

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

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The Reasons behind Rise in Crime

There is no single cause to any disorder, including crime. While clearly we are all ultimately responsible for our own actions, it is wrong to hold an individual wholly responsible for his unlawful act. There are certain factors in our society that endorse the potential of criminal activities of an individual. Most criminals are simply too strong physically, pumping up the body muscles, but not enough the mental and emotional muscles. The reason why their strength becomes weakness is because they are not balanced.

Being raised in a dysfunctional family, or coming from a disadvantaged background, or feeling discriminated all can cause crime. Moreover, there are so many other factors behind committing crime with such conditions. Poverty is often blamed for leading to crime; however underneath is something more vital - society bombards us with commercial values, making us want more and more material things, to the point when some would do anything - including criminal acts - to get them. Unemployment is another factor in this category that contributes to crime through looking ways to earn money by any means possible. No doubt, every person who harms another should be punished, but also rehabilitated so that the crime is prevented from reoccurring. Punishment is good for two reasons: it shows the offender that one cannot get away with doing the wrong things, and as a form of prevention - the fear of punishment is often main reason for law-abiding citizens not to slip to the other side of the tracks.

The purpose of punishment is to discourage a person from committing a crime. Punishment is supposed to make criminal behavior less attractive and more risky. Imprisonment and loss of income is a major hardship to many people. Another way of influencing choice is to make crime more difficult or to reduce the opportunities. This can be as simple as better lighting, locking bars on auto steering wheels, the presence of guard dogs, or high technology improvements such as security systems and photographs on credit cards. A person weighing the risks of crime considers factors like how many police officers are in sight where the crime will take place. Studies of New York City records between 1970 and 1999 showed that as the police force in the city grew, less crime was committed. A change in a city's police force, however, is usually tied to its economic health. Normally as unemployment rises, city revenues decrease because fewer people are paying taxes. This causes cutbacks in city services including the police force. So a rise in criminal activity may not be due to fewer police, but rather rising unemployment.

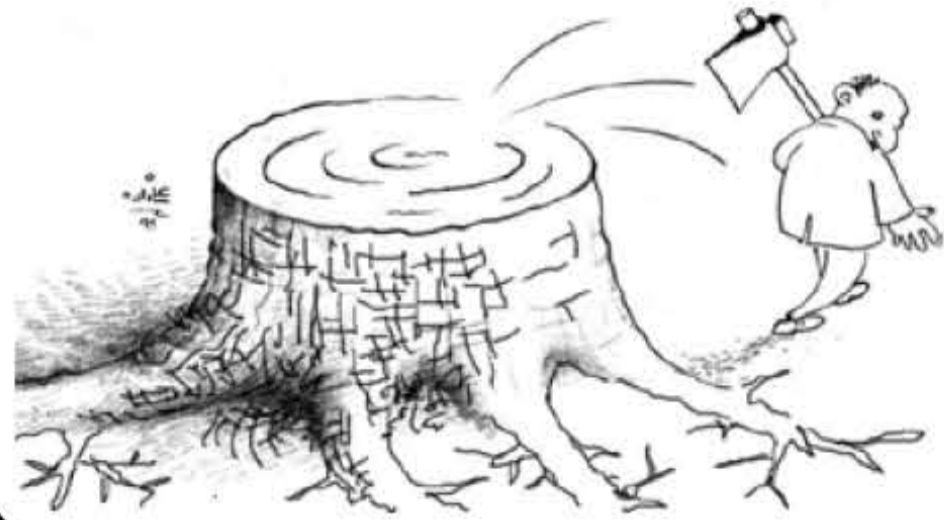
Another means of discouraging people from choosing criminal activity is the length of imprisonment. After the 1960s many believed more prisons and longer sentences would deter crime. Despite the dramatic increase in number of prisons and imposing mandatory lengthy sentences, however, the number of crimes continued to rise. The number of violent crimes doubled from 1970 to 1998. Property crimes rose from 7.4 million to 11 million, while the number of people placed in state and federal prisons grew from 290,000 in 1977 to over 1.2 million in 1998. Apparently longer prison sentences had little effect on discouraging criminal behavior.

