



## HUMANISM: ESSENTIAL FOR THE PRESENT SOCIETY A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

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—American Humanist Association.

People who share these beliefs and values are called humanists and this combination of attitudes is called Humanism. Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over acceptance of dogma or superstition. The meaning of the term humanism has fluctuated according to the successive intellectual movements which have identified with it. Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports the maximization of individual liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. It advocates the extension of participatory democracy and the expansion of the open society, standing for human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as a part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political system—have their source in human experience and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

**KEYWORDS** : Supernaturalism, Ethical Stance Rationalism, Empiricism, Dogma, Rational, Compassion, Theological.

### INTRODUCTION

Humanism is a joyous alternative to religions that believe in a supernatural god and life in a hereafter. Humanists believe that this is the only life of which we have certain knowledge and that we owe it to ourselves and others to make it the best life possible for ourselves and all with whom we share this fragile planet. A belief that when people are free to think for themselves using reason and knowledge as their tools, they are best able to solve this world's problems. An appreciation of the art, literature, music and crafts that are our heritage from the past and of the creativity that, if nourished, can continuously enrich our lives. Humanism is, in sum, a philosophy of those in love with life.

Humanists affirm that humans have the freedom to give meaning, value, and purpose to their lives by their own independent thought, free inquiry, and responsible, creative activity. Humanists stand for the building of a more humane, just, compassionate, and democratic society using a pragmatic ethics based on human reason, experience, and reliable knowledge—an ethics that judges the consequences of human actions by the well-being of all life on Earth.

Humanistic there in emphasize personal responsibilities they also focus on the project without develop the importance of part experiences. They give more stress on personal growth.

**Carl Roger** gave importance to self-theory; becoming a fully functioning person. He says that people who strive to experience Life to the fullest, and who trust their own feelings. They are sensitive to the need and right of others but they do not allow Society's standards to shape their feelings or actions to an excessive degree. Throughout life their actions are dominated by constructive impulses. They are in close touch with their own values and feelings and experience life more deeply than other persons.

**Abraham Maslow** (1970) brought about another theory of personality highlighting the need hierarchy. In his theory the stages of personal development is which individual reach their maximum potential, having peak experiences during which an individual feel at one with the universe. They feel more spontaneous and more appreciative of life. They have the ability to take charge of their lives and foster their own development.

Humanistic, humanism and humanist are terms in psychology relating to an approach which studies the whole person, and the uniqueness of each individual. Essentially, these terms refer the

same approach in psychology. Humanistic Psychology gets its name from its belief in the basic goodness and respect of humankind. Its roots are based in existential psychology or the understanding and acceptance of one's own existence and responsibility. The goal of life should always be to achieve personal growth and understanding. Only through self-improvement and self-knowledge can one truly be happy.

Humanism is a psychological perspective that emphasizes the study of the whole person. Humanistic psychologists look at human behavior not only through the eyes of the observer, but through the eyes of the person doing the behaving. Rogers unlike the other psychologists redirected psychology towards the study of the self.

### **Humanistic psychology assumptions**

Humanistic psychology begins with the existential assumptions that phenomenology is central and that people have free will. Personal agency is the humanistic term for the exercise of free will. Personal agency refers to the choices we make in life, the paths we go down and their consequences.

- *Basic Assumptions*
- Humans have free will; not all behavior is determined.
- All individuals are unique and have an innate (inborn) drive to achieve their maximum potential.
- A proper understanding of human behavior can only be achieved by studying humans—not animals.

**Humanistic psychology**, also often referred to as humanism, emerged during the 1950s as a reaction to the psychoanalysis and behaviorism that dominated psychology at the time. As it developed, humanistic psychology focused on each individual's potential and stressed the importance of growth and self-actualization. The fundamental belief of humanistic psychology is that people are innately good and that mental and social problems result from deviations from this natural tendency.

### **How Humanistic Psychology Developed**

During the late 1950s, Abraham Maslow, and other psychologists held meetings to discuss developing a professional organization devoted to a more humanist approach to psychology. They agreed that topics such as self-actualization, creativity, individuality, and related topics were the central themes of this new approach. The American Association for Humanistic Psychology was officially established in 1961. In 1962, Maslow published *Toward a Psychology*

of *Being*, in which he described humanistic psychology as the "third force" in psychology.

### **The Influence of Humanism**

The humanist movement had an enormous influence on the course of psychology and contributed new ways of thinking about mental health. It offered a new approach to understanding human behaviors and motivations and led to developing new techniques and approaches to psychotherapy.

Some of the major ideas and concepts that emerged as a result of the humanist movement include an emphasis on things such as:

- Self-concept
- Hierarchy of needs
- Unconditional positive regard
- Free will
- Client-centered therapy
- Self-actualization
- Fully-functioning person
- Peak experiences

### **Major Thinkers in Humanistic Psychology**

The early development of humanistic psychology was heavily influenced by the works of a few key theorists, especially Maslow and Rogers.

