



HUMANISM IN A WORLD WITH RELIGION

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The philosophy of humanism is rooted on the simple fact that reason transcends all other considerations about all things in this world. It does not dwell on the premise that something more profound exists, perhaps an idea, a supernatural concept or an unproven hypothesis for instance. Rather, the ideology rests on simple fact, common sense of something perceptible by the senses. It does not justify things with mere conjectures or guesses. It only sees things, I suppose, as being there or as being absent. It does not support imperceptible things. It finds strength in being able to prove something simply because it is something, not because it could be anything.

Religious humanism espouses the existence of God not as a transcendental being but as something that concretely moves within man himself. We might say that humanism doesn't support religion of any sort, believing as it does in the ability of man to govern himself independent of any Omnipotent "other" force. It espouses that man's goodness emanates from himself, and not from a Higher Being that animates his life or the things around and in his life. It's a kind of political independence that man believes he possesses inherently, quite far from having an "inner" higher being to help him be moved this way or that in the nature of making decisions.

Humanism doesn't find support in the belief of the unknown. It does not thrive in the often less-than-concrete elaboration—or attempt at explanation—through less conceivable means. For the humanist, if no explanation exists for something being there, then that something simply doesn't exist. Imagination begins and ends when no other more perceptible explanation or information truly exists. For humanists, it's either common sense and actual perception, and anything left to the imagination simply doesn't merit consideration. Man is an entity upon himself, and no other justification needs to be there anymore.

If shared experiences of something exist, then that thing surely exists. Humanism thrives in a provable, repeated experience of something, but the experience that is scattered, isolated or still has reasonable doubt doesn't merit holding attention to. For humanists, the essence of everything on this earth is a matter of existence. If that existence merely exists at some borders but fails to show up in some other aspects, then it simply does not exist.

Based on these philosophical rationalizations of the ideology of humanism, we can conclude that the entire ideology concentrates on either what is black or what is white, with no grey area in between. It's a very constricting notion, I believe, in that it doesn't open itself to the premise that something could be true based on an unexpanded—and not thoroughly knowable-- explanation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define humanism in your own terms.
2. What makes humanism stand apart from religion? Be as specific as necessary.
3. Are you a religious person? Why or why not?
4. Do you agree with the concepts of humanism? Why or why not?
5. Why is humanism a practical way of seeing things in this world?