



## TRACES OF HUMANISM IN MYSELF

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Humanism is a philosophy that has long espoused that humans are self-sufficient within and of themselves, and no further justification, concept or transcendental factor needs to be brought into the entire equation of human existence. It thrives on individualism as it does on skepticism and liberalism. Man exists simply because he was meant to be, not by the grace of perhaps a Higher Being Who made all things possible.

I have long heard the long and short of this argument from people I know and don't personally know who derive no satisfactory explanation for staying true to one particular religion. For them, there will always be more worthwhile pursuits out there that can ultimately replace going to a church service, a fellowship meeting, a Sunday Mass. For them, no Supernatural, Transcendental being can ever replace their ability to be themselves. They simply came upon the Earth without Divine Intervention or Great Intercession. In other words, they were put on this planet not by a Powerful Being, but they have a right to exist much like other people do.

If you ask them about anything having to do with religion, they'd simply shrug their shoulders and say, "What has that got to do with me or with anything, for that matter?" They do not wish to dwell on what they perceive as mere inanities of existence. They live their lives simply because they have been meant to do so, and not only because they can pursue something else that's more profound than this empty existence. The question, "What is your purpose in life?" is simply answered with "Because I am me, and nothing else plays a more significant role in my life than that."

For humanism, supernatural or unexplained phenomenon is not meant to be understood. Neither does it merit practical attention or devotion or senseless delving into. Whatever has no existing explanation was not meant to be explained, much less understood.

I confess to being both half-in and half-out on this thinking. I don't believe in ghosts, but fear being cast into experiencing them by sheer stroke of (bad) luck. I am not superstitious, but I do the sign of the cross when I hear about a really terrible event or misfortune. I hate seeing black cats, never mind if they're just walking by me or giving me the curious eye. I believe in sharing whatever blessings I get, but frown upon giving alms on the street to kids who could potentially use the money for gambling or worse, surrender it to their beer-guzzling or gambling-addicted parents.

I am not overly cautious about many things in life, preferring to explore whatever lies before me. But I so desperately beg my kids to study their options carefully all the time before taking any leap.  
Would you consider me a humanist?

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What makes humanism different from other ideologies such as institutionalized religion?
2. Would you call the writer a humanist? Why or why not?
3. Would you classify yourself as a humanist? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe that you were put on this earth by a Powerful Being that can control you and all other aspects of your life? Why or why not?
5. Is it easy to be a humanist? Why or why not?