

## HUMANISM QUOTES

### **Definitions:**

"In my old fashioned terminology, a humanist means a person saturated with the humanities. Humanism is something cultural; an accomplishment, not a doctrine." **George Santayana**

"Basically, we are talking about faith in God versus secular humanism."  
**Jesse Helms**

"The mistake must be at the root, at the very foundation of thought in modern times. I refer to the prevailing Western view of the world which was born in the Renaissance and has found political expression since the Age of Enlightenment. It became the basis for political and social doctrine and could be called rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed or practised autonomy of man from any higher force above him. It could also be called anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of all.

The humanistic way of thinking, which has proclaimed itself our guide, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man, nor did it see any task higher than the attainment of happiness here on earth. It started modern Western civilization on the dangerous trend of worshipping man and his material needs. Everything beyond physical well-being and the accumulation of material goods, all other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, were left outside the attention of state and social systems, as if human life did not have any higher meaning." **Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn**

### **[Beware hysteria!]**

"Why are the humanists promoting sexual perversion? Because they want to create such an obsession with sex among our young people that they will have no time or interest for spiritual pursuits.....So what do we have? Humanist obsessions: sex, pornography, marijuana, drugs, self-indulgence, rights without responsibility.

Humanists control America. America is supposed to be a free country, but are we really free? ....Now the humanist organizations-ACLU, AHA [American Humanist Association]-control the television, the radio, the Hollywood movies, magazines, porno magazines, and the unions, the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation.....They, 275,000 humanists, have infiltrated until every department of our country is controlled by the humanists.

Humanists will continue leading us toward the chaos of the French Revolution. After all, it is the same philosophy that destroyed France and paved the way for the dictator Napoleon Bonaparte. This time the humanists hope to name their own dictator who will create out of the ashes of our pro-moral republic a humanist utopia, an atheistic, socialistic, amoral society for America and the rest of the world. In fact, their goal is to accomplish that takeover by or before the year 2000." **Leo Wine**

#### **What is Humanism?**

"Know then thyself - presume not God to scan.

The proper study of mankind is man." **Alexander Pope —Essay on Man**

"The knowledge of ourselves not only arouses us to seek God but also as it were, leads us by the hand to find Him."

"It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face." **John Calvin—Institutes of the Christian Religion**

"Humanism is the abandonment of theological preoccupations for a concentration on the finite - and the exploration of it in all directions."

**H. J. Blackham — Objections To Humanism**

"Twentieth-century man, it is clear, needs a new organ for dealing with destiny, a new system of religious beliefs and attitudes adapted to the new situation in which his societies now have to exist."

**Julian Huxley-Religion Without Revelation**

#### **A Humanist World view:**

"Matter, Energy, Power, Chance, Necessity, Form, Particularity, Relatedness, Synthesis (wholeness), Outcome (results)."

Mind, Idea, Truth, Spirit, Personality, Will, Purpose, Love, Good, Evil, Beauty, Life, First Cause, Time, Space." **Corliss Lamont**

"Nature is the totality of being." **Corliss Lamont**

"We consider the universe to be a dynamic scene of natural forces that are most effectively understood by scientific inquiry."

**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Chance alone is at the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere.....Pure chance - blind chance is at the root of the stupendous edifice of evolution." **Jacques Monod - Chance and Necessity**

"Today the theory of evolution is again under serious attack by religious fundamentalists. Although the theory of evolution cannot be said to have reached its final formulation, or to be an infallible principle of science, it is nonetheless supported impressively by the findings of many sciences."

**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"The evolutionist holds that new species of plants and animals have risen from earlier, different forms over vast periods of time. As a result of selective forces (especially the major explanatory principle of natural selection) and the chance appearance and accumulation of favorable slight variations or major mutations, some individuals in a population have an adaptive and survival advantage and therefore a reproductive advantage over others. These individuals are favored in the struggle to exist in a changing environment.

The evidence to support organic evolution is sufficient to convince any open-minded intelligent thinker. Admittedly incomplete at this time, the fossil record is the single most important body of evidence to support the doctrine of organic evolution.