- Abraham Maslow
- Carl Rogers
- Rollo May
- Erich Fromm

### **The Qualities of self-actualized persons**

- They have a very good efficiency in perception of reality and are comfortable relations with it.
- They are able to accept themselves as they are including their short coming and weakness and also accept others.
- They are very spontaneous.
- They are mission oriented and not ego centered
- They enjoy solitude and privacy
- They are autonomous
- They are appreciative
- They have mystic experience
- They have a deep feeling of compassion for human beings in general.
- They have a good interpersonal relations with others
- They are highly ethical and have a sense of right and wrong

### **Values of Society Level**

When relationships get higher priority over physical facilities, fearlessness and marital trust starts emerging in the society. Fulfillment of human good Will start getting to the fore in plans and project at the level of societies and nations and a universal human order based on trustful relationship can emerge.

### **Humanistic Psychology Today**

Today, the concepts central to humanistic psychology can be seen in many disciplines including other branches of psychology, education, therapy, political movements, and other areas. For example, transpersonal psychology and positive psychology both draw heavily on humanist influences.

**Women's issue:** At the all India level, 2,44,270 crimes against women were reported in 2012. The number increased in 3,27,394 in 2015. If these are the registered cases, one can well imagine the number of unreported cases. Also the rape cases are on the rise, and at same time the number of rape cases being withdrawn is on the rise. It makes the accused to go scot-free without any punishment. In 2012, the police had secured 49.25% conviction in rape cases. It fell to 35.69% in 2013, in 2014 34.5% to 2016 there was drastic fall to 29.37% in 2015, a Delhi report revealed that there had been

withdrawal of as many as 104 rape cases. It reveals lack of justice to the victims.

Even in a **political life** too we find lot of dehumanization. In India if we want anything done, for the best result, we go to a politician, as a tenant, may genuflect before a feudal Master. for example lately a MP from Maharashtra, who beat up an airlines manager "25 times" with his Slipper for asking him to deplane after the aircraft had reached the destination. He was angry with airlines for its failure to give him, a business class seat in a flight, in which there was no business section.. The political class is an easy figure of hate, because its display of power is most pronounced and visible.

**Mahatma Gandhi** said "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.

**Dr. Vineeth Kundu Kulam**, a theologian from Kerala, in his presentation on "religious, peace builders or peace breakers" argued that religious also have a social role and in their arena religions can be mixed with politics and religious leaders may motivate their followers to resort to violence. It has happened in the past and is happening even today. History shows that religious have played both roles as peace makers and peace breakers.

He made four proposals to make religion a peace making force.

1. Prevent people from nurturing communal feelings at the grassroots
2. Strengthen the civil society.
3. Respond proactively to violence and
4. Practice the inter-dependence and inter faith dialogue.

All of us need **Love and Harmonious relationship** and its one of the important need to live in happiness. We are placed here on earth to increase the goodness in the World and we all are capable of discover the goodness and to spread it around us.

**Communication** is of the most important factors in creating happiness in our lives. Everything we experience in our lives involves relationships. Humans have free will and conflict will arise from time to time. Having a happy life does not mean a life without conflict but having the ability to cope well with conflict. Communication is the key to finding something that works. Hence we need to work and strive to develop Compassion Communication. To develop Compassionate Communication,

1. One needs to have intent to communicate with respect and love.
2. Having a common vision rather than looking at the differences.
3. Come up with options and ideas to consider that seem workable.

Also we need to cultivate ethics and justice for all. There involve empathy, fairness, compassion for the injured and the larger interest of the society.

**Mother Theresa is an embodiment of love and compassion**, who is able to reach out the needy and the destitute with tender loving care, Her main mission in life is to give each person the dignity of human being created by God. Her noble work of compassion is extended to one and all.

Love, compassion and the exhortation to care for the poor and hungry, are common to all the world's great religions. Persons, who experience divine love which the highest level of love, are free from jealousies worldly desires. They like to share their belongings with others. They have the attitudes of service, friendliness and love toward their family, society and all fellow beings, symbolizes the people live in togetherness. When they are other oriented, their mind is infused with love, "happy molecules flow throughout their brain and body, letting each of the trillions of cells know of one's happiness. It has been scientifically proved that in such people immune-modulations increase raising their immunity against

disease. They are joyful, healthy and more creative in life. Once **Dr. Lean Kass**, Who served as the chairman of USA President's Bio ethics committee, said "keep alive certain vital questions about what makes a human life worthwhile, what is good community, what is the human good. And that you will ensure the little candle stays lit against the barbaric darkness."

I would like to quote **St Francis of Assisi whose prayer for peace** which stirs one's whole being and it would urge us to become more human and humane in our thought, words and deeds.

***"Lord make me an instrument of peace:  
Where there is hatred let me bring Love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,  
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.  
Where there's discouragement, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light,  
And where there's sadness, let me bring Joy.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
It is in giving that we do receive,  
And it's in dying that we are born to life".***

## CONCLUSION

Let each of us realize the beauty of humanism, its urgency and the need in the present society and let us try to cultivate and imbibe it in our day to day life especially in our dealings. So that each of us make our family, Society country and the world at large, a better place to live in and pass it on to the next generation. At present the Universe need truly spiritual persons and teaching community who sacrifice their own personal interests and should lead exemplary lives radiating righteousness and unselfishness. Every spiritual man and teacher should ask himself/herself, what my contribution to the complete personality development of young generation and development of society? Self realization should lead to external expression of love and compassion. Living a value based humanistic life the religious leaders of all communities should educate and enlighten the common man keeping in view the balanced psychological growth in harmonious atmosphere both in families as well as in society and helping and stretching their hand in solving his/her problems.

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