UNIT 4 HUMAN AS FREE

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4 .0 OBJECTIVES

- To analyse deeply and meaningfully the notion of freedom.
- To study the significance of freedom in human lives.
- To respond to some of the criticisms against human freedom.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we delve into the nuances and significance of freedom. After elaborate discussion on the nature of freedom and taking up the challenges of Freud and Skinner, we give our critical response to them. Then we conclude with some meaningful insights on freedom by philosophers like Frankl and Ricoeur.

4.2 APPROACHING THE PHENOMENON OF FREEDOM

Actually, much of the last unit has already begun to venture into hermeneutics – in as much tried to suggest a saner, more useful way of looking at the "data" about human decision-making. For instance, we passed over certain deficient readings of what constitutes human freedom, notably the idea that it is something absolutely sovereign and impervious to heredity, environment and all that sort of thing. We also expressed our reservations of linking it too unqualifiedly to absence of restraint. Now, let us situate freedom in its full context – the whole area of appetites in general and of the faculty of the will in particular.

To begin with *appetite*. Though in common parlance, this word is used exclusively with reference to our craving for food, it seems worthwhile to extend this term in

a general sense to every human (hence, more or less conscious) process whereby we strive towards some good or pleasure or, conversely, seek to avoid some evil or pain. In this sense, "appetite" is more or less a synonym for "tendency", "drive", "striving" or even "dynamism". For further precision, let us point out that "inclination" implies relatively weak tendency. If we're speaking of a stronger and more powerful striving, it would be better to say "drive". A "need", on the other hand, brings in the notion of a conscious lack of something which provokes action. A "passion" would be a powerful and lasting tendency, deeply rooted in the mind and associated with strong feelings or sentiments. An "instinct' would be, psychologically speaking, a tendency which is inborn and present in all individuals of a given species. In this sense, our intellectual dynamism is an "instinct": it is an orientation which is innate in all human beings and is the fundamental driving power in all our activities. Incidentally, I am indebted to Donceel for the explanation of all these terms.

What about the will? Well, it is one of our various faculties or proximate principle of activity. By "proximate principles" we mean the immediate or closest responsible power for the action concerned. Thus, we could say that the eye is the proximate principle of faculty of my seeing. The ultimate or remote principle of my seeing is myself, "I". After all, as everyone knows, it is not really my eye which sees or my mind that thinks, but I who see or think by means of my eyes or my mind.

The human faculties are traditionally subdivided into the organic or sentient faculties and the spiritual faculties. The former refer to those active powers which human being has in common with animals – the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. This latter indicates those faculties which in human being enable her/him to transcend "the immediate data of senses" and these comprise the intellect and the will. Incidentally, we should not confuse the faculty with the organ. The faculty is a power or capacity to act that, in itself, is not visible or tangible: it is rooted in one's inmost self or "I". The organ is the instrument (Greek *organon* = tool or instrument) through which the faculty acts. Thus the eye is the organ of the faculty of sight, the ear is the organ of the faculty of hearing and so on. If the organ is injured the activity of that faculty is impeded. That the organ cannot be simply identified with the faculty seems to be borne out by the fact that a diseased or "dead" organ can be replaced (in a transplant) and the working of the once impaired activity is resorted.

Even the most cursory phenomenological observation of human activity (as we have seen) reveals that human being has the capacity to transcend the immediate data of the senses. As we have seen, her/his ability to develop and use a conceptual language, her/his creative capacity and her/his practice of religion reveal this. We could say then that s/he has a "spiritual" faculty or "spiritual" faculties, in the Rahnerian sense of term. That there is in human person a spiritual faculty called intellect should be clear enough in what we have already seen from our analysis of direct judgement, guided by Maréchal . We saw there how the intellect transcends the immediate data of the senses, recognising the limitedness of existence as much in the beings of our immediate affirmation. But this is not the only type of activity that we do, by means of which we "transcend". We also will and choose. In other words, we posses not only a spiritual cognitive faculty, we also have a spiritual appetitive faculty: we have an intellect and a will. Everyday experience confirms this, through the exercise of self control. We frequently feel

within us an urge to do something and we, for some reason or the other, resist this. In other words, we are aware that there is a tendency within us which is more superficial, and which is held in check by a higher tendency. This "higher tendency" which controls our lower, base ("animal") desire is nothing but what we mean by the will (Pandikattu 2011).