Like does not beget like, and kind does not beget kind.....Over long periods of time the accumulation of genetic changes in a population interacting with a changing environment may result in the variety becoming a new species.

The modern synthetic theory of biological evolution is grounded primarily in the explanatory concept of natural selection (Darwin) and genetic variability (Mendel).....It does not necessarily result in progress, nor is such progress excluded. Evolution supports neither the necessity of increasing complexity or perfection nor a pre-established purpose, direction, or goal within natural history." **H. James Birx - Free Inquiry**

"The universe was not pregnant with life or the biosphere with Man. Our number came up on the Monte Carlo game." **Jacques Monod - C & N**

"Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; ... his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms."

**Bertrand Russell - A Free Man's Worship**

"We are not innately anything. Humans are cultural animals. Each one of us is the product of a cultural environment."

**Richard Leakey - The Making Of Mankind**

"Reason appears in possession of the throne, prescribing laws and imposing maxims with an absolute sway and authority." **David Hume**

"Man's own reason and effort are man's best and indeed only hope."

**Corliss Lamont**

"Humanism is the effort of men to think, feel and act for themselves and to abide by the logic of results." **Julian Huxley**

"It is primarily in a questioning approach to the world, in an openness which sits loose to all categories that the Humanist quest is pursued."

**H. J. Blackham**

"The first principle of democratic secular humanism is its commitment to free inquiry. We oppose any tyranny over the mind of man, any efforts by ecclesiastical, political, ideological, or social institutions to shackle free thought.  
**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Knowledge is basic, it is knowledge which enables us to understand the world and ourselves and to exercise some control or guidance."

**Julian Huxley —Phenomenon of Man**

"The present is the first period in the long history of the earth in which the evolutionary process, through the instrumentality of man, has taken the first step towards self-consciousness. In becoming aware of his own destiny, man has become aware of that of the entire evolutionary process on this planet."

**Julian Huxley - R w/t R**

"...the development of mind is the last high point of evolution." **Huxley**

"The guiding premise of those who believe in free inquiry is that truth is more likely to be discovered if the opportunity exists for the free exchange of opposing opinions; the process of interchange is frequently as important as the result. This applies not only to science and to everyday life, but to politics, economics, morality, and religion." **Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Ethics is an autonomous field of inquiry,...ethical judgments can be formulated independently of revealed religion,...human beings can cultivate practical reason and wisdom and, by its application, achieve lives of virtue and excellence.....For secular humanists, ethical conduct is, or should be judged by critical reason, and their goal is to develop autonomous and responsible individuals, capable of making their own choices in life based upon an understanding of human behavior." **Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Man's reason will conquer the universe." **Huxley**

"We are committed to the use of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence in developing knowledge and testing claims to truth. Since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing inquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction. Although not so naive as to believe that reason and science can easily solve all human problems, we nonetheless contend that they can make a major contribution to human knowledge and can be of benefit to humankind."

**Secular Humanist declaration**

"We believe the scientific method, though imperfect, is still the most reliable way of understanding the world. Hence we look to the natural, biological, social, and behavioral sciences for knowledge of the universe and man's place within it. Modern astronomy and physics have opened up exciting new dimensions of the universe: they have enabled humankind to explore the universe by means of space travel. Biology and the social and behavioral sciences have expanded our understanding of human behavior. We are thus opposed in principle to any efforts to censor or limit scientific research without an overriding reason to do so." **Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Science, as such, does not acknowledge the supernatural and requires free inquiry into natural history and human existence. Scientific inquiry is a liberation from religious dogmatism, blind faith, vacuous myths, and human emotions. In fact, all scientific explanations, as such, are naturalistic."

**Robert Hall - Free Inquiry**

"The scientific spirit and the scientific method have proved the most effective agents for the comprehension and control of physical nature. It remains for man to apply them to the comprehension and control of human destiny.

