

The Crime of Genocide - Prevention, Condemnation and Elimination of Consequences: Education as a Deterrent to the Crime of Genocide

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Editorial Intro: A thoughtful and even touching brief reconstruction of basic principles in Western philosophy that underpin a philosophy of human rights, formulated by a university instructor in Beirut on human rights, democracy and international law, and the managing director of the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon. The author leaves us with a quixotic statement that a course on human rights has both succeeded and failed, and that he is proud of both outcomes. Whail Kheir explains intriguingly,

One has every right to be proud to parade the stream of students interested in human rights. On the other hand, not every candidate will be convinced and embrace the rights and freedoms of every human being by the end of a course. Paradoxically, rejecting the message of the course proves that freedom is inherent and all efforts to indoctrinate are futile. Some students chose not to be impressed by the commendable values of human rights illustrating that human defiance against all forms of indoctrination is precious. In other words, those students who dismiss human rights also express the indestructible freedom in every human being.

We were hoping for a more expanded discussion of the section "Lessons from Human Rights Education in Lebanon," but in the Middle East many things remain quixotic and unresolved, and sometimes that is the wise way. We will await such happily in the future - inshallah.

The title is no credit to the author. Who but a hopeless dreamer completely detached from reality believes that monsters on the ready to wipe out whole communities and races, can be deprogrammed, reformed and recycled as citizens in the service of the

social order simply by taking up an intensive course on human rights? The title is deceiving and does not do justice to my reading of human nature. I concede that retribution is a more reliable deterrent. Education, though far behind as a restraint, is not an unworthy effort.

Education is not outside the parameter of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) refers to education twice within the body of the text; first as a tool to disseminate human rights and freedoms, and later on the UDHR prescribes a highly appreciated liberal concept of education. *“The General Assembly proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms...”*

Article 26 paragraph 2 states: *“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”*(1)

There is no cynicism in my claiming education was taken seriously by those who voted in favor of the UDHR. In the process of drafting a slow but steady attempt to water down the binding nature of the document started to surface. State representatives, especially those of super powers, did not wish to install a mechanism, not even a moral one, to judge their actions or abstentions. Relegating human rights to the safe realm of education and nothing more was what they strove to achieve. The statements of understanding of both the USA and the USSR are revealing. Despite the Cold War that set them apart, the two super powers agreed on the non-binding nature of the UDHR and the US representative restricted it to just education. The USA's statement of understanding goes as follows: *“In giving our approval to the Declaration today, it is of primary importance that we keep clearly in mind the basic character of the document. It is not a treaty, it is not an international agreement. It is not and does not purport to be a statement of law or legal obligation. It is a declaration of basic principles of human rights and freedoms, to be stamped with the approval of the General Assembly by a formal vote of its members and to serve as a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations.”* (2)

The nonbinding nature of the UDHR became crystal clear in the declaration of understanding of the USSR: *“Regarding the proposals on measures for implementing the Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant, the Government of the Soviet Socialist Republics considers that the implementation of the Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant is a matter which solely concerns the domestic jurisdiction of*

the State, and accordingly sees no need for any international agreement on the subject.” (3)

An impressive sign of hope was the miserable failure of the attempt to reduce human rights to just education. Later developments turned human rights into something far more than a timid ideal for the future. Human rights, by sharpening modes of immediate action, proved to be the most formidable force of change in our modern age.

Now that this necessary introduction is done, I propose to cover education and human rights along the following sections:

Definition of Education

Synoptic History of education

The inflated trust in education and a wake-up call.

Lessons from human rights education in Lebanon.

What is Education?

The Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary - Educational Book of Essential Knowledge - 1964- defines education by going back to the Latin origin of the word “*educō, educatū, which the dictionary points out to be composed of the prefix e: out, and duco: to lead. Webster elaborates: to conform and enlighten the understanding of, to cultivate and train the mental power of; to qualify for the business and duties of life; to teach; to instruct; to train; to rear.*”

“*Education,*” the source goes on to say, “*is the act of educating, teaching or training; the act or art of developing and cultivating the various physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral faculties; instruction and discipline.*”(4)

Synoptic History of Education:

“*Horses are born. Human beings are formed,*” goes an ancient proverb. This formation of the human being by way of education is as old as humanity. Passing skills, myths, collective memories –accurate or drummed up- go back to the first human society of hunters and gatherers. However, more developed methods of education were inscribed in some Egyptian temples dating back over 3000 years B.C.