But, someone may object, even a well – trained dog manifests acts of self-control, as when s/he will not grab food placed before her/him, though her/his mouth may salivate evidently enough. But there is no reason to put the dog's "self-control" on a par with that of humans. All the observable indicates that there has been no transcending of immediate data of experience to that level of values and principles that has guided the dog's self-restraint. It is merely the memory of certain very vivid and unpleasant "immediate data of experience" in the past (a good beating), which accompanied her/his grabbing of the food which is holding her/him back – for s/he knows how to make associations from the past for the future (cf. Pavlov's famous experiment with the dog). In fact were the dog's hunger greater than her/his fear or a thrashing s/he could snatch at the morsel. Nor would it fail to do so if it had never been trained with that or similar very concrete, very tangible experiences from the past. True again, some humans are "no better than animals" and the only reason they don't go in for stealing hand-bags and snatching *mangal-sutras* is because they're afraid of the policeman's baton or the lock-up. But we also know from experience – our own as well as observation of others – that there are many situations where humans do restrain themselves for reasons which are totally above and beyond such immediate sensible data as avoidance of physical pain or gaining of physical pleasure. Here, ideas, values, principles (transcending sense-data) are surely at work. Hence, postulate a spiritual appetitive faculty in us, called the will.

Further confirmation is provided that very often we consciously choose or will an object that is repugnant to sense data – as when we "knuckle down" to some study or unpleasant duty, or take some bitter medicine. Here, what moves us to act is not plain and simply some sensible good but some other supra-sensible good presented to us by our intellect and sought by our will. (Desbruslais 1997)

That last sentence already gives us a clue to what the "formal object" of the will is. Our various faculties are distinguished by their formal objects – that is, the aspect according to which they approach and perceive reality. Thus the formal object of the faculty of sight is colour, that of hearing is sound and so on. We cannot see a sound for the formal object of sight cannot relate to sound. Now, since both the intellect and the will are spiritual faculties, we should expect them to be working in tandem, which is in fact what happens. Both of these faculties attain the same *material* object, being (any being). The formal object of the intellect is being as being, that of the will is the good. In other words, whenever the intellect presents to the will any being as good, then the will is provoked to respond. When we talk about the will being "free", what we mean that though the will is roused to action whenever something is presented to by the intellect is good, it is not irresistibly compelled to choose is (so long as the thing concerned is not perceived as the absolute good). It must act, but it can act either by choosing that (limited) good or by rejecting it.

4.3 VOLITIONAL DYNAMISM

If there is in human person a basic intellectual dynamism towards the unlimited being as such, it follows that there is also, in us a consequent volitional dynamism (a dynamism of will) towards the same ultimate being, but seen by the intellect as good and presented as such to the will. And just as it is this basic orientation that spurs the intellect to affirm limited beings at all, it is this same orientation that ultimately drives the will to seek and desire limited goods. Since we are made for the unlimited good, when anything is presented (*rightly* or *wrongly*.) to the will by the intellect as the unlimited good, we would be powerless to resist or reject it. But so long as something – as should all the objects of our experience – be presented to the will by the intellect as a *limited* good, then the will is under no compulsion to reach out for it. We are free only in the face of what is perceived by us as *limited* goodness.