. . . . the scientific method of accumulating and organizing knowledge can be profitably extended to the entire psycho-social field, to the workings of society and of human nature, in such a way that knowledge can become in a full sense the basis of wisdom." **Julian Huxley - R w/t R**

"Man will become in the ethical sense his own creator." **H. J. Blackham**

"Humans are inventing a new god!.....Today, we are creating "Technos," the god of technology. Technos is challenging Christian, Muslim, and Jewish gods around the world.....It is exciting to wrestle with the social impact of Technos. On radio talk shows, I have forecasted: "In the twenty-first century, Americans may condemn natural parents." I speculated that this scenario might evolve in three stages. First, Americans are obsessive consumers. Therefore, millions of us will desire to select our child's height, color, and intelligence quotient. Second, people worldwide aggressively pursue profit. Thus, entrepreneurs might found "McBaby" corporations that sell test-tube babies and, in turn, buy

our legislators. Tax incentives might be passed that support human hatcheries and punish old-fashioned parents. And finally, I can imagine a U.S. Supreme Court ruling: "People have *no* constitutional right to endanger society's genetic pool by giving birth to a 'defective' child."

**Andre Bacard - The Humanist**

"Evolutionary humanism has eugenic implications also. These are, for the moment, largely theoretical, but in due time will become intensely practical. Within a century we should have amassed adequate knowledge of what could be done negatively to lighten the burden of inherited deficiency of mind or body which presses so cruelly on so many individual human beings and hangs so heavily on evolving humanity as a whole, and positively to raise the general level of innate human possibilities and capacities. When this has happened, the working out of an effective and acceptable eugenic policy will be seen as not only an urgent but an inspiring task, and its political or theological obstruction as immoral.

There are a few other points on which I would like to touch. The importance of the population problem for human destiny is looming larger every year. The implications of evolutionary humanism here are clear. If the full development of human individuals and the fulfillment of human possibilities are the over-riding aims of our evolution, then any over-population which brings malnutrition and misery, or which erodes the world's material resources or its resources of beauty or intellectual satisfaction, is evil. Among the world's major and immediate tasks is the working out of an effective and acceptable population policy."

**Julian Huxley - R w/t R**

"The Humanist affirms that knowledge and understanding can be increased, that conduct and social organization can be improved." **Huxley**

"Human beings can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty on this earth."  
**Corliss Lamont**

"In the first place, evolutionary biology has given us a new view, impossible of attainment in any earlier age, of our human destiny. That destiny is to be the agent of the evolutionary process on this planet, the instrument for realising new possibilities for its future.

Man is only at the beginning of his period of evolutionary dominance, and vast and still undreamt-of possibilities of further advance still lie before him.

Biology has revealed man's place in nature. He is the highest form of life produced by the evolutionary process on this planet, the latest dominant type, and the only organism capable of further major advance or progress. Whether he knows it or not, whether he wishes it or not, he is now the main agency for the further evolution of the earth and its inhabitants. In other words, his destiny is to realise new possibilities for the whole terrestrial sector of the cosmic process, to be the instrument of further evolutionary progress on this planet.

Evolutionary humanism has the further implication that man is at one and the same time the only agent for realising life's further progress, and also the main obstacle in the path of its realisation. The hostile outer world was his first obvious adversary; but the only opponent ultimately worthy of his steel is himself. Man has learnt in large measure to understand, control and utilise the forces of external nature: he must learn to understand, control and utilise the forces of his own nature." **Julian Huxley - R w/t R**

"Man's destiny is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet. He is the highest dominant type to be produced for over two and a half billion years of the slower biological improvement effected by the blind opportunist workings of natural selection..... I would compare the present stage of evolving man to the moment when our amphibian ancestors were just establishing themselves out of the world of water." **Huxley**

"Glory to man in the highest." **Swinburne**

"Naturalistic humanism challenges men to rely on their own intelligence, courage and effort in building their happiness and fashioning their destiny in this world of infinite possibilities." **Cotliss Lamont**

"The problems that humankind will face in the future, as in the past, will no doubt be complex and difficult. However, if it is to prevail, it can only do so by enlisting resourcefulness and courage. Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than divine guidance. Skeptical of theories of redemption, damnation, and reincarnation, secular humanists attempt to approach the human situation in realistic terms: human beings are responsible for their own destinies.

