

Championing Human Rights: An Alternative Perspective

Since the earliest records made by man, in either written or pictorial forms, close examinations of the records have yielded evidence of societal strife, of conflict, of mental, psychological and physical enslavement among the homo-sapiens in the supposedly noble name of survival, or more appropriately self-interest. This phenomenon has propagated from millennia onto millennia, irrespective of genetic makeup, ethnic grouping, and social development.

Advancements in the understanding the world around us, and of ourselves, through scientific and / or metaphysical means, have not dulled man's desire for self interest. Instead, such advancements have only paved the way for new manifestations of this innate ill. Airline unions at enmity with management in UK, the intense lobbying against increasing insurance premiums and capping escalations in charges by pharmaceutical companies in the US, and poisoned export products from China are a stark reminder of this perpetuating ill today. Many justify that many of the said activities are in the interest of upholding human rights. Such a subtle deception indeed! It is but a modern day manifestation of elevating self interests through interest groups.

If only one is able to effectively cure this prevailing social disease at the personal and community level, human rights shall abound with increasing measure. The right to make informed choices not only for the good of themselves but also their community, the right to compete under a common datum, the willingness of the haves to share with the have-nots, the right to engage for social good. These are but a few of the rights that one ought to be able to enjoy. But alas, "nirvana" on earth is not to be.

Instead, the major constituents of modern and ancient societies have sought to feed and nurture this ill of self-interest. That said, there remain isolated pockets of the humankind who have, through the ages, sought to purge and rid themselves of this perceived ill, hoping to impact others in their circles of influence.

One of the notable means to supposedly correct societal imbalances, and promote human rights for all is the ideology of communism. The sacrifice of one's interest is to be made for the interest of the community, to redistribute wealth and power. We observe the folly of this political thought and

governance, and the counterproductive results that followed, metaphorically illustrated by George Orwell's fiction novel, *Animal Farm*. It only took a mere three human generations for capitalistic self interest to supplant communism, and along the way countless number of persecutions and deaths for many who stand not only in the way of the ideology, but also those who fail to support certain interests within the cause.

Conversely, some argue that capitalism will promote human rights through affluence, where the abundance of the haves will share with the have-nots. This was not to be, as evidenced by the creation of labor unions, their conflicts with business enterprise, and their morphs into self interest groups. The events that unfolded through the recent Wall Street fiasco of 2008 are a reminder of intense greed, of unrestrained self interest. The miners' strikes that crippled and accelerated the downfall of the mining industry in Britain, as well as recent strikes in times of economic downturn for more wages and benefits focused on short term personal gain instead of long term sustainability.

Another notable mean of curing self interest in the hope for the greater good is the pursuit and propagation of religion. However, world religions and their numerous permutations have failed to make a significant impact in containing, let alone purging, self interest. From Jihads to Nazism, from bin Laden in Pakistan to Jim Jones in Guyana, from the church sex scandals to forced conversions of the Crusades, self interests abound. In particular they are dove-tailed and masked into religious interest groups instead.

The recurrent ritual of cleansing oneself through ancient temple priestesses and prostitutes to the water wash from the river Ganges, from the monks in the Middle Ages that inflict physical pain on oneself to men on barefooted firewalks at East Indian Diwali events are but a temporary reprieve from the guilt of pursuing one's self interest at the expense of another.

It appears that no religion of the world has been able to rid this from man's inner core. It is arguably in man's genetic makeup to be looking out solely for oneself. Just as an apple tree begets apples, so selfish homo-sapiens beget selfish offspring.

With the severe limitations from government and religion, breaking the self perpetuating cycle requires intervention from another dimension. It necessitates that another unconditionally and perfectly sacrifices itself for the

homo-sapiens at the individual level. And through that sacrifice, there is a perfect life beyond for all who embrace this, where self-interests cease in a truly utopian society.

It is through this form of sacrifice that some of the homo-sapiens may be convicted to sacrifice of themselves for the greater good of fellow human beings, for human rights, and for a future utopia.

The jihadists and the kamikazes warriors have successfully been indoctrinated with a twisted derivative of self sacrifice in reaching utopia. But towards what cause? The cause of interest groups, and not necessarily for a better tomorrow that preserves human rights.

For an appropriate form of self sacrifice in working towards a utopia, and as a model for curing self interests, a proposition is put forth to examine the life of Jesus Christ and to cultivate a relationship with him. No, it is not in the religion of Christianity but in embracing the life of Jesus for mankind.

Isn't the above proposition making a case for religion? Isn't this the calling on another crusade in the making that led to the dark Middle Ages? No, not another era of forced conversion nor a forced baptism but rather a natural appeal.

It is to the appeal of Jesus' unconditional sacrifice for humans, as well as his support for the underdogs and outcasts, that ought to serve as the impetus to embrace him, transform yourself from within, and to embrace human rights through the sacrifice of oneself.

Do consider the person of Jesus Christ today and not the church institution for inspiration of a better tomorrow where justice and human rights prevail.

If Jesus is not appealing to you, then look for other good teacher of philosophy through the ages that may present you with the motivations for a transformational life and the credible solution to the problem.

You may be hard pressed to find a suitable alternative.

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