The will always strives or seeks after something under the appearance of good. Even that which is morally or physically evil (sin or pain) is consciously sought by the will (more accurately, by us through the will) because of something in it which is perceived as good (pleasure and comfort, health and virtue). In the case of drunkard or drug addict, s/he perceives the drink or the heroin as the absolute good and so s/he cannot resist it. Thus, s/he is not morally guilty for indulging her/himself in these, nor even (in all probability) for the felony s/he commits to have access to them. We do not send such people to jail but for medical or psychiatric treatment. The addict is not guilty, here and now, for this particular act of indulgence for, as we have seen, s/he is not really free to check her/himself. But s/he is "culpable in cause": s/he is guilty of having caused this sorry state of affairs to finally take possession of her/him. Frequent indulgence has slowly befuddled her/his brain so that her/his intellect has slowly come to be "brain-washed" into seeing drugs/drinks as the absolute good.

The possession by the will of the good constitutes happiness. But the will is not a cognitive or knowing faculty. It cannot know whether something is good for it or not. That is the job of the intellect which, on the other hand, is incapable of reaching out for the good seen. That is the role of the will. The independence of the intellect and the will is usually brought out by saying that the former is lame and the latter is blind. Remember the fable of how the blind person and the lame person formed an alliance of collaboration, the blind carrying the lame on her/his shoulders and the lame person directing her/his friend. That is a pretty good picture of how the intellect and the will work (Pandikattu 2011).

Our reviewing of Joseph Maréchal's analysis of intellectual dynamism from the stand-point of the will has thus afforded us an insight into the freedom of the will from a more metaphysical perspective.

4.4 PRAISE AND BLAME

The very fact that we praise people for certain actions and blame them for others implies that we acknowledge human freedom to be a fact. If we were not free, if all our actions were but conditioning and/or blind responses to stimuli, why should we allocate praise or blame at all? The very fact that we punish people for certain actions – even putting them away for life – while others, who have done

the same unacceptable deeds, in effect, are put in an asylum and given treatment means that we do grant the general fact of human freedom. This can be impaired from birth or through traumatic experiences or wantonness or whatever. In any criminal case there is always the effort to establish that the person was psychologically free at the time of her/his action and, if s/he was, s/he is punished. In short, the whole penal system is an implicit "argument" for the fact that we are free. Indeed, there could be no ethics, no such thing as heroes and villains, saints and sinners if there were no such thing as freedom. In such a case, the one who orders the ruthless butchery of millions of innocent people would be on a par with the one who sought to save them from death by starvation. Hitler and Mother Theresa would have to be put on the same level. It is hard to find a rabid determinist who would do that.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is "appetite" in the context of the volitional drive towards freedom?

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2) Faced with unlimited goodness, has the will any freedom to choose?

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4.5 FREUD'S CRITICISM

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) is generally taken to be the founder of Psychoanalysis, which may be defined as "the separation of the psyche into its constituent elements." We can sum up his main ideas by quoting the above-mentioned notes:

Freud 's views had their antecedents in the culture of the age – the general positivist and behaviourist current in psychology. There was a strong feeling, in France and Germany, against what was known as "vitalism", the view that life can only be explained by postulating something over and above what is found in the interaction of organic bodies. Everyone – except, perhaps, the Man from Mars – knows the basic notions of Freudian psychology: the assumption of unconscious mental processes, recognition of resistance and repression, the importance of sexuality and aggression and the Oedipus complex. Freud was to resolve the psyche into the basic elements, the id, the ego and super ego and give a purely

positivist explanation of morality and its so called laws. Other key, but less known, ideas in Freudianism are infantile sexuality, the libido, narcissism and the life and death instincts. Psychoanalysis soon came to be represented as a conceptual system for understanding all human behaviour and personality, not only that of the mentally disturbed. Towards the end of his life, Freud had to face a lot of problems. Apart from Nazi harassment and the painful cancer of the mouth which he developed, several rifts gathered around him. Otto Rank, his most devoted disciple (he had come to be known as his "crown prince") broke with him after twenty-five years, went on to propose quite independent views and left Freud with no one to succeed him as the new guru of the group. Two other giants, Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937) and Carl Jung (1975 – 1961) also deserted Freud because they found that he was stressing too much the sexual element in his system and they disagreed with this view (Freud 1938:939).

