

An Introduction to Peace Education

This second lecture on Peace Education was given at two programmes on the Notodden Campus and the Porsgrunn campus of Telemark University College in Norway 31 October and 2 November, 2006 by Dr. H. T. D. Rost, a member of the Board of the Bahá'í Academy and staff member of New Era Development Institute, Panchgani. These lectures were attended by professors and students of TUC and were very well received. They were followed by useful comments and questions to panels that included Prorektor Krut Duesund, Dr. (Mrs.) Radha Rost, and others.

It has been said that if we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children. But a teacher had a dream in which she saw one of her students fifty years from today. The student was angry and said, "Why did I learn so much detail about the past and the administration of my country and so little about the world?" He was angry because no one told him that as an adult he would be faced almost daily with problems of a global interdependent nature, be they problems of peace, security, quality of life, inflation, or scarcity of natural resources. "Why was I not warned? Why was I not better educated? Why did my teachers not tell me about the problems and help me understand that I was a member of an interdependent human race?"

With ever greater anger, the student shouted, "You helped me extend my hands with incredible machines, my eyes with telescopes and microscopes, my ears with telephones, radios and sonar, my brain with computers, but you did not help me extend my heart, love, and concern for the human family. You, teacher, gave me half a loaf."

What is this great ideal known as peace, this goal toward which we are not yet helping our children and youth to attain? What is inner peace, that is, peace within ourselves, and outer peace, that is, peace in our society and throughout the world, and what is the connection between inner and outer peace? There are many different definitions of peace, but listen to the words of children aged 3 to 7:

"Peace is being quiet inside." "Peace is having good feelings inside." "Peace is when people get along and don't argue or hit." "Peace is having positive thoughts about myself and others." "Peace begins within each one of us." And here are the words of students aged 8 to 14: "Peace is more than the absence of war." "Peace is living in harmony and not fighting with others." "Peace is a calm and relaxed state of mind." "Peace consists of positive thoughts, pure feelings, and good wishes." "To stay peaceful requires strength and compassion." "World peace grows through non-violence, acceptance, fairness and communication." "Peace is the main characteristic of a civilized society."

From the point of view of not only some children but some adolescents and adults, peace is not just the absence of war; it is the practice of love. In a peaceful society people would work together to resolve conflicts, develop morally, treat each other with justice, satisfy basic needs, and respect each other. In essence, they would live in unity. Our aim is not to achieve a perfect world. What we do want is much more unity and peace throughout the world. As an example of working in this direction, starting with my published materials for five year olds and older, children learn that there is no happiness greater than peace and that peace links with the practice of love. They are also introduced for the first time to the concept of the human family.

Peace can take place within the individual. Some believe this inner peace can be strengthened through our relationship with the Divine. Inner peace involves peace of mind and absence of fear. Outer peace is peace in society. Our impression is that in India there is, in general, a greater stress on inner peace than in the West, where there is more emphasis on outer peace. East and West must come together, as the world needs both. This is known as holistic inner-outer peace. It has both spiritual and material dimensions. The sacred texts of the world's great religions can help us better understand holistic inner-outer peace. Beginning with 8 year olds and older, in these same materials, inner and outer peace and the development of inner peace through helping others, meditation as related to reflective thinking, and applying the principle of the Golden Rule and other approaches are included. Peace education would not exist unless people throughout the world believed that world peace is attainable through a multifaceted effort but starting with the education of children and youth. One such was Maria Montessori. Peace education is strengthened through the will-power and efforts of those who actively promote it, for they are aware of the terrible consequences if they do not. In *The Promise of World Peace*, the Universal House of Justice declares, "Whether peace is to be reached only after unimaginable horrors precipitated by humanity's stubborn clinging to old patterns of behavior, or is to be embraced now by an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the earth." In other words, the horrors and suffering within our society and worldwide can be reduced if we have the strong will to act. In the words of the Indian thinker and philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan "We must will peace with our whole body and soul, our feelings and instincts, our flesh and its affections."