Institutional secular learning came much later and is widely acknowledged as a Greek contribution, which the whole of humanity emulated. The emergence of democracy in Athens in the 5th century B.C and the trial by jury, offered the need to train the citizens in the art of rhetoric, as a necessary tool to achieve prominence in political and legal pursuits. Itinerant teachers streamed into Athens from the various parts of Magna Graecia. The Sophists rejected what they regarded as fruitless philosophical

speculation. Their skeptical approach was based on the opinion that although answers to philosophical questions may exist, the human being cannot know the truth about the riddles of nature and the universe. Furthermore, their reputation was tarnished by charging fees, often enormous for their services. Socrates differed from the Sophists not just in the humble life he led but, more importantly, in his ontology. He maintained that absolute norms exist and are universally valid and knowable. Socrates rejected the ethical implications of Protagoras that *“man is the measure of everything; what he judges right is right, and what he judges wrong is wrong.”* Superficially, he granted, moral standards might seem conflicting and relative with no hint to universal validity and authority beneath their hopeless variance and antagonism. But applying a patient method composed of sufficient comparing, analyzing and redefining of different standards of different individuals, one observes that these standards converge towards points of agreement and would eventually produce a definition of virtue.

By founding the Academy Plato institutionalized the Socratic Method, the principles of universalism, and the innate knowledge in every human being. Aristotle shifted the focus of education from Plato’s World of Ideas into more inductive and practical aspects of subjects taught without losing sight of theory. One of education’s primary missions for Aristotle was to produce good and virtuous citizens for the polis. *“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of the youth,”* he wrote in Book III of Nicomachean Ethics. *“Education should aim at teaching the citizen how to rule and how to obey,”* he counseled in his book *On Education*. (5)

These two understandings of education, the Platonic and the Aristotelian, dominated all centers of education for the following 2000 years. The Christian and the Islamic worlds throughout the Middle Ages applied one of the two methods. The Muslim civilization introduced two levels of instruction; the Katatib and the Madrasa. Two prominent figures, Ibn Sina and Ibn Tufail, stretched out the Aristotelian induction and introduced a notion not entirely within the fold of the Greek philosophers which captured the attention of some educators of later ages. Both Islamic thinkers considered the human being to be a *tabula rasa*. The pupil starts as a blank page where knowledge is acquired through sensory organs. Around that period the Scholastics were slowly building up within the confines of the scriptoria of the monasteries what later developed into universities.

An important watershed for education is the contribution of the Age of Enlightenment. Though maintaining an inflated trust in education as a guaranteed prescription to build a utopia, the cornerstone of secular public education would be traced to these thinkers who influenced our modern age.

The philosophical center of gravity in Europe in the eighteenth century was in England in the first half, in France in the middle and in Germany towards the end. England, by its

more attractive liberal political system to emulate and thinkers to follow, such as David Hume and John Locke, influenced the French, who contributed most to that stage of human thought in the persons, to state a few; Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu. The flame broke through the French borders northward to Germany where Kant and Hegel had a share in enriching education.

I'll introduce some broad outline of these thinkers on education before passing to describe the main tenets of the French Enlightenment.

The Rationalist believed in reason as the primary source of knowledge. They also maintained that the human being has certain innate ideas that exist in the mind prior to all experience. In the eighteenth century a number of philosophers, foremost among them was John Locke, David Hume and George Berkeley, all three British, held that we have absolutely nothing in the mind that we have not experienced through the senses. "*We have no innate ideas or conceptions about the world we are brought into before we have seen it. If we do have a conception or an idea that cannot be related to experienced facts, then it will be a false conception,*" wrote Locke in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. This Empiricist school of thought had a mighty influence on the French Enlightenment.(6)

Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is an outline on how to educate the mind. Locke, along the line of the Enlightenment thinkers, belongs to the *Tabula Rasa* approach to education. He expresses his belief that education "*maketh the man.*" The mind, according to him, is an "*empty cabinet.*" And observes; "*I think I may say that of all men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education.*"(7)

The French Enlightenment, in its more complete French form, consists of the following

- 1- Opposition to authority
- 2- Rationalism
- 3- The enlightenment movement
- 4- Cultural optimism
- 5- The return to nature
- 6- Natural religion
- 7- Human Rights

All seven characteristics fit within the parameter of our conference, admittedly some more directly than others..