The youths, who were involved in gang rapping in Paghman district of Central Kabul, reportedly each has spent many years in prison; however the imprisonment did not bear the desired fruit. Hence, even a long term imprisonment cannot be an effective measure for curbing crime.

It is well-known that many of the people responsible for law enforcement themselves are often hand in glove with criminals for making some quick gains by underhand means. Even otherwise, they are not too keen on nabbing the culprits unless the crimes are of larger magnitude. This sluggish attitude from the law enforcers encourages the criminals in their nefarious activities. There can be many other impulsive factors behind committing crime such as extreme greed and lust for property, a propensity to harm others, a tendency to revenge, or to commit a crime just for the heck of it.

The government is supposed to take effective mechanism for the law enforcement so as to prevent from crime and corruption. However, it should be considered that the government is not only to take retributive measures but also rehabilitative ones. In other words, punishment is intended not to merely revenge the criminals but to rehabilitate them. Besides punishment, it is better to narrow the opportunity for crime across the country through facilitating the citizens and satisfying their financial, physical and mental needs. The government has to provide job opportunities for the youths. It is rightly said, "An idle mind is the workshop of the Devil." Idleness and poverty will force one's hand into crime. No doubt, if the government officials do not address the unemployment immediately, the criminal activities will rise more than ever before.

Condemning or punishing the criminals is a piece of cake, but can it be a proper solution for the problems going on in the society? No way! I emphasize again that the government must not end with punishment. Preventing measures ought to be taken through eradicating the criminal factors and addressing the problems being experienced by the citizens. In short, retributive measures are good but not enough and the officials have higher



Questioning - An Essential Tendency

By Dilawar Sherzai

"Ask many questions. Life is a learning process. You are learner. Seek answers to the puzzles of your life."

Lailah Gifty Akita

Asking question is one of the habits of human beings that support him in collection of information and finding answers to the mysteries of life around them and within themselves. It is not possible to solve the puzzles of life without asking questions and searching for the truth. All the knowledge that human beings have accumulated and all that they are accumulating are because they have asked and are asking different questions. When human beings started their journey towards a civilized life they were not loaded with the information and knowledge they have now. However, they had inquisitiveness and the capacity to wonder and that particular character made them peep through the mysteries of nature and various phenomena in it.

The faculty of wonder took the human beings to the doors of philosophy where they were greeted with open arms. Philosophy prepared human beings for the most basic questions about their lives and the world around them. It was through philosophy that they started asking 'why'. They were no more satisfied with the world as it was. They did not just live in it but questioned its existence and even started questioning the purpose of their own lives within it. Philosophy on the other hand did not leave them alone and held their hands firmly, took them through the wilderness of the unknown to the gardens of knowledge and gifted them with the fruits of understanding. They grew in their intellect and became the most advanced and developed of all the creatures and throughout the way their 'why' remained their companion.

Eugene Ionesco says in Fragments of a Journal, "Nothing is mightier than our why, nothing stands above it, because in the end there is a why to which no answer is possible. In fact, from why to why, from one step to the next, you get to the end of things. And it is only by travelling from one why to the next, as far as the why that is unanswerable, that man attains the level of the creative principle, facing the infinite, equal to the infinite maybe. So long as he can answer the why he gets lost, he loses his way among things. 'Why this?' I answer, 'because that,' and from one explanation to the next I reach the point where no explanation is satisfying, from one explanation to the next I reach zero, the absolute, where truth and falsehood are equivalent, become equal to one another, are identified with one

another, cancel each other out in face of the absolute nothing. And so we can understand how all action, all choice, all history is justified, at the end of time, by a final cancelling-out. The why goes beyond everything. Nothing goes beyond the why, not even the nothing, because the nothing is not the explanation; when silence confronts us, the question to which there is no answer rings out in the silence.

That ultimate why, that great why is like a light that blots out everything, but a blinding light; nothing more can be made out, there is nothing more to make out."

The same inquisitiveness, the urge to ask questions also led human beings to the world of science, where they further found the answers to their different questions practically. Now, they no more remained confined to the theories, they started performing experiments, looking for solid reasons and further strengthening the basis of their knowledge. Science questioned almost everything and every phenomenon around and within human beings and it also found their answers to a certain extent.