"The theory of repression is the pillar upon which the edifice of psychoanalysis rests", Freud tells us in his "*History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*" (Freud 1938:939). He goes on to add that, "it is really the most important part of it." By repression he means the unconscious and automatic inhibition of a psychic content. When this is done consciously and in voluntary manner, we have "suppression." Here we have one drive being stopped by another drive. What happens to an inhibited drive, be it repressed or suppressed? It doesn't go away altogether: it still keeps on trying to attain its goal but in a roundabout and unconscious way. Eventually it will appear in consciousness. If the repression/ suppression does not succeed, it will manifest itself in a slip of the tongue or as in many cases, it may even express itself in schizophrenia and other psychotic states. When repression/suppression is successful, the inhibited tendency has been given some kind of alternative outlet through art or some other valuable achievement.

We shall pass over details of Freud's dream theory, psycho-sexual development and so on as they are not directly pertinent to our study here. Instead, let us confine ourselves to *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life.* This is, in fact, the title of what is perhaps Freud's most widely read work. This is a kind of popular primer of psychoanalysis and is concerned with slips of the tongue, forgetting and the like. Freud claimed that all these are by no means fortuitous or chance happenings. They have a specific meaning and are both the effect as well as the sign of hidden tendencies. A "psychic determinism" is at work here, determining these lapses and it is possible to work backwards from these and unearth these determining causes. Freud, being a determinist, extended his principle of psychic determinism to all psychic phenomena. Slip of tongue and so on is not caused by fatigue, inattention and the similarity of words. It is assumed that there is some repressed or suppressed psychic drive that is at work. Even inability to recall a name is taken as pointing towards some unpleasant event in one's past, associated with the words that have been forgotten. In these and various aspects of his theory, Freud proposes his view of human being which denies in her/him all capacity for transcendence, seeing in her/him a being of determinism and instinct, nothing more.

4.6 SKINNER'S CHALLENGE

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904-1990), an American psychologist, was born in Susquehanna and was drawn, in his student days, into the American behavioural

school of psychology and became very interested in the work of Watson and Pavlov. He secured a Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard in 1931 and spent several years studying animal learning and the functions of the central nervous system. He did not hesitate to have his younger daughter, Deborah, spend her first two years in his "baby box", a controlled environment chamber for infants.

He is best known for his research into the learning process and his belief in what has come to be called a *planned society.* He also supports *planned instruction*, according to which the principles of learning elaborated from laboratory research are to be applied in the class room. He is also one of the leading exponents of behavioural psychology today – the study of the observable behaviour of human beings. In his popular work *Walden Two* (1948) he described his vision of an ideal society based on principles of learning. In *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971) – a book which stirred up a hornet's nest – he called for restrictions on individual freedoms that hinder the development of the ideal planned society.

4.7 CRITICAL RESPONSE

It is one thing to explain human transcendence in terms of complexification. It is quite another thing to reduce all human transcendence (language, creativity, religion and so on) to transformations and derivations of the sex drive – which, in effect, is to deny their transcendent element altogether. Though Freud has much that is both relevant and challenging to say on the issue of the human *psyche*, great parts of his system have been vitiated by the materialistic mentality that he seems to have unconsciously imbibed from his environment. Nor is it matter of "an alternative and valid hermeneutics": vast areas of data have to be ignored or taken lightly if one is to explain man's moral, religious and artistic activity in this starkly materialistic way.

