



Humanising Social Life and Human Dignity: Philosophical Concerns

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Abstract:

The theme “humanising social life” immediately directs our attention to the notion of person and extends to the theme “the place of the person in society and his/her inalienable dignity.” As society is the setting in which the person exists and acts, person, society and human dignity seem closely interrelated. When we reflect upon the idea of humanization, India, with its caste-based society, becomes a more appropriate instance as the laboratory for the consideration of a “theory on humanization.” As the basic constituent of any society, the person is essential but ambiguous, for one can turn inward in a self-centred manner as happened for centuries in this country. Hence it is important to add that any resolution of the social problem requires that the individual be endowed with dignity, which includes one’s emotional life as well as intellect and will. It regards the possibility and necessity of speaking meaningfully of a social, cultural or generic consciousness at the corresponding levels. Whatever the possibility of an answer by philosophy, it is necessary to point out the consequences and the implications,

which are directed to the life of individuals in the community, their realities and possibilities.

Keywords: Individuals in Community, Dignity, Person, Society, Social Life, Humanization of social life.

The theme “humanization of social life” immediately directs our attention to the notion of person and extends to the theme “the place of the person in society and his/her inalienable dignity.” As society is the setting in which the person exists and acts, person, society and human dignity seem closely interrelated. When we reflect upon the idea of humanization, India, with its caste-based society, becomes a more appropriate instance as the laboratory for the consideration of a “theory on humanization.” It consists of traditional realities such as caste, legacies of Islam and British Institutions and practices. The topic also directs our attention to two implications which are more appropriate in our times. The humanization of Indian societies cannot be discussed and understood without taking its moral element into account. The moral force is a motivating force for solidarity and associational values that entice citizens to achieve social goals together. It gives people to an ideal to strive for and a sense of belonging. But in the post-independence India, majority of people are not endorsed to be human because of caste, colour, ethnicity and the like so that humanizing aspect loses its importance as a basic value that any society nourishes and fulfils in its search for values. The second dynamics which I would like to point out is the need for a human dignity initiative by the civil society which can deal with some of the most profound dilemmas of present Indian social life. What is at stake is the practice of liberal democracy in India which is not committed to treating all citizens as equal and dignified. Human dignity and equality of individuals are made rather than found. They are produced through the influence of a special kind of political and social culture. In fact, in the village community in Indian social and political life, a certain group of people does not have cultural intimacy with their selves. Somehow, they do not belong anywhere.

What it means to be humanized is a difficult theoretical question. Some may suggest that community is an essential aspect while considering the concept of humanization and others may suggest the unity of individual egos in a transcendental Consciousness. Would that all human beings agreed on a common basis for humanization? Plato in his Republic attempted to give us a view as to how social life can be constructed by basing it on a concept of a humanized individual as one who is just. By justice he meant the interdependent and harmonious relationships of the three parts of the human soul, namely, the rational part, the spirited part and the appetitive part. Society is the individual writ large; hence, society must have three classes of individuals, the rulers, the auxiliaries and the producers. But this utopian view of humanization and social life has never been realized; in fact, it has been severely criticized as elitist. Aristotle followed Plato and provided his own view of the humanized man as the pursuit of happiness by the fulfillment of all his potentialities, but especially of his rational faculties. The ideal man for him was the contemplative man. In the middle ages, we had Christian humanism, a representative example being that of Thomas Aquinas for whom man can only be fully humanized by aspiring toward the supernatural. As a result, the social arrangement was a collaboration of Church and state for the promotion of spiritual life. We do not need to go further in our review of some significant theories of humanism. In recent times we have Marxist humanism and democratic capitalism. The question is, what are the bases of humanized individuals or community upon which Indian society should pattern itself.

Humanization of Life: The Occidental and the Oriental

The Western world was successful in developing and perfecting social structures. In a number of Western countries, social relations are sufficiently humanized to ensure a high standard of life as well as social justice. It may be said that given such conditions, a genuine humanization of social life was made possible in the West or at least, an attempt has been made. In

practice, however, we witness a prevalent consumerist mode of life according to which the self-realization of a person is primarily the possibility for a comfortable life, luxury being the ideal. Indeed, individual persons and small groups or communities can follow a really humanized way of life.