A number of strategies to achieve peace exist, including peace through strength, pacifism, peace with justice, institution building, peace through sustainability, and peace education. These are not mutually exclusive, but in some cases complement each other.

Peace education is more effective when it is adapted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a society. It is enriched by that society's cultural and spiritual values along with universal human values. For example, these same published and yet-to-be published materials for Indian schools are based on what are termed universal human values such as love, reciprocity, empathy and concern for others, and justice and fairness. Such values can be included in peace education for schools throughout the world. But at the same time this curriculum, being developed in India, reflects Indian social problems, Indian culture, its strong religious beliefs, and the country's needs especially as the curriculum moves up to higher age levels. So it is enriched by certain widespread Indian spiritual and cultural values as ahimsa, that is, non-violence and non-killing. As to a definition of peace education, there are several, but a good one is from Dale Hudson, who rests his definition on certain basic principles. He states: "Peace education can be defined as: education that actualizes children's potentialities in helping them

learn how to make peace with themselves and with others, to live in harmony and unity with self, humankind and with nature. This definition rests on the following principles: 1. The cardinal prerequisite for world peace is the unity of humankind. 2. World order can be founded only on the consciousness of the oneness of humankind. The oneness of humankind has at least three major aspects: [first] All human beings belong to the same species and all humans are related, at least as close as 50th cousins, [second] A common spiritual capacity, [third] A common home—planet earth." Since Hudson was writing with children aged three or four to around twelve in mind, we can simply add that peace education applies as well to adolescents and adults. In the past, peace education centered on the causes of war, an issue that grew as nations developed the capacity of destroying the whole human race many times over. But today the scope of peace education includes not only the causes, the nature, and the terrible consequences of war but also the study of violence in all forms. Such forms of violence include conflict, threat to life, ethnic hatred, discrimination, prejudice, racism, injustice, genocide, poverty, violence in the home and family, destruction of the environment, and so forth. A basic aim of peace education is to save humankind from destroying a large portion or all of itself. Once we become aware of our suicidal behavior, peace education points out to us the alternatives that can gradually slow down and stop this mad rush. As H.G. Wells put it, human beings are embarked upon "a race between education and catastrophe." Will we win or lose that race?

But peace education does not provide a complete answer, as it appears to offer a long term solution to threats here and now. It depends on millions of students being educated, ideally in every country, to work to change from violent to peaceful behavior. This takes time and effort. The good news is that more and more countries are waking up to the need, and international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization continue to promote peace education. But various other strategies for peace exist. One such is institution building with a major example being improvement of the United Nations and its peacekeeping efforts that must be used to deal with more immediate dangers. Simultaneously peace education must grow, especially if it spreads quickly and becomes more effective within schools and reaches out to parents, families, various ethnic and religious groups, and the community. Norway has more than its share of prominent authorities in peace studies and peace education. Please excuse my poor pronunciation of Norwegian names. Johan Galtung is the foremost name that comes to mind. Galtung has actively promoted peace research and peace education and was a founder in 1968 of the International Peace Institute in Oslo. He has become one of the world's leading figures in peace research and scholarship. Galtung, along with other European peace educators, has emphasized that peace education will not be effective relying on traditional teaching methods. He has criticized violence in the classroom. Tell all of that to huge numbers of teachers in Indian schools! One of the leading feminist peace scholars worldwide is the Norwegian Birgit Brock-Utne. But the rest of us are not in the same league as Europeans who have contributed to the modern concept of peace in Western civilization such as Desiderius Erasmus, Immanuel Kant, Leo Tolstoy, Maria Montessori, and Johan Galtung, the only professional educator being Maria Montessori.