1-The Opposition to Authority. Many of the French Enlightenment philosophers visited England, which was in many ways more liberal than their home country. They were intrigued by the English natural sciences, especially Newton and his universal

physics. But they were also inspired by Locke and his political philosophy. Once back in France, they were increasingly opposed to the Old authority. They thought it was essential to remain skeptical of all inherited truths, the idea being not that the individual must find his own answer to every question. The tradition of Descartes was very inspiring in this respect because of his building everything up from the ground. The opposition to authority was not least directed against the power of the clergy, the king, and the nobility. During the eighteenth century, these institutions had far more power in France than they had in England.

The exchange said to have taken place between Alexander the Great and a pirate was reproduced in the cynical style of Voltaire *"It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large quantities and to the sound of trumpets."* (8)

When a correspondent argued that monarchy is the best form of government, Voltaire replied: *"Provided Marcus Aurelius is monarch, for otherwise, what difference does it make to a poor man whether he is devoured by a lion or by a hundred rats?"*(9)

Fabricating charges against Jean Calase, a Protestant of Toulouse, and his execution, enraged Voltaire. It stimulated the French thinker to adopt his famous motto: *"Ecrasez l'infame."* (10)

2- Rationalism: The next key word is rationalism. A rationalist believes in reason as the primary source of knowledge

Of course rationalism goes way back before the Enlightenment. It is a mainstay of Greek philosophy with Parmenides (c. 540-480 B.C.) as a main hallmark. From about 500 B.C. there was a group of philosophers in the Greek colony of Elea in Southern Italy, among whom figures Parmenides. Parmenides thought that everything that exists had always existed. Nothing can come out of nothing and nothing that exists can become nothing. He developed this basic Greek principle further. He thought that there was no such thing as actual change. Nothing could become anything other than what it was. Parmenides realized, of course, that nature is in a constant state of flux. He perceived with his senses that things changed. But he could not accept this with what his reason told him. When forced to choose between relying either on his senses or his reason, he chose reason.

Socrates developed the idea further. He felt it was necessary to establish a solid foundation for our knowledge. He believed that reason is a primary source of knowledge, and he also believed that man has certain innate ideas that exist in the mind prior to all experience. This foundation lay in man's reason.

Like the humanists of antiquity most of the Enlightenment Philosophers had an unshakable faith in human reason. This was so characteristic that the French

Enlightenment is often called the Age of Reason. The new natural sciences had revealed that nature was subject to reason. Now the Enlightenment philosophers saw it as their duty to lay the foundation for morals, religion, and ethics in accordance with man's immutable reason. This led to the Enlightenment Movement

3- The Enlightenment Movement. Now was the time to start '*enlightening*' the masses. This was to be the basis of a better society. People thought that poverty and oppression were the fault of ignorance and superstition. Great attention was therefore focused on the education of children and of the people. It is no accident that the science of pedagogy was founded during the Enlightenment.

4- Cultural Optimism. The Enlightenment philosophers thought that once reason and knowledge become widespread, humanity would make great progress. It could only be a question of time before irrationalism and ignorance would give way to an "*enlightened*" humanity. "*Let reason be freed and it would in a few generations build Utopia,*" Paine described the mood of Enlightenment. This cult of progress, the basis of Positivism, dominated the Western European through all the way down to the mid-twentieth century. (11)

5- The Return to Nature. For some during the Enlightenment the catchphrase was Return to Nature. But 'nature' to them meant almost the same as 'reason' since human reason was a gift of nature rather than of religion or of 'civilization'. It was observed that the so-called '*primitive peoples*' were frequently healthier and happier than Europeans, and this because they were "*less civilized.*" Rousseau proposed the catch phrase "*We should return to nature for nature is good and man is, by nature, good; it is civilization which ruins him.*"

Rousseau's arguments against civilizations failed to impress the bulk of the Enlightenment thinkers. The most cynical, though not the most profound, comment was formulated by Voltaire. "*I have received, sir, your new book against human species, and I thank you for it...No one has ever been so witty as you are in trying to turn us into brutes, to read your book makes one long to go on all fours. As, however, it is now some sixty years since I gave up the practice, I feel that it is unfortunately impossible for me to resume it.*"(12)

6- Natural Religion: Religion should be brought back in harmony with natural reason. Many fought for what they termed a "*natural religion.*" At the time there were a lot of confirmed materialists who did not believe in a God, and who professed atheism. But most of the Enlightenment philosophers thought it was irrational to imagine a world without God. The world was far too rational for that. It was also considered rational to believe in the immortality of the soul. Just like Descartes they related the immortality of the soul to reason and not faith. According to them what religion needed was to be

stripped of all the irrational dogmas that had got attached to the simple teaching of Jesus during the course of ecclesiastical history. They professed what is known as Deism holding a belief that God created the world ages and ages ago but has not revealed himself since. Thus God is reduced to the “*Supreme Being*” who only reveals himself to mankind through nature and natural laws, never in any “*supernatural*” way.