Again, it is true that Freud made some very illuminating and insightfully intuitive discoveries, enabling him to put his finger on many a solution which had previously eluded earlier investigators. But he had the unfortunate tendency to generalise from one or a few individual cases. Worse still, he drew conclusions about normal behaviour from the diseased workings of a troubled mind. Such unwarranted generalisations are seen as faults in the scientific world. The great emphasis that statistical methods put on numerous, carefully monitored case-studies is meant as a corrective to such hasty generalisations.

Coming to the difficulties raised by Skinner, we shall but make a few general remarks (leaving to the course on *Psychological Perspectives* the filling in of more details). In the first place, let us remember that human freedom is not something that is required to be able to stand aloof from its environment, from the possibility of being influenced by programming and whatever. It is even true that some techniques of programming or brain-washing may more or less completely break down the will power – just as an accident may harm seriously the brain, organ of intellectual faculty and "reduce the person on the state of a vegetable". But this is no argument against the existence of the faculty of the intellect, any more than a diseased eye is an argument against the faculty of sight. What could be discussed is the morality of such programming and the values upon which a particular concept of an ideal society is based. In passing, let us note, that it may be necessary – but as a temporary remedy – to sacrifice some freedoms as an emergency measure to enable the victims of injustice and of dehumanising structures to find a meaningful and dignified human life.

The basic rights (to food, clothing, shelter and work) surely have priority over derivatives of the right to private property. In any case, the thrust of Skinner's views seems to be, not so much to deny human freedom as a basic datum in human person as to question whether it is something always to be encouraged in every one of its outlets. Ultimately, the discussion will hinge upon one's understanding of the human person and of freedom (both of which can be understood liberatively and oppressively). Still, I cannot help registering my disgust at confining a helpless little child in a "baby box" for years on end for the sake of a scientific experiment. A human person (and that includes a baby, let us not forget) is an end in himself/herself and can never be used merely as a means (and little Deborah was being utilised as precisely that). It is quite a different thing to elaborate more efficient techniques of pedagogy in the laboratory and try them out in the classroom on people who are old enough to critically react. But any brain-washing – however subtle, however brutal – is surely but another word for using a person merely as a means. Whatever Skinner's ideas do this or not depends on more detailed familiarity with his views than I have. Donceel gives us a nice thought-clinching summing up: "...the will should not be conceived as standing above the drives any more than the soul hovers over the body. If there is to be moral growth, the will must orientate the drives in the direction of its own higher ends, use their energies for its own purposes, try to penetrate them more and more with spiritual finality [whatever Donceel may mean by words like "spiritual" and "spiritualised", we can take them in the Rahnerian sense of implying the possibility of transcending what falls merely within the limits of immediate data of sense-experience]. This cannot be done directly with all drives. These which are essentially somatic [are inherently bound up with the body] can be put at the service of the will; they cannot be really spiritualised or sublimated. It is impossible to sublimate hunger, thirst and the biological sex drive. Other drives which are not so somatic can really be spiritualised. Take, for instance, ambition. The drive to excel, to be strong and outstanding, is inborn in most human beings; it needs a favourable environment to reach its full strength, this "instinct" can be assumed by the will, animated and spiritualised by it, sublimated in the real sense of that word. We might even say that outstanding achievements will rarely occur except when a naturally "ambitious" character is thus animated by some higher purpose, whether that purpose be egoistic, as with Napoleon, or altruistic, as with John F. Kennedy. The same real sublimation may occur with other non-somatic drives, such as curiosity and gregariousness" (Donceel 1967: 256-257).

The difficulty with all forms of determinism is that, in the last analysis, all determinists can't help behaving "as if" people were free after all. For instance, they react angrily to someone who has cheated them – but why do so, unless that action were blameworthy, which presupposes freedom on the part of the doer? After all, if Hitler were not acting freely when he decreed the wholesale extermination of the Jews, his action was just one more natural disaster (like an earth-quake) and there is no reason to feel any indignation about it all. "One teacher of psychology I know works his course up to a fine climax wherein he declares that freedom of the will is man's greatest delusion. ...Privately this same psychologist sees his dilemma and laments that he finds it necessary to administer praise and blame to himself and others "as if" people were responsible for their acts." (Desbruslais 1997). Wouldn't it be more natural to see the necessity that we must speak that way as a sign that such is the case, rather than fly in the face of experience because of one's nice little theory?

