



HUMANISM - ESSENTIAL FOR PRESENT SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Humanism is an approach to life based on reason and our common humanity, recognizing that moral values are properly founded on human nature and experience alone. -The Bristol Humanist Group The 21st century promises to be a time of scientific and technological growth at a level never before experienced in human history. This growth will either trigger chaos, disruption, war, starvation and disease or will introduce a period of humanistic cooperation, development, progress, and peace. What emerges will depend upon which values are embraced, taught, encouraged, and legislated. The value choices, which must be deliberately chosen and not left to chance, must be secular, global, and familial. The accepted values must be embraced, taught, encouraged, and supported internationally, nationally, locally, and personally. What is proposed here represents some of the value choices, the ethical building blocks, that will enable a world of peace and harmony to come into existence—a world in which human diversity is respected and tolerated and, at the same time, a world in which each individual will be enabled and encouraged to maximize his or her potential, without discrimination and in an atmosphere of freedom. What is required to bring about this idealized world is a democratic, pluralistic society which recognizes the human rights of each individual and in which no man or woman or class of men or women shall be demeaned and treated as mere slaves existing only to fulfill the desires of those who would be their masters; a world in which no man or woman or class of men or women shall be used as tools for the lusts of others, or for the ambitions of others, or for the greed of others, a world in which the life of every man and woman and child shall be recognized and esteemed as a unique and ultimate statement of the evolutionary process and therefore of inestimable value. To achieve and make real this concept of a world of peace for the 21st century the following humanistic values provide the basic essentials.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

1. Humanistic values must be secular, democratic, and pluralistic.
2. Humanistic values must be global.
3. Humanistic values must be based on a familial ethic.
4. Humanistic global familial values must embrace a survival ethic.
5. Humanistic global survival values require that we treat one another as members of a family, which means that we must look out for and care about one another's welfare.
6. Humanistic global family values must express concern for the health and well-being of all members of the human family
7. Humanistic global family values demand familial responsibility as we face the problem of population control.
8. Humanistic values must be taught.
9. Humanistic global family values must be concerned with providing each member of the human family with the means to become involved in meaningful work, employment or efforts designed to promote the well-being of the entire human family.

Moral values are declining at a very fast pace. Minds are occupied by deceit, corruption, distress, hatred and so on. Deterioration of human values has become a phenomenon in many nations, including India. This trend of decline in human values does not only pose serious threat to the future course of development of the country but even for its survival, respect and authority itself. Though, change in social/human values in younger generation is inevitable with time but the decline in Indian younger generation is at an alarming rate as compared to any other country all over the world. It devolves on the parents, teachers and society to imbibe the desired human values in the younger generation.

EDUCATION AND HUMANISM:

It is one thing to propose values, but how are they to become known and adopted? One way is through education. The word "education" comes from the Latin root educare which means "to lead out." As an

educator, it is my task to "lead out" (educare: I lead out). "Leading out" involves the dismantling of barriers which impede humanistic ethical growth, while bringing others to a place where new ethical horizons can be seen, recognized, appreciated and approached. Education calls for belief in what is to be shared, commitment to the ideals embraced by humanistic values, and hope for the future. So many are disillusioned and without any belief in the possibility for change. The educational program, which can be instituted as part of curricula in classes ranging from kindergarten to university and also through the public media should include the following.

1. The right to personal security and protection.
2. The right to personal liberty which includes
 - freedom from involuntary servitude or slavery,
 - freedom from harassment,
 - freedom of thought and conscience,
 - freedom of speech and expression,
 - moral freedom to express one's values and pursue one's lifestyle so long as it does not harm others or prevent others from exercising their rights.
3. the right to privacy which calls for respect for the rights of others concerning
 - confidentiality,
 - control of one's own body,
 - sexual preference and orientation,
 - life-stance,
 - reproductive freedom within the boundaries proposed by value 7 (above),
 - health care based on informed consent,
 - the desire to die with dignity.
4. the right to intellectual and cultural freedom which requires a spirit of toleration and understanding with regard to
 - the freedom to inquire and engage in research,
 - the right to adequate education,
 - the right to cultural enrichment,
 - the right to express and publish one's views.
 - the right to adequate health care (see value 6, above)
 - freedom from want which means that society must guarantee.
 - the right and opportunity to work,

- the satisfaction of basic needs when individuals are unable to provide for themselves,
- care for the elderly,
- care for the handicapped,
- the right to adequate leisure and relaxation.

5. Economic freedom including:

- the right to own property,
- the right to organize,
- protection from fraud.

6. Moral equality, which entails equal opportunity and equal.

7. Equal protection under the law which is vital to a free, democratic society, and include

- the right to a fair trial,
- the right to protection from arbitrary arrest or unusual punishment,
- the right to humane treatment.

8. The right to democratic participation in government which include

- the right to vote,
- the right of assembly and association.
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9. the right to hold religious beliefs or not hold religious beliefs.

10. The rights of marriage and the family which include

- the right to marry or cohabit,
- the right to divorce,
- family planning,
- the right to bear and the responsibility to raise wanted children,
- child care, the right of children and each family member to be protected from abuse and physical or cultural deprivation

Within the humanistic approach, education is about creating a need within the student, or cooperate with the student his self-motivation. Humanism is about rewarding yourself. Intrinsic rewards are rewards from within oneself, rather like a satisfaction of a need.

Gage and Berliner (1991) described 4 basic objectives:

1. Promote and develop positive self-direction and independence;
2. Develop the ability to take responsibility for what is learned;
3. Promote and develop creativity;
4. Promote and develop curiosity.

An integrated approach to education that gives equal importance to the economic, social, cultural and civic dimensions of learning. This is reflected in the four pillars of learning to know, to do, to be and to live together. The integrated approach is fundamentally under threat in the current system, particularly; learning to be and to live together.

A humanistic approach to education and development is based on the foundation of an integrated approach to knowledge, learning and development. Some core principles are important: respect for life and human dignity; equal rights and social justice; respect for cultural diversity, as well as a sense of shared responsibility and a commitment to international solidarity. These principles are all fundamental aspects of our common humanity. It is an approach that recognizes the diversity of knowledge systems, worldviews, and conceptions of well-being as a source of wealth. It recognizes the diversity of lived realities while reaffirming a common core of universal values. A humanistic approach implies a central concern for sustainable human and social development, in which the fundamental purpose of education should be to sustain and enhance the dignity, capacity and welfare of the human person in relation to others and to nature.

This implies inclusive policy-making, as well as transparency and accountability in the provision of meaningful learning opportunities for all.

Further awareness and recognizing the importance of non-formal and less institutionalized educational spaces in a lifelong learning framework, is needed. Together with a renewed recognition of the importance of the teaching profession, we can build a solid learning experience. The role of educators is critical as guides who enable learners to develop and advance through the constantly expanding maze of knowledge throughout their lives. In order to ensure this, teachers and educators need to be offered more attractive, motivating and stable living and working conditions, including salaries and career prospects.

Conclusion

Humanism is a progressive life stance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives capable of adding to the greater good of humanity. Each one of us, pledge ourselves to action in helping to move humankind towards a way of living where the humanistic family ethic overlays the nationalistic, linguistic, religious, and ethnic differences that separate us. We work toward the time when the world will be at peace and human energy will be focused on the needs and well-being of all members of a single family, a time when we will enjoy and celebrate our unique differences while exalting the importance of our human similarities, a time when we will acknowledge the basic human needs that unite us including our mutual concerns for the futures of our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren who constitute the future.