The ethical life can be lived without the illusions of immortality or reincarnation. Human beings *can* develop the self-confidence necessary to ameliorate the human condition and to lead meaningful, productive lives."

**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Man is that part of reality in which and through which the cosmic process has become conscious and has begun to comprehend itself. His supreme task is to

increase that conscious comprehension and to apply it as fully as possible to guide the course of events.

My grandfather, in the famous essay in which he defined agnosticism, stated as self-evident that 'every man should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him.' My faith is in the possibilities of man."

**Julian Huxley - R w/t R**

"Humanism is naturalistic instead of super-naturalist, it will have nothing to do with Absolutes, absolute truth, absolute morality, absolute perfection and absolute authority, but insists that we, man, can find standards to which our actions and our aims can properly be related." "Any belief in absolutes, whether the absolute validity of moral commandments, of authority, of revelation, of inner certitude, of divine inspiration, erects a formidable barrier against progress and the possibility of improvement." **Blackham**

"Up to Darwin even though there were great advances in science, it was always under the control of the authority of God but in Darwin in 1859 the door was opened to a completely new pattern which could reject God...that pattern was the evolution centered organization of thought and belief."

"There is no immemorial tradition, no revelation, no authority which is beyond question and which can be used as a standard by which to interpret experience. There is only human experience interpreted by the light of further experience." **Blackham**

"As secular humanists we believe in the central importance of human happiness here and now. We are opposed to Absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered in the course of ethical deliberation."

**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"The further evolution of colour-patterns of various sorts.....and has assisted in the birth of that evolutionary novelty we call beauty.

If the self-creation of novelty is the basic wonder of the universe, this eliciting of mind from the potentialities of the world-stuff, and its intensification and increasing importance during evolution, is the basic wonder of life.

Evolutionary humanism, with its naturalism and its twin goals of present fulfilment for the individual and of long-term progressive realisation of possibilities for man and the planet he inhabits, imposes a transvaluation of values. For one thing, it helps to restore our unity with nature. It brings back

the objects of our adoration and the goals of our spiritual longings out of supernatural remoteness and sites them nearer home, in the immediacy of experience. As an example, let us consider the beauty and richness of nature. Rare Christian mystics like Traherne have found in it a religious fulfilment, and great poets like Wordsworth, in spite of the theological preconceptions of their time, have succeeded in expressing its transcendent value. The gospel of evolutionary humanism generalises that value. The enjoyment of the beauty and varied wonder of the natural world—an experience engendered jointly by nature and the capacities of man's mind—is seen as one of the indispensable modes of human fulfilment, not to be neglected without peril, involving something essentially religious or holy even though we may not burden it with any such heavy designation.

From the angle of evolutionary humanism, the flowering of the individual is seen as having intrinsic value, as being an end in itself. In the satisfying exercise of our faculties, in the pure enjoyment of our experience, the cosmic process of evolution is bringing some of its possibilities to fruition. In individual acts of comprehension or love, in the enjoyment of beauty, in the inner experiences of peace and assurance, in the satisfactions of creative achievement, however humble, we are helping to realise human destiny.

Above all, the individual should aim at fullness and wholeness of development. Every human being is confronted with the task of growing up, of building a personality out of the raw materials of his infant self. A rich and full personality, in moral and spiritual harmony with itself and with its destiny, one whose talents are not buried in a napkin, and whose wholeness transcends its conflicts, is the highest creation of which we have knowledge, and in its attainment the individual possibilities of the evolutionary process are brought to supreme fruition." **Julian Huxley R w/t R**

"The Humanist rarely loses the feeling of perfect at homeness in the universe. He is conscious of himself as an earth child. There is a mystic glow in this sense of belonging. On moonlit nights, in the renewal of life in the springtime, before the glory of a sunset, in moments of swift insight he feels the community of his own physical being with the body of his mother earth. Rooted in millions of years of planetary history he has a..... consciousness of pride and dignity as a bearer of the heritage of the ages." **A.E. Haydon**

"Normal mysticism.....exaltation.....secularized admiration.....moments of rebirth." **Cordiss Lamont**

"Justice is the only worship.  
Love is the only priest.  
Ignorance is the only slavery.

