The Gene of Curiosity

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You, after reading the title of this essay, might be wondering what will be written under this topic. This is exactly what curiosity is. A formal definition of curiosity is *the desire to seek information to address knowledge gaps resulting from uncertainty or ambiguity.* (If you don't get this formalism like me, don't worry—you will by the end of this essay. Of course, I have to maintain your curiosity!)

As a precaution, be apprised: never consider mere questioning as curiosity. Curiosity is profoundly different from mere questioning. Mere questioning is like knocking at a door because you need something from inside ,like bread or water, and then turning back once you get it. But curiosity is like knocking at the door to get inside, exploring the rooms, wandering the corridors, climbing the stairs, and peeking into the hidden corners. Even if one does not get an answer, the actual joy lies in the journey to find that answer. Curiosity is not a momentary spark but a fire that keeps us burning, leading us from one discovery to another. As one of the greatest physicists, Richard P. Feynman, famously said: ***"I would rather have questions that can't be answered than answers that can't be questioned."***

Curiosity is, in fact, the primary distinctive trait of humans. As Aristotle famously said: ***"All men by nature desire to know."*** Animals are also curious, but humans took this to an extreme level. We not only seek "what," but also "how," "when," "where," and most importantly, "why." A monkey sees the sky, but have you ever seen a monkey trying to know, "Why is the sky blue?" (Surely, a monkey doing experiments with light and playing with mathematical jargon is never found—at least on Earth!) Without deep curiosity, humans would be nothing more than a handsome species of monkeys.

According to Abrahamic religions, the evolution of mankind started when Adam and Eve picked a fruit from the tree that was forbidden. Why did they do that? Although they had everything they desired, they still plucked that fruit because of inherent human curiosity. Thus, one can say that curiosity is the very spark that ignited human civilization. Not only the start of civilization, but the entire progress of humankind owes itself to curiosity. One of the most crucial inventions in history is "fire." How was the fire discovered? It was our curiosity to know what happens when stones are struck together. What are these sparks? What can they do? Why do they shine? And many such questions. Not merely inventions, but the entire exploration of humanity throughout history is dependent on this single trait of endless curiosity. It was curiosity that drove Columbus to sail beyond the seas and discover the vast and beautiful land of North America. It was the same curiosity that led Galileo to ask: *"Are we really at the center of the universe?"* It was the same curiosity that inspired James Watt to harness the power of steam, sparking the Industrial Revolution which proved to be the prelude to modern progress. It was the same curiosity that made Einstein look out of his

school's window and wonder, *"What would it be like to ride at the speed of light?"*—a childlike question that forever changed physics.

In fact, one can say: ***"It is curiosity which originated all knowledge."*** From physics to philosophy, biology to sociology, politics to robotics—curiosity is the forming and driving force of all knowledge. Consider physics: early humans observed the stars, fire, rivers, and storms and asked: "Why does the sun rise and set?" "Why does lightning strike?" "Why do objects fall down instead of going up?" These raw questions laid the foundations of physics. Some isolated themselves in thought and asked: "What is reality?" "What is knowledge?" "Why do we exist?" These questions became the seeds of philosophy. The same story is true for every branch of knowledge. Curiosity is not limited to the sciences; it encompasses the whole of literature. Even language itself emerged from the curiosity of people to share what they know. So indeed: ***"If necessity is the mother of invention, then curiosity is the father of invention."***

For a better understanding of the importance of curiosity, imagine a world without even a trace of it. How would that world look? People would live, but without the urge to ask or to know. There would be no technology and no tools except what chance might throw their way. No beliefs, no myths, not a single drop of knowledge except by fortune. It would be a silent planet where humans walk but never wonder, eyes never sparkle with questions, minds and souls never feel an *"Aha… moment"* (described by Feynman as the joy of discovering something). The stars would shine in the sky, but no one would ask, "How I wonder what you are?" The seas would be inviting, but no one would dare to cross them. In such a barren world, there would be no stories told, no songs sung, no philosophies born, and no questions for the mind to play with.Now look at the world we live in. Curiosity gave life its colors. It turned silence into voices, questions into songs, the distant stars into stories, and the restless seas into journeys. It lifted us from mere survival and made us explorers of both earth and sky. Truly, ***"The universe is like a library filled with locked books, and our curiosity is the key to open them."***

In conclusion, curiosity is the most important trait of mankind, essential for everything we do—from learning to earning, from discovering to inventing, from crafting to breaking. It is like a "gene" inherent in humans, passed on from generation to generation, from Adam to you, my curious fellow reader. Yet, sadly, it is gradually disappearing. The traditional education system in many countries murders curiosity in young minds, stripping away their childlike wonder. Let me end this with a statement that may seem strange, yet is true:

"It is more important to save curiosity than trees."