



HUMANISM AND HAPPINESS

**Pokkuluri
Suryaprakash**

Former Lecturer in English, S.C.I.M. Government Degree College, Tanuku, Andhra Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Humanism consists in showing interest in providing happiness to one's family, one's relatives, one's friends and others in the society. Happiness implies a state of pleasure. "Happiness depends on what you can give, not what you can get", in the words of Mahatma Gandhi. One can make one's life happy. Also, one can make the lives of others happy. It is a matter of one's choice. It is matter of one's attitude towards oneself and towards others. How can one be happy? One can be happy by looking at what one has done. One need not be unhappy for not being able to accomplish a lot of work in a day and for leaving some unimportant work undone. To be happy, who are in distress and so on. Further one can help others in solving their problems, in a big way, if one can do so. One can watch a favourite programme on television; and one can observe and enjoy nature. How can one make others happy? One can make others happy by doing simple acts. These simple acts include speaking kind words, giving your seat in a bus to senior citizens, women and children, helping your colleagues, stopping one's car or motor cycle to enable people to cross the road, giving a small present to one's near and dear, helping people, who are in distress and so on. Furthermore, one has to develop noble qualities like generosity, kindness, altruism, forgiveness and courtesy. Moreover, one should be grateful to anybody, from whom one receives help of any time. What is required today is: (1) to implement the policy of "live and let live" and (2) to remember the words of Edward E. Hale about helping others: "Look up, and not down; out and not in; forward and not back; and lend a hand".

KEYWORDS : Humanism, happiness, generosity, kindness, forgiveness, courtesy.

INTRODUCTION

Let us have but one end in view, the welfare of humanity, and let us put aside all selfishness in consideration of language, nationality or religion. - John Comenius

There is no happiness higher than what a man obtains by this attitude of non-offensiveness, to all creation.

-*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (I. 189)

Human beings have unique place in the universe because they have a number of abilities, faculties and talents. They have excelled in many fields including education, economics, commerce, political science, science and technology. They have made life on earth happy and prosperous. But, especially, in the present age of globalization, some people have become selfish and greedy, ignoring the welfare of people at large. This tendency on the part of some people has been steadily increasing, causing harm to fellow human beings and environment. In this connection, it is relevant to recollect how Maxim Gorky was criticized by a peasant spokesman: "Yes, we are taught to fly in the air like birds, and to swim in the water like fishes, but how to live on the earth we do not know". (quoted by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan). Today, it is necessary to enlighten ignorant people with noble qualities of head and heart. One should develop these noble qualities, which are described below, in order to be happy and prosperous and in order to make others happy and prosperous. In fact, what is humanism? What is happiness? What is meant by bliss? What is contentment? What is meant by generosity? What is meant by kindness? Describe forgiveness? What is meant by altruism? Explain courtesy? What is needed today? What is the conclusion? All these significant and current issues are discussed, in detail, hereunder.

Discussion**What is humanism?**

Humanism implies a sense of interest in human welfare and happiness. It can also be said that humanism is concerned with human values and ideals. Humanism, according to Encyclopedia of Social Sciences is described thus:

Humanism as a technical term and as an intellectual or moral conception has always leaned heavily on its etymology. That which is characteristically human, not supernatural, that which belongs to

man and not to external nature, that which raises man to his greatest height or gives him, as man, his greatest satisfaction, is apt to be called humanism.

What is happiness? What is bliss? What is contentment?

Happiness, bliss, contentment imply a state of pleasure and satisfaction. Happiness is that which results from the possession of what considers good. Bliss is pure happiness. Contentment is a peaceful kind of happiness, without desires.

What is meant by generosity?

Generosity, a noble quality, is liberality in giving others, what one can give and what others need. It can also be said that generosity is readiness to give others freely. "What you set free is yours forever. Clutch at it and it is gone", says Rabindranath Tagore. About generosity, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar writes thus:

Generosity is a quality of the spirit. When you feel generous, your life becomes abundant – full of compassion and love. (*THE SPEAKING TREE*, 23 Oct. 2016)

What is meant by kindness?

