



Freedom

Freedom—or Liberty, to give it its equivalent name—is such an important concept and ideal, and yet it is regrettably so little understood, let alone practised. This latter remark is, of course, a generalisation, as there are many individuals, families and organisations in the world that do try to live this ideal, although they might know it under other names. So what does Freedom or Liberty really mean?

Liberty, a word derived from Old French *liberté* and Latin *libertas* ("freedom"), itself derived from *liber* ("free"), is usually taken to mean freedom in the sense of absence of restraint, control or restrictions, including from excessive government control, and often with the sense of being free to act, believe or express oneself as one chooses. However, its truer original meaning, which is far more satisfactory, unselfish and civilised, is a state of love—love for each other and love for all life, including being governed (or governing) in a loving way. A clue to this is the associated word, *liberal*, from Latin *liberalis*, meaning "generous, selfless, noble, gracious, munificent".

Freedom, the state or condition of being free, is derived from Sanskrit *pri*, meaning "love", or "loving kindness". Freedom thus means a state of love or loving kindness, or of being loving and kind. Such a state of love is naturally liberal (i.e. generous, selfless, noble, gracious and munificent). The associated word 'friendship' is similarly derived from Sanskrit *pri*, as also the name of the goddess Freya, who is commonly associated with the goddess Venus. Freya/Venus personifies this state of love. It is the greatest of all virtues and the truest meaning of virginity—"pure in heart". ("Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." – Matthew 5:8.)

The Statue of Liberty in New York harbour, presented to the Americans by the French, and the Statue of Freedom that crowns the US Capitol in Washington DC, are sculptural representations of this same ideal or divine principle. It is also encapsulated in the sayings: "God is our friend", "friend of God" and "God is love".

The Spirit of Freedom (Venus) is accompanied by her lover, Justice (Mars), who sweeps away all injustice, such as tyranny, corruption, greed and selfishness—in other words, all that which is anti-freedom. Freedom and Justice go together hand-in-hand. This also is shown in New York's Statue of Liberty and Washington's Statue of Freedom—the former bearing a torch in her right hand and a *tabula ansata* (a tablet evoking the law) in her left, the latter wearing a helmet and holding a sheathed sword in her right hand and a laurel wreath and shield in her left.

Freemasonry, which had a strong influence on the design of the two statues as also on the design of the American Constitution, as a word is likewise derived from the Sanskrit word *pri*, 'love'. In its truest sense, 'Freemason' means a loving builder—a builder of freedom, a builder of Solomon's Temple, the temple or state of peace ('Solomon' means 'Peace').

The person who is truly free is someone who has become the embodiment or manifestation of love. In effect, this means the human being who lives his or her life in complete loving service for the good of others: for, as the philosopher Francis Bacon pointed out, God is Love, and divine love is love in action, and the purpose of humanity is to imitate or be the image of this. Such service is a self-sacrificial act of love. This produces the



initiatic 'death' of the psyche that culminates in its illumined rebirth or resurrection. This illumination is the real state of freedom—the state of love that has risen above and is therefore free of all selfish, egoistic desires, thoughts and actions.

Freedom, the state of being free, has always been considered the state of the true initiate. It is the state of philanthropy or charity. A person who achieves this state of being was known classically as “Liber Bacchus”, “the Free One”—the child of God or embodiment of love. Such a person has become free or liberated of all selfish, materialistic, egoistic desires, thoughts and actions, especially greed for power, fame or fortune in all its various guises, which are the ties that hold us earthbound in what the ancients called “hell”.

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