With regard to the Oriental cultural model, we may say that it is the personality, but not the social life, that is being humanized. In the case of the Western cultural model, it is the social relations but not the individual human life that is being humanized. Thus, the issue of humanization of social life appears to be rather problematic and unsolvable. The components, which seemed complementary to one another theoretically, become incompatible in the practical level which can suggest certain pessimistic overtones. The significant question is whether human dignity can be harmonized with social cohesion. If not, how can we talk about a meaningful understanding of human dignity and thus humanization of social life? In fact, this paper is purported to inquire into the specificities of these issues.

Looking from the perspective of Indian tradition, true humanization is based on unity, harmony and integration. To be humanized is to be in harmony with nature, with fellowmen and with the idea of Transcendent. To be in harmony means to be in an I-Thou relation with nature, with fellowmen and with the Transcendent-God- so as to constitute a “we” relation as opposed to an “us-and-them” relation. The sense of community as a “we” consciousness which was developed by some people¹ should be extended to the whole universe. Hence, to be humanized is to develop a cosmic sense, a sense of belonging with the cosmic community. Social life includes social life with nature and with the Transcendent and not only with one’s fellowmen. One cannot have a truly humanized social life if it is confined merely to one’s own family and country while millions in the world are poor and starving, and when such a social life is obtained at the expense of the exploitation of others and the pollution of the earth. This view of humanization is in the realm of the “soft” cultural field, as opposed to the hard system of socio-economic and political

structures.² The problem is what sort of cultural concept of humanization are we to use in determining how to humanize social structures. Only answer that I can suggest is recognizing and cherishing human dignity.

Given the practical problem of diversity of social life in India and the theoretical problems of determining how to be humanized, it is impossible to arrive at a concept of humanization in the fullest sense of the term which would respect the values of the various cultures and subcultures in the Indian societies. What we need is to derive common elements of humanization from various cultural fields which will serve as criteria for determining the shape and form of social structures and judging the degree of humanization in various societies. The common denominator we will propose is human dignity. Thus a society is humanized when human dignity is recognized and appreciated by all members of society. The ontological foundation of human dignity, as George McLean has suggested, is subsistent individuality.³ Of course, this minimalist definition of humanization is subject to criticism precisely for being minimalist. But this is also its strength in allowing dignity for each individual to pursue what he believes to be the ideal man. It allows freedom for both secular humanists and religious humanists to pursue their own brand of humanism.

Human Dignity

Theologically speaking, the human subject can get nowhere in the understanding of himself before he recognizes that he is a creature; however, when he has become humbled by this overwhelming fact, he may very likely be already on the way to the understanding of other important and positive aspects of his being.⁴ Yet man is more than a creature among creatures, he is also as a responsible self a special creation. He is free to make decisions regarding his total attitudes and actions within the limits of his inherited and environment conditions.

Responsible selfhood then uses reason as the Enlightenment of purpose⁵ to set some ideal for itself. According to the Holy

Bible, God created humans in his image; in the divine image he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth”.⁶ The essential biblical source for this principle is found in the book of Genesis⁷ , noting that human beings were made in the image and likeness of God. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in drawing on the Genesis account further refined the understanding of the human person being created in God’s image by interpreting Genesis to instruct that the human person is an “intelligent being endowed with free will and self-movement.”⁸

Origin of the Discourse on Human Dignity

“Human” is etymologically related to the Latin for earth, *humus*, so that “human” means what is “earthly” or an “earthling”. Generally speaking, it means what is proper to the kind that “we” are, or to the species of rational animals, referring in particular to their kindness (humanity) and their fallibility.⁹ “Dignity” comes from the Latin noun *decus*, meaning ornament, distinction, honour, glory etc. And dignity means, generally speaking, the standing of one entitled to respect, i.e. his or her status, and it refers to that which in a being (in particular a personal being) induces or ought to induce such respect: its excellence or incomparability of value.¹⁰ When “human” and “dignity” are used in conjunction, they form the expression “human dignity”, which means the status of human beings entitling them to respect, a status which is first and to be taken for granted. It refers to their highest value or to the fact that they are a presupposition for value, as they are those to whom value makes sense. Human beings are endowed with intrinsic values which are inalienable to exist with the true sense of living as social beings; this is to suggest that the concept of dignity is always being part and parcel of being human.

As an image of God, and as the chosen people of God, human beings are called to live up to this divine image. They are called

to fulfil the sacred mission assigned by God to them. Or more precisely, they are assigned the responsibility to build a *regnum Dei* (the reign of God), or a *civitas Dei*, i.e., a perfect society (the city of Jerusalem which St. Augustine explicitly named) after the model of the world which reveals the nature of God. According to St. Augustine, the very order, disposition, beauty, change and motion of the world and of all visible things silently proclaimed that it could have been made by God, the ineffably and invisibly great and the ineffably and invisibly beautiful.