Our own modest contribution in another part of the world, which has been hindered over and over again by frustrations, delays, diversions, and a lot of other work, began in the 1970s in Kenya. As we more recently trained pre-primary and primary teachers and developed peace education teachers' guides for use in Indian schools, the main focus was to try to develop as

comprehensive an approach as possible for the peace education of children aged approximately from 4 to 10 as a regular school subject, keeping in mind the typical conditions in the schools that we have observed. In India peace education can readily be integrated into values education as a subject. Some of our materials have been published through the generous support of the Norwegian Aid Agency and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Norway. Telemark University College staff gave useful inputs. Other materials of a more advanced nature await publication. Everything has been tested. With minor changes and translations they can be used in Europe, as is happening in Belgium with Mr. and Mrs. Jaminon and the Foundation for Global Education and Development.

My own experience with the infusion approach, introducing peace education into existing school subjects such as history, mathematics, and science, is limited to some brief training of teachers using UNESCO's Learning the Way of Peace and the use of cooperative games in the teaching of English, mathematics, and other subjects. But we have trained teachers in cooperative learning since 1992 and have incorporated it as well as cooperative games into the peace education materials. Drawing from a wide variety of sources from several countries all in English, appropriate for various age levels, synthesizing approaches, and adding some creative ideas, the result has been a wide-ranging program of education for peace as a subject. This has also included the use of cooperative learning for all school subjects as well as cooperative games so that peace education in one form or another can impact schools in all subjects each and every school day. In this talk the examples of peace education activities are taken from the published books. But to be truthful, the more we learn about peace education and the various strategies to achieve peace, the more we realize what little we know—it's just the first steps in climbing the mountain. When you begin to explore education for peace, it is like exploring a huge garden with beautiful, flourishing sections competing with unsightly weeds that need to be rooted out by expert gardeners. We are those gardeners, and we all need to be trained for the task. This approach that has been developed in India aims at producing peaceful, morally mature individuals who are active peacemakers and contribute to a more unified, peaceful, progressive nation and world. Since education for peace is value-centered, peace being a value itself, the primary means to achieve this aim is a growing understanding of what are termed universal human values and the various ways and means of practicing them according to the capacities and potentialities of the learners.

Universal human values have been the subject of scholarly research and writing for years, drawing on the work of thinkers worldwide. One example is the values inherent in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, a document that has an impact on international law. Human rights education may be regarded as one of the approaches to peace education. Another good example is the declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993 entitled "Towards a Global Ethic" from more than 200 leaders from more than 100 religions based on two years of work by scholars and religious leaders, a declaration that, they thought, would be accepted "... by all persons with ethical convictions, whether religiously grounded or not. "Since universal human values exist, this can be a sign of the unity of humankind, that humanity is one, and that you share these values with human beings everywhere—or at least most human beings. Thinkers have concluded that among universal human values there are those that are essential for our one species, homo sapiens, to survive on this earth. For example, knowledge is regarded as a universal value. The need for knowledge is

so important that without gaining knowledge and learning, human beings could not exist. Another universal value essential to humanity's survival is the protection and preservation of the world's environment. There is a direct link between peace education and environmental education. But some authorities like to use the term "near-universal" because they think that within every society there is deviance and not every single individual lives up to the moral standards of that society. For instance, even though humanity's long-term survival depends on the protection and preservation of the earth's natural environment, there are many individuals, groups, businesses, institutions, and so forth that do not put this value into practice and in many cases are doing nothing about it or just the opposite. Most of them may know about this value and accept it on the surface but do not really understand it or take it seriously, as they do not put it into practice. Others may simply be ignorant about it. The consequences of not practicing this value by the human race are disastrous. Destruction of the earth's natural environment is a form of colossal violence.

So it is the job of education for peace to help us make wise choices of what is right or wrong, good or bad on some sort of basis—in this case, universal or near-universal values. I think that a basic difference between peace education and traditional values education or character education or moral education is the focused aim of peace education toward which these values are learned and practiced plus a wide variety of peace-inducing activities and techniques that are associated with peaceful value choices.

