



Vaclav Havel  
Poet & First President of the Czech Republic

## Summer Meditations

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“Politics is not essentially a disreputable business; and to the extent that it is, it is only disreputable people who make it so.”

“A democracy is recognized by, among other things, the degree to which it gives voice to minorities.”

“One thing seems certain to me: that it is my responsibility to emphasize again and again, the moral origin of all genuine politics, to stress the significance of moral values and standards in all spheres of social life, including economics, and to explain that if we don’t try, within ourselves, to discover or rediscover or cultivate what I call ‘higher responsibility’, things will turn out very badly indeed for our country.”

“Communism was overthrown by life, by thought, by human dignity.”

“There is only one way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance, and that is decently, reasonably, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly. I’m aware that, in everyday politics, this is not seen as the most practical way of going about it.”

“One surprising experience from ‘high politics’ is this: I have discovered that good taste is more useful here than a post-graduate degree in political science.”