

(The opinions expressed in the following paper are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Victoria Lodge of Education and Research)

Freedom

by Bro. Christo Pandelidis
Camosun Lodge #60, B.C. & Y.R.

Freedom is the state of not being liable to any sort of physical or moral constraint. Freedom is the right of the individual to act or not to act according to his own volition.

"Oh, Liberte que de crimes on commet en ton nom?"

"Oh, Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name?"

Mme. Jeanne-Marie Roland de la Platiere was a French woman of education devoted to politics during the reign of Louis 16th. The above is said to have been her exclamation when she mounted the scaffold in 1793 and perceived that the gillotine had been erected close to the Statue of Liberty.

For no other ideal, so many wars have been fought, nations been destroyed, flags been raised and boundaries been erected.

On the body of freedom, we stick many labels: freedom of speech, freedom of economy, political freedom, scientific freedom and so on. All those are the manifestations of the one and only Freedom. If one out of those many freedoms is hurt, Freedom does not exist since the entire body suffers from this wound.

Freedom does not constitute a clear, abstract meaning so that we may easily determine its definition and use. On the contrary, it consists of a meaning which depends always on the perpetually moving reality which constantly undergoes change. On one hand, man has given a form to the meaning of freedom but on the other, the same man, by being liable to a specific way of development, is permitted to enlarge its meaning and acquire more forms of it. Therefore, the interaction of the forms between the definite and the abstract is perpetual; the meaning has the traces of the development of the reality. Correspondingly the development of the meaning could be summarized into two: the Philosophic and the Moral.

A rational choice concludes in the fulfilment of a rational reason. According to the orthological freedom (Plato, Spinoza), free act is the one which is done for the fulfilment of a sound reason

Descartes and especially Kant gave us the whole range of orthological freedom. Act is free when conscience does not succumb to the desires of senses, the pure logic. Freedom is recognized as the law of logic and is defined as autonomous..

Johan Fichte gave a definite meaning for the autonomous by considering as the realization of spiritual ideological inclination of every human. Freedom lies in the act of determination of the action by means of its own mission and does not lie in the realization by the human of any over-

all expediency, which would be different than the law of its own personality. The free realization of humans constitutes a self-realization and the happiness of a genuine autonomous life or a personal creation is the testimony of freedom.

In reality, freedom cannot be determined by the orthological or non-orthological character of the content of our actions. A human has the sense of his freedom whenever he acknowledges himself in his life and approves the history of the world.

Freedom, according to the definition of Stoics, is the end of life: "*Fata nolentem trahunt volentem ducunt*" that is, "Better someone to change his desires than the order of the cosmos."

Stoics tend to be more optimistic as they accept that everything happens in accordance to a strict power of reason and sequence which is called "*ΕΙΡΑΡΡΕΥΗ*" or destiny or fate. They recognize, though, that there are actions which depend on the human will. The philosophers of the "*ΣΤΟΑ*" or arcade tried to reconcile the term of this confined freedom with the power of reason. They say that if the soul makes good use of freedom and acts according to the commands of the universe then "Logos" or word or reasoning is free.

Jean-Paul Satre and Jasper conclude in the same view. Satre states, "Freedom can be acquired only when a human takes a stand on every event of History." Freedom is assimilated with the awareness of the conscience which in every moment shows to the mind the prudent attitude towards the existing situation.

The social problem of freedom consists in the reconciliation of personal freedom with the social law. The view that the personal freedoms must have unlimited expression is according to Plato; direct freedom or anarchy. While the view that the social law consists of an ideal towards which the individual has to be assimilated to, characterizes the nationalism which accepts only one ideology, prohibiting thus the private enterprises. Indeed, it is necessary to a minimum limit of laws (legislation) in order to sustain a society and a minimum limit of private initiative in order for freedom to exist

Freedoms of everyone signify the total rights of the individuals and constitute the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter also imposes limitations which do not conflict with the safety and dignity of the individual.

Freedom and Freemasonry

We, as Freemasons, when we talk about freedom, we talk about self-determination of our will power. We talk about the power to do or not to do something beyond our logical will. We never talk about absolute freedom. The meaning of absolute freedom comes up against the law or ethics. Freedom in Masonry is the self-determined with the freedom of others with what ever does not harm others. Its limit is the limit of the freedom of the other. Also when we talk about freedom, we talk about ourselves, we talk about esoteric freedom, and about self-liberation. We talk about liberation of ourselves from the non-logical volition, from the non-social trends and prejudices, and from our bad habits, rushes and passions. That is the reason we request from everyone who wishes to become a Freemason, to be free and of upright morals. In other words, we request the "moral freedom" which coexists as a meaning with virtue and which is a human

property. A divine gift is inherent and not revealed in all circumstances; not even due to obedience to specific rules of ethics and social behavior; not even with the observance, from our part as Masons, of our fundamental principles of Freemasonry such as faith in God, absolute respect of the religion of each individual, freedom of thought, conscience, etc.

Those social, ethical rules and commitments — even the specific ethical rules and values are recognized *a priori* and bind us as upright men and Masons.

In other words, there is a kind of shaped and "standardized" behavior of those ethical rules, values and obligations which makes us believe that certain actions are ethical and compelled or that the opposite ones are bad actions and prohibited. That is not moral freedom in its proper true meaning. It does not mean virtue in the sense of an expression of divine and human property.

For us Masons, moral freedom begins when, beyond the standardized ethical life and its limits, we seek the tremor of the soul. With this tremor, moral freedom begins to be activated as the ethic conscience begins to be tested and fights back. According to the intensity of this fight and hardship, virtue is born. Then each of us free and with responsibility, begins his own esoteric fight; the fight against himself, the fight for virtue, and the trial of his conscience with the reservation of the eventual profound and invincible remorse.

This esoteric fight of moral freedom which reveals and expresses virtue, during specific human instances, is revealed by our late Brother Nicos Kazantzakis in his book, "Sodoma and Gomora."

LOT:

How can you comprehend me, old Abraham? You are a pure obedient. You say "yes" and your lips are sticky, you haven't got a rough heart to fight with. Your soul and heart are like two domesticated and harnessed camels. They take you straight to God. You watch the stars and say, "So many are my grandsons and so many are my great-grandsons." I watch the stars and say, "So many are my sins. My virtue is not an orchard in which I stroll in the evening and talk to God. It is a precipice in which I crumble. All day, I gamble my soul and I save it. All night, I gamble my soul and I lose it."