What are some of the universal or near-universal values in a peace education program? Some of these in our program can be given, but other peace educators could give more. Starting with four year olds, based on their capacity at this age, happiness, friendship, sharing, cooperation, gentleness, concern for others, love, helpfulness, and kindness are introduced with emphasis on practicing these values, often through playful activities. Starting at such an early age, the internalization of such values can have a powerful, lifelong influence. It goes on through higher age levels with values such as the unity of humankind; truthfulness; politeness; courtesy; respect; honoring and obeying our parents; responsibility; caring for the earth; compassion; patience; honesty; trustworthiness; forgiveness; and love, unity, and peace as they link together. Again the emphasis is not only on understanding but practicing them. The students are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of the purpose of their lives. But all this is included in this peace education curriculum within a wider context of ways and means of engendering such peaceful values.

Ways and means of developing these peaceful values or virtues or good qualities as a means of attaining inner peace and peace in society are of great importance. We will first outline some of them that can be introduced with four and five year olds. Again, other peace educators can add more. Children from an early age can first begin learning and practicing these values in groups through cooperative learning and cooperative games, both of which improve social interactions. The children engage in a variety of participatory and play activities designed to help develop these values. They sing peaceful songs, chant, listen to peaceful music, draw, make peace badges, listen to stories about such topics as love, peace, and kindness, and so forth. From the very beginning, parents and families are involved in peace education primarily through the children themselves as well as through the teachers. The children begin to problem solve in groups answering low consensus questions having more than one possible answer on a wide variety of peace themes as part of their preparation to eventually become mature peacemakers

who can solve complex problems involving values. They begin to learn the consequences of a person's actions upon another person, another aspect of the process of becoming a peaceful person and a peacemaker. In this connection, they begin to learn how to solve conflicts between people in order to make everyone happy, and this is reinforced through the use of problem solving puppets. They begin to understand how to set goals. They begin to discern between similarities and differences in children and later learn that despite people's differences, they are basically the same. An important early preparation for understanding and practicing the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," based on values of right and wrong, dealing with conflicts and interacting with people at a later age is reinforced with an introduction to six basic emotions associated with body language. This activity, like other activities, builds up through recognition of more feelings and emotions in a more complex manner over the years. They memorize a statement of the Golden Rule, "We should treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated," and other short peace statements for the first time. The children are exposed for the first time to the concept that there is such a thing as the whole human family. The class has a Peace and Oneness of Mankind Notice Board. Special peace celebrations are held during the year, for many of which parents and families are invited.

Clearly, this peace education program must build on the foundation laid with young children, and this reinforces the view that in some ways the most important teacher in the whole system is the teacher of young children interacting closely and harmoniously with the parents and families. When a young tree is planted straight, it will grow straight, but what if, from the beginning, it is planted crooked? Then, in this curriculum, for students aged 6 and up, the same ways and means of developing peaceful values and virtues are continued and developed further with the addition of good listening; the Golden Rule and listening; peaceful talk; a kindly tongue; seeing good in others; associating with good people; avoiding bad people; discovering emotions; sharing feelings; expressing their own feelings; understanding others' feelings; how my actions affect how others feel; caring about feelings; dramatizing feelings; feelings about special events; feeling of the week; drawing feelings; feelings book; the Golden Rule and being kind, helpful, and polite; the Golden Rule and cooperation and encouragement; the Golden Rule and justice and fairness; encouraging others to do good; bringing ourselves to account each day; controlling our anger; giving "I" messages, and having a class caring project.