Kindness, a good quality, refers to benevolent nature. Kindness implies considerate behaviour. It can also be said that kindness means sympathy for others. "Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together", in the opinion of Goethe. (*THE SPEAKING TREE*, 4 Dec. 2016) mentions thus about merciful actions, peace and joy:

Jesus asks us to be merciful in character and nature. The message this has for us is that when we meet people, let us be jovial and enthusiastic about meeting them. The joy is doubled when we share our lives with them. Let us be sympathetic at our work places with those with whom we interact daily. In these simple and humble ways, we can make our place in the hearts of those who don't even know us. And such kind and merciful actions give us peace, joy and love.

Describe forgiveness?

Forgiveness, an excellent quality, refers to ceasing to feel resentment against a person. It can also be said forgiveness means pardoning an offender. In other words, forgiving is giving us one's anger towards others. "We pardon as long as we love", says La

Roche foucauld. About the power of forgiveness, about the role of forgiveness in conflict resolution and about the restoration of humanity, John Moolakkattu expresses his views in the following words:

The power of forgiveness as a means of conflict resolution or transformation was emphasised by thinkers like Hannah Arendt as it allows human beings to come to terms with their undesirable past, thereby changing the rule that governs the power relationship between the former victimiser and his victim... Forgiveness, in short, seems to represent the personal, the private, the spiritual...

Hence forgiveness can play a role in conflict resolution when the parties accept that the conflict is a relational phenomenon and is the result of failed interaction, that both sides have a role in reconstructing the relationships, and in so doing, reconstructing their identities, which results in the restoration of humanity of both. (*THE SPEAKING TREE*. 20 Nov. 2016)

What is meant by altruism?

Altruism means showing interest in the welfare of other people, without selfishness. Altruism is an admirably high quality. One has to make good use of opportunities for doing acts of altruism. One can find those opportunities in the family, outside the family and in the society.

Explain courtesy?

Courtesy, a good quality, means polite behaviour. It can also be said that courtesy refers to social conduct or excellence of manners. Social conduct and excellence of manners help one to improve relationships with others in society, leading to human welfare. Courtesy is invaluable in public and private life. Courtesy creates good impression on others. It is little courtesies like "thank you" and "please" enable people to lead their life happily and without friction. Borge says "The small courtesies sweeten life, the greater ennoble it". "We must be as courteous to a man as to a picture, which we are willing to give the benefit of a good light", as advised by Emerson.

CONCLUSION

The topic "Humanism and Happiness" is a very important one and it has been discussed, at length, in India. Many experts opine that a happy and prosperous society comes into being, only when people develop noble qualities like compassion and sympathy. People should show a strong concern for human welfare, human values and human dignity. Organisations that help to improve the welfare of mankind have to be encouraged. What is needed today: (1) to understand that one's happiness lies in making others happy, (2) to remember the words of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, former President of India about the faith of the future, about fellowmen and about toleration:

The faith of the future is in co-operation and not identification, in accommodation to fellowmen and not imitation of them, in toleration and not absolutism. and (3) to give importance to the words of Mahatma Gandhi, about humanity and faith:

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

REFERENCES

1. A Handbook of Quotations, Chennai: Seasons Publishing: 71.
2. "Daily Acts Of Kindness": *THE SPEAKING TREE*, 4 Dec. 2016, Hyderabad ed.,:03.
3. John Moolakkattu. "Power Of Forgiveness". *THE SPEAKING TREE*, 20 Nov. 2016, Hyderabad ed.,:07.
4. Maurus, J. Something to Think of. Allahabad: The Allahabad Saint Paul Society, 1978:80.
5. Radhakrishnan, S. Kalki or The Future of Civilization, Ludhiana: Kalyani Publications, 1973:7.
6. Ibid., 1973:10.
7. Sharma, P.D., Immortal Quotations and Proverbs, Mumbai : Navneet Publications (India) Limited, 2001:63.
8. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume.I, Mayavati: Advita Ashrama: 89.