Development of the Idea of Human Dignity

The principle of human dignity, as a universal affirmation that human beings have the highest value, does not itself have a history, because a universal statement is meant to have limits neither in space nor in time. But the idea of human dignity does have a history in so far as it has been thought to rely on various things and consequently been accounted for in various ways. The expression “human dignity” seems to emerge rather slowly from a context where the term “dignity” is used in appreciation of the importance of human subjects. The 1948 *Declaration of Human Rights* testifies to the currency of both terms, but a systematic usage of the term “human dignity” was not the object of philosophic investigation before then, however, surprising this may seem.¹¹ But then, within the Human Rights tradition flowing from this document, the term of “human dignity” is constantly used to express the basic intuition from which human rights proceed. It is meant as the basic principle upon which human rights are understood to rest. It is said to be inherent in each and every person, and also to be inalienable.

We may talk about four stages in the development of the idea of human dignity. Each depends on a time-typical framework and exemplifies a logical possibility. Cicero may represent the Cosmo-centric framework of Antiquity, which explains human dignity on the basis of nature (2). Thomas Aquinas represents the Middle Ages’ Christo-centric framework, which explains

human dignity in relation to Jesus Christ (3). Immanuel Kant can represent the Logo-centric framework of Modernity, explaining human dignity as a tribute to reason (4). Mary Wollstonecraft, finally, represents the Polis-centre framework of Post-Modernity, which explains human dignity in relation to social acceptability. Each of these ways of accounting for human dignity can be understood as a source of the idea as it appears in the *Declaration of Human Rights*.

The Cosmo-Centric Account

In the Roman Republic as well as in the succeeding Empire, *Dignitas* was the standing of the one who commanded respect, whether because of his political, military or administrative achievements. The Greeks had another term for reality: $\alpha\xi\alpha$, meaning the worth whereby someone or something counts for more or less. Aristotle, in fact, defines $\alpha\xi\alpha$ (*axia*) in the *Nichomachean Ethics* as “a term of relation. It denotes having a claim to goods external to oneself.”¹² *Axia*, in turn, depends both on character and on evaluation by society; and it, therefore, tends towards equalization within the relationship of friendship, as it both educates character and appreciates the equal worth of the other. But Aristotle does not seem to entertain the idea that all human beings, simply because they are human, possess *axia*. Indeed, *axia* is precisely what distinguishes among them: they are not equal or entitled to the same status, and justice consists in making distribution according to their different *axia*.

Cicero, on the other hand, probably due to the influence of Stoicism, refers to the idea of *dignitas humana*, even though only once. This special status is due to the superior mind of humans, which obliges them to stay superior to the beasts. To Cicero dignity is, as it was for any Roman, a fundamental concept. He defines it as what merits respect,¹³ whether mediated by an office or by the sheer excellence of virtue. This is so because there is nothing more divine than reason; in fact, human beings share with the gods this marvelous power. As a consequence Gods and

humans also share justice and law,¹⁴ and thus live in and share the same commonwealth, which is the Universe, the Cosmos. The human dignity referred to by Cicero implied equality before the gods and the brutes, however, and obliged humans to self-respect and proper behaviour; and it ought to be the basis for the laws of the Republic, as Cicero saw it.

In the Cosmo-centric framework, dignity refers to the prerogative of governing, i.e. to the status of the one who is in command, either of himself, or of his household, or of some office within the State. The corresponding virtue in women is beauty, and thus Cicero seems, in accordance with the Cosmo-centric framework, not to have made up his mind as to the human dignity of women.¹⁵ It is possible that his understanding would not differ much in intension from the one current in the Human Rights tradition, but that it would indeed differ in extension, considering this tradition's emphasis on the eradication of racism and sexism.

The Logo-Centric Account

The experience of the Reformation and the religious wars following it made a lasting impact on all modern thinkers. They could afford to take very few things indeed for granted, as tradition and authority were widely questioned, and it was discovered that even the new institutions (such as the nation-state), put in the place of the old, had also to withstand the wind of criticism. The new world-view – the Enlightenment – attempted to explain anything and everything through some supposed relation to reason.