As they grow older they come to grips with the higher and lower values possessed within themselves and within others through overcoming violence with peace, overcoming hatred through love, overcoming indifference with compassion, overcoming falsehood with truth, overcoming unreliability with trustworthiness, overcoming injustice with justice, and reaching our goals through developing virtues. A basic means of developing peaceful values in practice, the Golden Rule, which has been termed a universal ethic, is stressed, drawing various formulations of the Rule from the sacred texts of the world's religions as well as from philosophers and thinkers worldwide, including materialist philosophers. The common formulation of the Golden Rule in the West is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," but there are many other versions worldwide. When you practice the Golden Rule you put yourself in the place of the person towards whom your action is directed and do to him or her what you would like to have done to yourself. In *The Promise of World Peace* it is stated that this teaching sums up the moral attitude, the peace-inducing aspect, extending through the world's great religions irrespective of their place or time of origin and also signifies an aspect of their

unity. Therefore, we feel that the Golden Rule, which can be practiced every day, merits a central place in a peace education program. Other excellent ways of developing peaceful values that can be practiced daily, depending on your choice, include bringing ourselves to account each day, prayer and meditation, and patterning our lives after the great role models of peace in humanity's history.

Everything mentioned so far could be interpreted as conducing to the development of a peaceful, moral person of real benefit to society, but they also can all be said to contribute to the development of an active peacemaker. Through the years the students continue to understand better what is peace and what is conflict, but in addition they learn the causes of conflict, the dangers of conflict, how conflicts can get worse, what can happen as the result of our actions, being responsible for solving conflicts, and how to resolve conflicts through cooperation, listening, talking, sharing, taking turns, getting help, apologizing, compromising, and so forth. Each student learns how to deal with conflicts by applying the Golden Rule and applying moral principles. The students explore what to do if their peacemaking activities fail and if they quickly have to do something to avoid people getting hurt. They must also understand the alternatives if they themselves are threatened with physical harm, and they practice quick decision making in a crisis. They practice having a peaceful classroom in which there are rules and come to understand that rules and laws can help bring peace. The first step in the process of students learning to be mediators to solve disputes and difficult problems and that mediation follows certain rules is when the teacher teaches them through her own example in the classroom how to become mediators. In later years they themselves learn and practice mediation in the classroom and school. They learn about the identification and removal of prejudices through mediation. They learn that there are different types of prejudices and how they can help to reduce or remove them. They learn some of the peace symbols found worldwide. Their education as peaceful, moral people who are peacemakers contributing to a more unified, more peaceful, more just world is rounded out through world peace activities. This includes peace and the practice of love, the further development of the concept that humankind is one family, inner peace within ourselves and outer peace throughout the whole world, developing inner peace by helping others and making peace our greatest desire and that world peace is our goal. Using meditation and the Golden Rule followed by problem solving we can help promote world peace. Crucially, the students are exposed to a positive view of the nature of humankind, that humankind is basically noble, is not naturally aggressive, and therefore human beings in all nations can be educated to be peaceful. This is a key principle in education for peace. The point is that if we are not positive about the great potentialities of human beings for good we will lose heart and, as a result, lose the battle. The students also learn that humanity's basic needs are the same, including the need for love, companions, and cooperation. The world peace activities for ages 9 plus end with an introduction to the United Nations. So your students need not be like the one who angrily condemned his teachers because they did not prepare him to live in a world beset with problems of a global interdependent nature!

My yet-to-be published materials go much further into such issues, including a wide-ranging curriculum for students ages 10 plus that includes an investigation of certain additional global problems, ahimsa, more advanced techniques, and other matters.

Of course, every curriculum can be improved, and this one can use some fine tuning. One thing that should be done with it is to assess how better and more systematically the wide variety of

ways and means can link up with the development of universal and near-universal peaceful human values. For example, when you are attempting to prevent or resolve a conflict, much more is involved than basically the choice of techniques, which is the approach commonly taken. You need to consciously base your actions as a peacemaker upon the application of universal or near-universal values such as justice and fairness, truthfulness, trustworthiness, honesty, and equity. In this connection you need to put the Golden Rule, bringing yourself to account each day, meditation and reflective thinking, concentrating on the problems, and so forth into practice in ever more complex situations. These are important issues, among many others, that we can explore with older students. Thus, the need for reaching above the age of 10 or so is obvious. We must also reach down below the age of 4 to be more effective. All such developments require collaboration and effort.