7- Human Rights: The French Enlightenment Philosophers did not content themselves with theoretical views on man’s place in society. They fought actively for what they called the “*natural rights*” of the citizen. At first this took the form of a campaign against censorship- for the freedom of the press. But also in matters of religion, morals, and politics, the individual’s rights to freedom of thought and utterance had to be secured. They also fought for the abolition of slavery and for a more humane treatment of criminals. They, in short, wanted to establish that everybody was entitled to this set of rights and freedoms simply by being born. That is what they meant by natural rights.

The Unfounded Inflated Trust in Education and its Rectification.

The Enlightenment trust in human reason and education as forces of change proved flawed. Sigmund Freud and the psychiatrists questioned the validity of the Rationalist as well as the Empiricist schools of education. Drilling in the deep recesses of the human psyche established that the human being is not really such a rational creature. Irrational impulses often determine what we think, what we dream and what we do. Such irrational impulses can be an expression of basic drives and needs.

Arthur Koestler in *The Yogi and the Commissar* addressed the schizophrenia in every normal human being. *“There are indications that this dualism is correlated to specific neural processes. Recent progress in neurology established the thalamus (the phylogenetically older center organ of the mid-brain) as the seat of feeling an emotion, and the pallial cortex (the rind of the relatively new brain-hemispheres) as the seat of discriminate (logical) thought. Animal experiments and the study of certain brain injuries during the last war (e.g. head’s thalamic syndrome) disclosed two mutually inhibitive tendencies of reaction to a given situation the ‘thalamic’ and the ‘cortical’ type of behavior. Thalamic behavior is dominated by emotions, cortical behavior by formal reasoning. Irrational beliefs are rooted in emotions; they are felt to be true. Believing may be defined as ‘knowing with one’s viscerae.’ Behavior under thalamic domination is accompanied by effective, that is, wishful or fearful thinking: the type of thinking we find in monkeys, savages and infants; and in every twenty three out of twenty-four hours in ourselves. Cortical, i.e. detached rational thought, is a new and fragile acquisition which breaks down at the slightest irritation of the viscerae, reported by the autonomous system of the thalamus, which, once aroused, dominates the scene. Both anthropology and psychology have during the last fifty years led convergent results. Levy-Bruel proved that the mentality of the primitive is pre-logical; the Kantian categories of*

*(homogenous) space, time and causality do not exist in the primitive mind. It is controlled not by formal reasoning but by ready-made beliefs (pre-liaisons collectives.) Freud demonstrated the affective roots of thought and followed them down to Totem and Taboo. Jung showed that certain archaic or archetypal images and beliefs are the collective property of our race. Even modern philosophy came more or less independently to the same results; Ogden and Richards proved the emotional fetish-character of words and tautological statements. Science has at last reached a stage sufficiently rational to be able to see the irrationality of the mind's normal functioning.(13)**

This brings me to the following part of my paper.

The abstract theories covered above must keep in focus the individual, the concrete reality addressed by all these theories of education. The centrality of the individual was, to my mind, best expressed, not by pedagogues, but by the prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials of 1946, who detected individuals behind the ultimate evil; the heinous crime of the annihilation of entire communities. The indictment highlighted in an impressive statement that *“crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can provisions of international law be enforced.”*(14)

It is the individual that is addressed in the human rights course developed by the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights (Lebanon)- FHHRL- and is being offered in the leading universities and the main seminaries of Lebanon. Credit goes to the Armenians of Lebanon, specifically to Dean Wilma Sholakian of the Haigazian University, who was the forerunner of human rights education by placing the course on the requirement list for the political science students as early as 1992.

The FHHRL, which took charge of the course, is proud of its achievement but is even jubilant that the course failed.

What are the components of the course, the source of pride? And why is its failure a reason for jubilation?

The basic course is composed of three parts; the worth of the human being. What are the rights of each and every person of this unique human being? And how to defend this set of rights and freedoms. As an introduction to the practical part, the syllabus includes six basic dichotomies with a seventh concept added, to stimulate discussion and help entrench the concept of human rights. It is appropriate to highlight the Matrix where all seven are listed.

