



„die Bildung der Menschheit in dem Menschen“, oder
„Bildung zum Menschen“

As human beings we are born with a human nature and human dignity. Each and every member of the human family as such, and *in the very capacity of being human*, holds an inherent dignity and worth.

The human being is not merely a species—like any animal—it is also *an ideal* and *a norm*. The human being needs to be educated and cultivated to develop his or her human nature. No animal can be said to have acted against its nature or calling, only about us human beings it may be said that we have acted contrary to the expectations that rightly may be made to us—that we have acted inhumanely.

It may be said that it is the assignment of every human being to become humane. The human being is a rational actor and as such creates both culture and history. The human being is, however, free in many respects to destroy the intrinsic order in the universe.

The human being has an innate desire to seek knowledge; and has been described as a rational animal, or in the least as a being capable of reason. It is the human privilege and mission to pursue his or her inborn desire for knowledge.

A second—but not secondary—intrinsic human ability is the one for loving kindness, *philanthropia*. It may be explained as love for humankind and benevolence.

None of these gifts to humankind are activated and translated into realities without pursuit through education and cultivation. We need to take an active advantage of learning from our precious human tradition. By means of this we must cultivate our mental capacities. It is from this *cultura animi*—cultivation of the mind—that our concept ‘culture’ originates.

As humans we must be educated and cultivated to transgress from bewilderment to insight, from fragmented to fully humane. A continuation and expansion, that is, of the infant’s journey from total naivety to maturity.

This is what Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer some 200 years ago called „*die Bildung der Menschheit in dem Menschen*“ or „*Bildung zum Menschen*“. (That is to teach or create humanity in the individual for him or her to become fully humane.) With Niethammer came the word—*Humanismus*. According to the humanistic approach it is vital that the educational and cultivating process is free in the sense that it is not limited to what may appear as useful for the sake of something beyond it.

It will never suffice for advancing as human beings that we merely register whatever happens around us. Without one the one side empathy and on the other sympathy or compassion we will not be able to make the moral choices that every life by necessity will imply.

To summarize we may take recourse to Immanuel Kant and ascertain that no human being is or should ever be treated as merely an implement or a remedy („*Handle so, dass die Menschheit, sowohl in deiner Person als in der Person eines jeden anderen jederzeit zugleich als Zweck, niemals bloß als Mittel brauchst.*“)

Human rights are based on a reasoned understanding of the human nature as qualifying for a minimum of rights. Human rights are biased in favour of the human being *as such* recognizing the uniqueness of every member of the human family. Administering human rights is a balancing act. The goal is to have the multiple rights of everyone respected simultaneously and constantly. My rights end where yours start, and vice versa. Democracy is intertwined with human rights if not also in itself a human right.

Thus “Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship – from Policy to Practice” is not just *a* task, but *the* task that truly enhances also the individual student’s human dignity and worth.

