

ABOLISH CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

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I still feel happy about a news item which I read in a number of English and Gujarati newspapers in 2007. I am happy to remember the news item that 130 countries have abolished capital punishment from the whole world.

With this good news there is also a stark reality that in many countries including the democratic countries like India, USA and the most populated China the laws of capital punishment are still existing. Though India has not executed any criminal in recent years criminal are condemned to capital punishment in the above mentioned three countries including India. Judgments of capital punishments have been passed in 25 countries in the world over in 2006.

We should consider the countries still dispensing capital punishment as uncultured and uncouth countries or people. In the 20th century most countries have the law of capital punishment and they have executed many people. I believe that giving capital punishment to a person is a beastly act. It is the brutality of the law and of the country. Capital punishment is the murder of humanity. It is the brutalization of civilization. Realizing these matters the people of good will everywhere have begun to oppose and speak against capital punishment from the beginning of 21st century.

Some people still advocate capital punishment. They often ask you, would you not ask for capital punishment if someone knowingly and in a planned way murder your dear and near one? Would not you call for revenge? Your heart surely wants retaliation for the murder of your dearest person, isn't it? Your feeling of enmity may be naturally aroused. But murdering your enemy in revenge for the death of your dear one, would not bring your dearest one back to life. That is not possible.

The murder of your dearest one is a very shocking crime. It is an unexpected cruel act. In the face of it by annihilating your enemy by the capital punishment law of the land, nothing good will come out of it. On the contrary, one more evil by legal sanction is committed. One more atrocity is enacted. One more wicked act is done.

One evil is not done away with another evil. One catastrophe is not undone by another catastrophe. An evil can be overcome only by the goodness of the heart. One heinous murder is countered not by a legal murder; but the criminal has to be won over by the goodness of the human heart. The feeling of revenge is the main factor in asking for capital punishment for a murderer. It is the principle of revenge. But there is brutality in it and not any humanity.

The studies and researches have proved one thing. In most countries the capital punishment is given mostly to those who are poor, the dalit, the members of the minority communities or the weak races or the powerless groups of people! This is a terrible injustice that in comparison with other people only those who are poor and powerless in self defense, are punished with capital punishment. After taking away the life of a person through capital person, the punishment can never be revoked because the person is no more.

I am not saying that the murderer should not be punished. The criminal should get appropriate punishment. That is the call of justice. Punishment is required to see that the murderer does not commit such crime again. But giving capital punishment to a criminal is a greater evil than his crime.

Today most people accept that the capital punishment is against a person's human right. Everyone including a heinous murderer has the right for human rights. So capital punishment is not in tune with a person's human rights. Everyone has the right to life. So those who sit in authority are called to protect lives and not to take lives.

We Indians take great pride in our unique ancient culture. But valuing our ancient culture if our elected rulers do not do away with capital punishment, it is time that ordinary citizens like you and me it is for us to take the leadership in seeing that the capital punishment is abolished.

Capital punishment is opposed to human rights. There is injustice in capital punishment. There is the murder of humanity in it. There is no opportunity for a cruel criminal to repent and change his/her ways in capital punishment.

We need a movement of the people of good will, who are opposed to capital punishment. The people of good will can write letters and articles in the newspapers and other periodicals about the evil of capital punishment and the need to abolish it. We can bring appropriate pressure on our elected representatives in the state and in the whole country for the abolition of capital punishment.

The NGOs can take up a signature campaign in schools and college and other public institutions and thus create a wide-spread public opinion against capital punishment as an effective message for the law makers to be awakened and act. Today there is need for the whole people of India to awake against the evil of capital punishment and raise their voices in one accord.

I look forward to such a new auspicious day when the capital punishment is done away with not only from India but from the whole world. (contact the author: ciss@satyam.net.in)

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