The Matrix (15)

The aim of human rights training is to qualify the candidate in the technicalities of filing cases of violation of human rights to the local and international bodies soliciting their alleviating injustice. How to act is pretty simple and almost mechanical. Why to act is the more philosophical and complicated part of the work. In a bid to promote the faith of the human rights activists in the inherent rights of every human being, some of the related and basic tenets of philosophy are placed before them for discussion and appreciation.

These are six dichotomies followed by the principle of slippery slope.

1- The Natural Right vs. the Positive Law

All societies from utter primitiveness to the most advanced are run on the basis of a set of rules and traditions the more advanced form of which are the laws. But laws, while formally legal, might be substantially unjust. Would they in the latter case be binding?

Humanity wrestled with this dilemma of obedience to unjust laws. This did not seem to have raised any problem for Thomas Hobbes who did not transcend the form. "*Unjust law is a contradiction in terms,*" the English philosopher, haunted by the anarchy of the civil war, wrote. A dramatically opposed view is suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas. "*Unjust law is no law at all,*" and, therefore, lacks a binding quality. Aquinas was reiterating Antigone's argument defending her discarding Creon's edict that violated the "*law of the gods.*" Obedience to the concept of natural right, as advanced by Sophocles, and the denial of legitimacy of a contradictory man-made law, should be the appropriate option of a human rights activist.

2- The Essence vs. the Accident.

An important contribution of the Greeks is the distinction between the Essence and what is Accidental. Granted the content of both concepts are somehow modified in the mid twentieth century to be in conformity with the inherent worth of all human beings. Common humanity is highlighted as the essence with all the remaining attributes as accidents. The 'essence' being superior in value to 'accident', it will be wrong to ditch the 'essence' and favor the 'accident'. It is therefore a violation of human rights that the 'essence', common humanity, should be surrendered to the 'accident' of color, creed, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, political persuasion, intellectual capacity, deficiencies and the rest of what sets a human being apart from the others.

3- The Person vs. the Individual

Jacque Maritain came up with a subtle distinction between the human being as an *'individual,'* and the human being as a *'person.'* These two qualities are imbued in every one of us. The *'individual'* determines what joins every human being to the other and makes him a member of the human race. Human beings are *'individuals'* who are related to a common social order of which they are part. But they are also *'persons'*. A person is a *'whole; is an object of dignity and 'must be treated as an end.'* A *'person'* has a transcendent destiny. *It is by virtue of their individuality that human beings are obliged to the social order, but it is by virtue of their personality that they cannot be subordinate to that order. As 'persons' we are perfectly entitled to reject all public measures that transgress our basic rights and diminish our qualities as 'persons,' such as curbing our freedom of thought, expression, beliefs and remaining rights and freedoms listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."*

Nikolai Berdiaev highlights the preeminence of the human person. *"The society, the nation, the state are not personalities; man as a person has a higher value than they. Hence it is man's right and duty to defend his spiritual freedom against the state and society. In the life of the state, the nation and society, we often find a dark, demonical force which seeks to subordinate man's personality and make it merely a tool for its own ends."* (Solitude and Society.)

4- The I-Thou vs. the I-It

Not completely unrelated to Maritain's distinction comes Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue in which two types of relationships are underlined; the I-It and the I-Thou.

The following synopsis, admittedly an amputated recast of the whole construct, discloses the basic tenets of Buber's doctrine.

"A classroom, a table, a book, a pen etc. are things. We deal with them, but they do not enter our personality. They are for us nothing more than an It. With them we have a so-called an It relationship. As long as I am dealing with things (with Its,) I remain closed and, to some extent, I myself remain an It. But when I really get to know another person and open myself to the other, when I say you to the other with all its depth of meaning (Thou,) a change takes place in me. It is as if I enter a new world. It changes me into a real I, into myself. It is only in as far as another person exists for me, do I become myself. At the moment when I display respect of the other, an I-Thou encounter, I live the fullness of my personality. I experience the full intensity of being me. When I share myself with another person in close friendship and loving intimacy, myself reaches a peak."

5- Human Existence vs. Human Role.

All existing beings have a quality of existence. A cow in the meadows, a tree on the side walk, a book on the shelf and a living human being all exist as long as they last. A more complicated question is whether their different existences are of a same or of a radically different nature?