Though they have not been able to answer all their questions through science, they have been able to gain the courage of questioning and investigating further. Science has not reached to the mysteries of human existence and the edge of the limitless universe but it has removed the covers from so many phenomena that used to puzzle human beings and frighten them and human beings accepting their defeat used to worship them.

But nowadays that is not the case, they have been overcome by science and now the same are being used for the advantage and benefits of human beings.

There are many people who believe that asking questions make a person too much doubtful and uncertain. The person may become too much skeptic and stop having strong beliefs and commitments. However, it must not be forgotten that avoiding questions may lead to certainty but that certainty may not necessarily be depicting the truth. As put by Stephen Batchelor, "The problem with certainty is that it is static; it can do little but endlessly reassert itself. Uncertainty, by contrast, is full of unknowns, possibilities, and risks." These possibilities and risks can, therefore, lead human beings to new vistas of discoveries and inventions. They can evolve through this questioning and can reach to a position of heightened knowledge and information.

They, therefore, must never stop questioning and keep on evolving.

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Human Rights - From Historical Perspective

By Hujjatullah Zia

The belief that everyone, by virtue of her or his humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is fairly new. Its roots, however, lie in earlier tradition and documents of many cultures; it took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience. Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group - a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the "golden rule" of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran, and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources which address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members. Contemporary international human rights law and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) have important historical antecedents. Efforts in the 19th century to prohibit the slave trade and to limit the horrors of war are prime examples.

In 1919, countries established the International Labor Organization (ILO) to oversee treaties protecting workers with respect to their rights, including their health and safety. Concern over the protection of certain minority groups was raised by the League of Nations at the end of the First World War. However, this organization for international peace and cooperation, created by the victorious European allies, never achieved its goals. The League floundered because the United States refused to join and because the League failed to prevent Japan's invasion of China, etc.

The idea of human rights emerged stronger after World War II. The extermination by Nazi Germany of over six million Jews and Romani, homosexuals, and persons with disabilities horrified the world. Trials were held in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II, and officials from the defeated countries were punished for committing war crimes, "crimes against peace," and "crimes against humanity." Governments then committed themselves to establishing the United Nations, with the primary goal of bolstering international peace and preventing conflict. People wanted to ensure that never again would anyone be unjustly denied life, freedom, food, shelter, and nationality. Member states of the United Nations pledged to promote respect for the human rights of all. On December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the 56 members of the United Nations. It claims that all rights are interdependent and indivisible. Its Preamble eloquently asserts that, "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of

freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

With the goal of establishing mechanisms for enforcing the UDHR, the UN Commission on Human Rights proceeded to draft two treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its optional Protocol and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Together with the Universal Declaration, they are commonly referred to as the International Bill of Human Rights. The ICCPR focuses on such issues as the right to life, freedom of speech, religion, and voting. The ICESCR focuses on such issues as food, education, health, and shelter. Both covenants trumpet the extension of rights to all persons and prohibit discrimination.

In addition to the covenants in the International Bill of Human Rights, the United Nations has adopted more than 20 principal treaties further elaborating human rights. These include conventions to prevent and prohibit specific abuses like torture and genocide and to protect especially vulnerable populations, such as refugees, women, children, etc. Globally the champions of human rights have most often been citizens, not government officials. In particular, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a cardinal role in focusing the international community on human rights issues.

For example, NGO activities surrounding the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, drew unprecedented attention to serious violations of the human rights of women. NGOs such as Amnesty International, the Antislavery Society, etc, Government officials who understand the human rights framework can also effect far reaching change for freedom. Many United States Presidents such as Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Jimmy Carter have taken strong stands for human rights. In other countries, leaders like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther have brought about great changes under the banner of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a call to freedom and justice for people throughout the world. Every day governments that violate the rights of their citizens are challenged and called to task. Every day human beings worldwide mobilize and confront injustice and inhumanity. Like drops of water falling on a rock, they wear down the forces of oppression and move the world closer to achieving the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Over all, the fact is that human rights did not come to existence overnight, but evolved gradually and passed many historical ups and downs. Throughout the centuries, human rights gained many proponents but also some opponents from radicals and conservatives. In short, it is widely agreed upon that men are entitled to natural and inalienable rights.

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