Throughout the world today there are current names for peace education. In India the National Council for Educational Research and Training of the Government of India calls it education for peace and aims at having it replace values education in Indian schools. But worldwide there are such diverse terms for peace education as "human rights education," "environmental education," "international education," "conflict resolution education," and "development education," each with a particular focus. The program that has been briefly outlined to you contains aspects of all of these. A wide variety of such approaches exist worldwide, with some countries being ahead of others. Despite calls for peace education to be spread to schools of all nations, starting 70 years ago with Maria Montessori, no one nation has made a full commitment as yet as a model for others to follow. UNESCO encourages the nations of the world to take action.

How do teachers, schools, and school systems get started in educating for peace? First, look at the interest as well as wealth of talent that you already possess, give it a common goal, set it in the right direction and train it, overcoming the obstacles. Creative teachers introduce peace education into their classes. Some use existing programs and courses like the one already outlined. Some introduce new ideas into existing subjects in the curriculum using the infusion approach. But the introduction of whole courses and programs dealing with peace and violence is more thorough and comprehensive because students and teachers can examine the issues in more depth, so it has advantages over the infusion approach. When teachers have given peace lessons four or five periods a week for a whole school year, they have sincerely declared that their own attitudes have changed and that they have learned a lot. Teachers need to have access to existing resources such as provided by an institution of higher education like Telemark University College. Also, a professional teachers' organization in a country promotes education for peace. Annual or regularly scheduled teacher and administrative conferences sponsor conferences such as this one, workshops, and forums on peace topics. Members within these organizations can establish task forces or committees to address peace education and develop teaching-learning materials. Outside consultants are brought in to provide new ideas and help teachers develop new skills. Or all of these activities can be under the umbrella of an organization within an existing institution of higher education. An example in India is the Gandhi Studies Center in the university known as the Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. My wife Radha and I attended a two day workshop on peace education for elementary school teachers and Indian Government education officials at that university earlier this year, and we learned a great deal. But above all, teachers need the understanding and long-term support of their school heads and fellow teachers, a support that an institution like Telemark University College can strengthen.

At present, a few teacher education programs are preparing teachers with the required skills and knowledge to teach peace education. We have been doing it in India in one form or another at the New Era Development Institute since 1993. We have a detailed report from a survey done with our 86 student teachers from their seven weeks teaching practice in 32 schools in 2005 documenting the excellent results with students, teachers, and school administrators from peace education. I am preparing a peace education course for the Faculty of Education of the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University in India, a course that can be adapted for use in other universities and colleges within and outside India. The rising interest in education for peace within the Government of India is helping to open up the doors in our country as it faces rising hatred, violence, and disruption both within and outside its borders. Much more could be said in this introduction to peace education than can be included in this talk. We will explore some more of the important issues in the second talk. This one can be concluded by asking one vital question: How can what we teach in our schools reach out to the parents, families, and communities, thus having an immediate impact on the wider society? In our program, which begins with the education of young children, this is accomplished first and foremost through the children themselves. We have found that some parents of young children can have an especially close, positive relationship with the school and will support the good they see in the school program. So in these published materials many lessons contain suggestions to the teachers for involving parents and families, and the unpublished materials contain many more. Contacts with parents and families include peace activities carried on by the children at home with the cooperation and involvement of the parents and other family members; Parents Days at the schools; observations at schools of special days such as International Peace Day on 15 September to which parents, families, and the local communities are invited; special Peace Celebrations at schools and inter-school peace programs to which the public is invited; publicity of the peace activities in schools through the media and, above all, friendly face-to-face contacts between parents of students of all backgrounds with teachers through home visits and visits to your school in which peace issues are discussed and the development of the positive potentialities of the students are explored. In short, all of you will make a big difference within and outside your schools as true "ambassadors of peace." It has been said that one inspired, dedicated person can have the power of 10,000. Now is the time to channel that power that is within you.

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