It was against this background that Kant developed his idea of dignity, usually taken to be the main theme of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. He, however, like Cicero and Aquinas, used the concept of human dignity only relatively and rarely, four times in all in *The Metaphysics of Morals*.¹⁶ Sometimes the logo-centric framework is called “anthropocentric.” This designation is fitting because of the association of modernity and anthropocentrism, and also because Kant regards humanity itself as a dignity. It is also, however, misplaced, because Kant explains

the importance of Man in relation to reason, exemplifying hereby the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The identification of Man with the Citizen and of reason with the justification of republicanism has inherent problems, which in turn (and in due time) provoke the rise of the post-modern framework. As a source of human rights, however, the logo-centric account, with its accentuation of autonomy as the principle of humanity, is still commonly relied upon. But as autonomy is either an invisible (moral) or a negotiated (political) reality, the extension of human dignity is left without an objective criterion, unless it is attached to human nature; in which case the problems of vagueness of extension are the same as those associated with the Cosmo-centric account.

The Christo-Centric Account

This understanding of personal dignity, or the understanding that the person has *a dignity*, is related to the use of the term *dignitas* in medieval logic. Thomas, like other Scholastics before and after him, used *dignitas* as the translation of the Greek αξιομα. Human dignity may be termed as a fundamental or self-evident principle upon which science (whether of mathematics or of ethics) relies. The term “principle” in modern-day English has in fact similar connotations: something (or someone) of basic importance, as in a “School Principal’.

The Christo-centric framework could explain fundamental things, such as the importance of being human, in terms of the shared belief in a God made man in Christ. This shared belief also made it acceptable that human dignity to some extent was understood as destructible: it was after all given twice, first in Creation and again, but now even better, in Redemption, after it was marred by sin. This belief, perhaps, entailed that the status of non-Christians was uncertain. Christianity was so important for the social structure that not adhering to it was regarded an offence against the order of the day, much as statelessness would be today. But the Christian message of love of neighbour

contributed decisively to reinforcing the recognition of the person-hood and human dignity of everyone, and indeed it still continues to do so. Without this present-day reminder of the absoluteness of love and of its absolute availability, it is doubtful whether faith in human rights would be sustainable.

II

Humanization and Human Dignity

Having narrowed the concept of humanization to the pursuit of human dignity, we can now interpret the recent historical changes in the eastern European countries and in the third World countries as a process of humanization. In the case of India, the important and urgent problem of humanization is the pursuit of not only economic and social rights but providing dignity to all individuals devoid of his/her caste and ethnicity. After nearly seventy-five years of independence, Indian people continue to be in the grip of caste consciousness. Historically, India has been surviving as a nation for millennia with closed groups divided by caste, creed and language. Although India is said to have a long tradition of pluralistic culture, in terms of religions, philosophies, languages and lifestyles, yet it was a group of people which have been bound down by the authority of Smrti, Achara, Dharma Shastras and Dharma sutras that enabled the Indian societies to develop a philosophy of exclusion and made a section of people as untouchables and deny them dignity as persons and very often their existence as individuals. The traditional social value of Varna dharma, which has been operating the social consciousness of this country, resulted to a segregation of the majority of people in the hierarchic pattern of social arrangement restricted the interaction between individuals belonging to various groups. Since the status and opportunities of the individual were coupled with the Jati (caste) that he/she belongs to by birth and one's birth itself is theologically conditioned by the past karmas that one performed in the previous births, oppression towards these groups were made easy and theologically found correct. The age-old Indian concept

of Dharma which was interpreted in terms of Varnasrama dharma by Manu, Prasasthapada and Kautilya seldom provided a place for the majority group of people, who were called Sudras and later metamorphosed as Dalits. In terms of realization this has been reflected in the various kinds of Hindu literature (Sanskrit), which had denied accessibility to this group of people. The effect was a reduction of *anvikshiki* (philosophy) to the higher castes or the Brahmins who had been able to systematically reject reason that is philosophy including any deeper and authentic sense of human dignity. As a result, the Indian concept of Dharma underwent a series of interpretations and conveniently used as a theological weapon for the suppression of the human spirit. Down the centuries these broken ones (Dalits) were imposed enslavement by the powerful interpretations of the apparently harmless exegesis and footnotes of the doctrines like *Dharma*, *Karma*, *Svadharma*, *Nishkama karma* and *Mahayoga*,