With the exception of the human being existence is a function of a role the being performs the absence or the termination of which renders existence unjustifiable. A tree is kept by the farmer as long as it yields, so is the case of an animal or a machine. Human existence, by contrast, is inherent and not a derivative of a function or yield. In the course of the minority groups, religious, ethnic what have you, struggle for their rights, evoked services, often inflated, rendered to those in power. There is a flaw in this traditional attempt that the advent of the principle of the universal worth of human rights helped alter. The traditional way dehumanizes the supplicants as it equates them with the non-human beings. The universality of human rights introduced a radical change. All human beings, individuals and collectivities, have the right to exist simply because they exist.

This change of attitude is best illustrated when the platform of Martin Luther King's Civil Rights Movement is contrasted with Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tome's cabin.

6- Biological Life vs. Quality of Life

Could human life be defined, just like any other animate being, on the basis of the functioning of the vital organs, or should a quality of life be factored in to highlight human worth? The biological definition of human life fails to integrate what distinguishes this unique being from the rest; his inherent dignity. The more complex definition, which takes into account the quality of life, conforms better to the supremacy of the human being. Yet again, this definition is not free of defects. Should human life integrate quality, how would we handle cases where the quality of life is unattainable whether by retardation, accidents, Alzheimer and the rest of the long list of infirmities? Would life in these cases remain commensurate with the entitlements of human life? If not, would the absence of quality justify abortion and euthanasia?

7- The Slippery Slope

Some measures in extreme cases could be tolerated even defended. However, when the principle of slippery slope is applied and the case is set in motion, the process will inevitably and gradually gravitate in the direction of the opposite

values. Consider a case of terror. A man in the course of casual interrogation admits planting a bomb in a school bus and is timed to go off in one hour. The interrogator has to decide on the spot whether he should lean heavily on the detainee to extract the necessary information to save the life of dozens of children or to stick to the rules banning torture and, thus, aborting a chance to save the innocent lives. The problem with the first option is the slippery slope risk. Once a precedent is set, the outcome bursts out of all restraints and ultimately justifies torture across the board with the number of ultimate victims far exceeding those of the school bus.

Ludwig Wittgenstein's logical atomism illustrates the Slippery Slope theory in what he terms 'the game.' Supposing (ABC) is a set of positive integrals and (XYZ) represent its negative antipode.

(ABC) would gravitate toward (XYZ) with each development reducing the positive attributes until they disappear and ultimately the negative ones would surface; (BCD), (CDE)... (XYZ.)

Lessons from Human Rights Education in Lebanon

What about the Slippery Slope, itself, slipping into a slippery slope in its own right? This usually triggers a stimulating discussion.

The FHHRL is not disappointed, it is even jubilant, that in the course of years of education it managed to convert the believers and non else. Two reasons, both rooted in human freedom, are the source of content; the historic record and human ontology.

On the matter-of-fact side lie the countless attempts over and over again in history of all authoritarian regimes, religious and secular, to reshape the human mind in a fitting form. All these attempts ended in failure that allows just one conclusion; to be free is to be human. No authority proved capable of stripping a human being of this basic natural endowment. The Soviet experience, history's longest, most sophisticated, and the most doggedly determined attempt to mold the human being into a specific cast, proved a failure. The Homo Sovieticus, rather than bolstering the Soviet Union, was at the core of the USSR's undoing thus proving that no force no matter how powerful and how long it tries, can strip the human being of his innate freedom.

The philosophic consideration is even more important. If a device manages to permanently deny a human being his freedom and shape him to match a designed mental form, then we would be justified in questioning whether freedom is an inherent endowment or, by contrast, freedom is a tangential human attribute. Crucial outcome flows from the answer; should freedom prove circumstantial, external and a disposable

vener and not an Archimedean base of human existence and dignity, would life, in that case, be worth living?

The bottom line of freedom is choice. There will be no freedom if choice is restricted to just one option. The longer the list to choose from, and the more varied, the more freedom we have. Evil shall remain among what a human being, by applying his freedom, would settle on. Only an irredeemable dreamer would believe a day would arrive when evil shall be eliminated. St, Augustine in his *City of God*, provided what to me is the most convincing argument and a way out of the human dilemma. There are two cities; the City of Man based on the love of self, and the City of God based on the love of God. At no point in time can the City of Man be turned into the City of God. Shall we then surrender to despair and resignation? That's not the Augustinian choice. Augustine demands we push the City of Man in the direction of the City of God while always aware we can never in this life reach our destination.

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The Theory and Practice of Human Rights, in English, 1998;

Some Said "No." On human rights, in Arabic, 1998;

You Do Not Have the Rights to Remain Silent. A human rights manual, in English, 2008.

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