Happiness is the only good.  
The time to be happy is now,  
The place to be happy is here,  
The way to be happy is to make others so.  
Wisdom is the science of happiness."  
**Robert G. Ingersoll - Humanist Hymn**

"We men of Earth have here the stuff of Paradise - we have enough."  
**Edwin Markham**

"Pleasure and pain become kings in our cities instead of law and agreed principles." **Dorothy Sayers**

"This declaration defends only that form of secular humanism which is explicitly committed to democracy. It is opposed to all varieties of belief that seek supernatural sanction for their values or espouse rule by dictatorship."  
**Secular Humanist Declaration**

"I do not want my humanism confused with that of the totalitarian Soviet state, which Russian theoreticians continue to describe as a humanistic political experiment." **Paul Beattie - Free Inquiry**

"When I reflect on the natural fallibility of my judgment, I have less confidence in my opinions than when I only consider the objects concerning which I reason, and when I proceed still further to turn the scrutiny against every excessive estimation I make of my faculties, all the rules of logic require a continual diminution and at last a total extinction of belief and evidence.

Thus the sceptic still continues to reason and believe even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason.

I cannot possibly by any argument pretend to maintain its truth."  
**David Hume - Treatise Of Human Nature**

"Among great philosophers Hume, who hung his nose as far as any over the nihilistic abyss withdrew it sharply when he saw the psychological risks involved and he advised dilution of metaphysics by playing backgammon and making merry with his friends. The conclusion of Hume's philosophizing was indeed a radical scepticism which left no convincing logical grounds for believing anything natural was there at all and he saved his reason by refusing to take the implications of his philosophy to heart."  
**Kathleen Knott - Objections To Humanism**

"Should it be asked me whether I sincerely assent to this argument which I have been to such pains to inculcate, whether I be really one of those sceptics who

hold that everything is uncertain, I should reply that neither I nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion. I dine, I play backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends and when after three or four hours of amusement I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strange and ridiculous that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further. Thus the sceptic still continues to reason and believe though he asserts he cannot defend his reason by reason." **Hume**

"Secularism and humanism were eclipsed in Europe during the Dark Ages, when religious piety eroded humankind's confidence in its own powers to solve human problems." **Secular Humanist Declaration**

"Let us be affirmative. Life is too short for despair. Technos could create a "good life" for many people rather than a pool of slaves to benefit a few. Corliss Lamont, in *The Philosophy of Humanism*, defines the "good life" as good health, friendship, meaningful work, recreation, cultural enjoyment, sex, educational opportunities, community recognition, and a sense of beauty." **Andre Bacard - The Humanist**

"If God is dead, if man is the highest, then good and evil is defined by majority vote." **William Golding**

Once the religious mumbo-jumbo surrounding the term "human" has been stripped away, we may continue to see normal members of our species as possessing greater capacities of rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and so on, than members of any other species; but we will not regard as sacrosanct the life of each and every member of our species, no matter how limited its capacity for intelligent or even conscious life may be. If we compare a severely defective human infant with a nonhuman animal, a dog or a pig, for example, we will often find the nonhuman to have superior capacities, both actual and potential for rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and anything else that can plausibly be considered morally significant. Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species *Homo sapiens* leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig. Species membership alone, however, is not morally relevant."

**Peter Singer - "Sanctity of Life or Quality of Life?" *Pediatrics* 72 (July 1983)**

"People say 'man is a microcosm' - and thinking to elevate human nature with this grandiloquent title - they did not notice that they had honored him with the characteristics of the mosquito and the mouse." **Gregory**

"Humanism always underestimates the will to evil and corruption."  
**Dorothy Sayers**

"The humanistic way of thinking, which has proclaimed itself our guide, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man." Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

"'You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve,' Aslan answered. 'And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth.'"  
C.S. Lewis - Prince Caspian

"Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for .....mortal man.....They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised....They did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God." Paul Romans 1:21-28