Such an outlook and world-view engineered to look upon women as inferior to man in intelligence. A menstruating woman and a woman who has delivered a child were equated with a corpse and an outcaste by this oppressing philosophy, which has not generated an outlook for equality, dignity and social justice. Even in this modern age, this particular attitude towards women conditions the mental framework of people in some parts of this country. Although women were accorded great esteem in Vedic times, yet were condemned to a most humiliating position in the age of the Smritikars.¹⁷

One of the major suggestions that I want to make here regarding the “humanization of the social life” is that the course of the evolution of revolutions in the history of social change will not end in itself. While one thinks about the articulation of social structures one ought to keep in mind that the goal should be the dignity of the person. This means that everything involved in the articulation of social structures, such as the social, political, economic, educational, and psychological aspects should be directed towards the goal of human dignity, for without individual dignity humanization cannot be attained. One may argue that

every theory has its own end, i.e., a person's benefit, but this can be questioned. Where do all such political goals end? In fact, they never end, or they may end in total destruction. For instance, one could argue that the perfect articulation of social structure is to attain socialism, but could socialism or any such social goal constitute an end in itself? Next, this also will undergo the dialectical process of evolution of revolutions, which continues till all men are perfected. True humanization cannot be exercised by a person merely in terms of law, politics etc. Therefore, it is very important to recognize human dignity as a goal for all aspects of social life. What I am trying to emphasize is that a social system, which accords human values with the sole criterion of one's caste cannot safeguard and create a social atmosphere of co-existence. The basic requirement, I argue, is based on those complex qualities of self-confidence and self-assurance in each individual which is possible only by according dignity to each person and that alone can ensure both the assertion of human spirit and its harmony with the society.

This involves both persons and groups. As the basic constituent of any society, the person is essential but ambiguous, for one can turn inward in a self-centred manner as happened for centuries in this country. Hence it is important to add that any resolution of the social problem requires that the individual be endowed with dignity, which includes one's emotional life as well as intellect and will. It regards the possibility and necessity of speaking meaningfully of a social, cultural or generic consciousness at the corresponding levels. Whatever the possibility of an answer by philosophy, it is necessary to point out the consequences and the implications, which are directed to the life of individuals in the community, their realities and possibilities. They are not simply theoretical or matters of preference or pre-established interests of certain groups or caste considerations. The point is to make life even more possible at exemplary levels with criteria and standards of quality, that is, with universally desirable values. What is required is multiple relations of solidarity wherein each person ought to perform public responsibilities in order to

develop intermediate spheres of active participation in the social order and, by implication, to correct conditions of excessive authoritarianism or weakness on the part of the state or of the superior castes and of injustice in the economic and social order. Hence, a progressive humanization of life in the third millennium will provide justice towards the marginalized groups in this country, which can pervade, transform and inspire all phases of social life. Let me sum up by enlisting the following points:

1. Generally speaking, human dignity in India is restricted in its possibilities. What I mean is that the worth of an individual is restricted in terms of his caste, creed and ethnicity. In other words, human dignity and value of being human are associated with the individual's particular caste or his connections with the powers that be. From the standpoint of human dignity, I may say that the history of India has not been centred on a search for making life possible in terms of its individuals as well as its different ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. Hence, in this part of the world, the ethics of human dignity is still an agonizing issue. The challenge, therefore, is to create social space and a national conscience with horizontal and vertical unity of individuals whether they belong to a particular religion, caste or ethnic environment.
2. In independent India, it is a sad fact that the individual exists only as a representative of another reality. When one is asked on whose behalf one comes and talks and if the answer is "I come in my own name" then the response is cold and sham; but when the answer is: on behalf of an important person or a well-known company, then you are attended to and obliged in a special way. It amounts to saying that one is forced to represent another reality knowing well that he is not that reality. It is indeed a pathological situation and this trauma is commonly exhibited in all spheres of life.

3. Since the declaration of human rights in 1949 by the U.N. where India also was a part, human dignity issues have not been kept its political and social relevance in both its role as a strategy of social reform as well as in its moral quality in this country. Consequently, Indian leaders and especially the intellectuals have not accorded adequate emphasis for human dignity issues as a platform for the moral and social reform of society. The reasons are religious, practical and cultural. They are religious and cultural in the sense that most of our leaders and the intellectuals have come from an aristocratic group wherein they find that the resurgence of a civil society representing human dignity issues will belittle their importance and worth. The concept of human dignity also relates to social reform in the sense of creating spheres of life in which people can regain their self-esteem for their social and physical environment.
4. As a policy issue, the political, social and economic transformation of Indian societies will not yield to their desired results, if there is no simultaneous progress in the moral transformation of a society. This moral transformation is possible only by accordin one's dignity. Even after 73 years of independence, we are increasingly becoming clearer that these changes have to be pursued together.
5. The social dimension of human dignity issue cannot be discussed and understood without taking its moral element into account. The moral force is a motivating force for solidarity and associational values that entice citizens to achieve social goals together. But in the post-independence India, a majority of people are not permitted to be a part of the decision making not only in the arena of the powers that be but also in the place of their birth. As a result, the moral function of this concept loses its importance of basic values that any society nourishes.

6. A central element in human dignity discourse in the Indian context is the desire to return to the concept of equality and social justice. But unfortunately, even in the post-independence India, Jati is a criterion of making one as the part of a society/ community, where respect for human dignity as a condition for human society is reckoned. It is my contention that the conditions prevailing in this country, despite having attained political freedom, yet to appropriate human dignity as the Indian societies are overshadowed with casteist and its metaphysical trappings. Now the question is: Can the existing normative doctrines, unquestioningly practised in India by all religions provide the liberal political ideas of freedom, dignity and equality devoid of their casteist and metaphysical trappings?
7. As a strategy of moral and social reform, civil societies and religious heads can fill this vacuum. In brief, the concept of human dignity is an idea, which offers both a moral way out of totalitarian rules and an alternative strategy of hope for the future. Human dignity is an important driving force behind any revolution. One can take recourse to human dignity under the age-old concept of Dharma, which can appropriate a useful role in the political, economic, social and moral recovery of present India.
8. Against the vague incommensurability of ethical and social values practised by all religions, one must start from life as experienced by socially related individuals. In other words, against an undifferentiated state, human dignity as an ethical concern is the configuration of open space for deliberation, critique and common action by all religions. The ethical principle of human dignity is grounded upon inter-subjective life experiences, which are the common issues that should be the concern of all religions. In this way, it is possible to unravel the central problem of the logic of human dignity, namely,

combining the universal and the particular: the universal is the absolute and unconditioned value of human life, the particular is the specific way in which life exists in a determined space and time, in accord with the determined tradition and common horizon of that way of living.

Notes

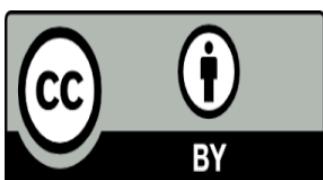
- 1 See the papers of James A. Loiacono, “The Community of Persons as Foundations of Human Society,” and Albertine Tshibilondi Ngoyi, “The Understanding of the Human Person and Society in Traditional and Modern African Culture,” in Ronald S. Calinger, Robert P. Badillo, Rose B. Calabretta and Robert Magliola,eds , *Humanization of Social Life*, Washington: RVP, 2004, p. 11-31.
- 2 See the paper of Gytis Vaitkunas, “Social Structure and Cultural Field: Humanization of Social Life,” in Calinger et al., *Humanization of Social Life*, op. cit. p. 31-47.
- 3 McLean, George, “Person, Creativity and Social Change,” in Calinger et al., *Humanization of Social Life*, op. cit. introduction..
- 4 Ferre Nels F.S. ‘The Meaning of Human Dignity from a Theological Perspective’ Andover Newton Theological School.
- 5 Whitehead, Alfred North. *The Function of Reason*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1929. p.29
- 6 Holy Bible, Book of Genesis, Chapter 2, verse28. (King James Version)
- 7 Genesis 1: 26-27
- 8 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, I—II, 1, Prologue.
- 9 Lebech Mette, “What is Humanity?” Faculty of Philosophy National University of Ireland, Maynooth.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 The use of the word ‘human’, to designate what pertains to the human race, apparently also is of relatively recent date. Various etymological dictionaries affirm that the word was in use only from the seventeenth century onwards. Before then the term ‘humane’ was used with a more normative sense. The expression ‘human

- dignity' is a prominent theme in the papal encyclicals from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.
- 12 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1123a18.
 - 13 Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *De Divinatione*, (On Divination-44 B. C) II, 166
 - 14 Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *De Legibus* (On the Laws) I, VII, 22
 - 15 Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *De Officiis*, (On Duties-44 B. C) I, 106
 - 16 Kant, Immanuel *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Oxford: OUP, 2019.
 - 17 Velassery, Sebastian. *Casteism and Human Rights: Toward an Ontology of the Social Order*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005. from the introduction

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