Sometimes determinists try to wriggle out of this "praise and blame" argument as Donceel notes. What we mean when we praise or blame someone for her/his deeds is not more than that is implied when we praise a racehorse or a heavyweight champion for her/his prowess. Such admiration doesn't imply that either – certainly not the racehorse. – is free? So why should our admiration for someone's heroic act or our condemnation of a person's shameless act imply that they are free? (Desbruslais 1997)

But are both such cases on par? We praise a racehorse or an athlete because her/his achievements imply overcoming certain physical difficulties through discipline, training and resolute commitment. But real heroic acts involve something more. It may not be more physically difficult to run into a burning building and rescue three children than it is to win the Marathon in record time. Assuredly, the latter would involve greater preparation and more physical effort. Rescuing the children means overcoming internal, psychological obstacles, freely. Admiration for a heroic act thus implies a recognition of freedom.

As for the fact that even would-be determinists want a criminal to be punished, they often try to defend themselves against the charge of inconsistency by saying that the reason they desire such action is not because they really believed that s/he was able to have refrained from such action but because her/his punishment would be a deterrent for others. But now could it be a deterrent at all if they were not free to act otherwise anyway? And this argument from deterrence (usually trotted out to justify capital punishment) assuredly violates out metaphysical conviction that the human person is an end in her/himself. To execute or punish someone on the sole ground that s/he be thereby a lesson to others is tantamount to using her/him as a means.

There remains that the typically Freudian objection that we may be totally determined (by traumatic experiences and what not) without knowing it. To this our only response can be that the very fact that we can speak of determinism at all implies that we somehow transcend it, are not totally within its grip. Nor does admission of the role of external forces – heredity and environment – in the process of decision-making (as we have seen) amount as evidence against indeterminism.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) How do you respond to Freud's challenge of psychological determinism?

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2) What does Freud mean by "suppression' and 'repression'?

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4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON FREEDOM

Freedom and Liberty

English has been blessed with a special philological fecundity in that we have words that trace their origin to a Germanic root and others that have to use via the "romance" languages from Latin. Thus we have often two handy words that point towards the same reality. Since we have both "freedom" (from the German *Freiheit*) and "liberty" (from the Latin *libertas*), let us make good use of this potential.

Many authors like to distinguish between "freedom from" and "freedom for". The former comprises what we might call the "first phase" of freedom, where we seek to release ourselves from all that trammels us, from all that stifles and prevents us from being our full selves. For instance, 'breaking free" from shyness, from the scares of inhibiting and painful childhood experiences which put a kind of strait-jacket on us, freeing ourselves from companions, habits and an environment that weaken our will power – all these are part and partial of the process of becoming "free from". But when that is over the real work is just beginning. We must decide what goal, what ideals and what values we will set out to pursue with conviction and resolve. For some people this will be to seek a deeper relation with God, or to build up more mature friendships with human persons, or to dedicate oneself to build up one's country (these possibilities are by no means mutually exclusive). In this sense, we could speak of freedom as *means* and freedom as *end* (Desbruslais 1997).

We think the whole idea becomes less unwieldy and more inspiring if we speak of freedom and liberty (better still, liberation), seeing the former as a means to the latter. Furthermore, the best thing would be to situate both these terms in the general context of a dynamic world view.In a dynamic world-view, nothing is a finished product. Rather, everything is, consciously or not, striving to realise itself fully, tending to become all that it is meant to be, bursting towards its full flowering by a kind of inner urge. If we have described a "liberated person" as one who is fully human, fully alive, let us extend this concept, by analogy to all reality. So let us say that any reality (a mango seed, for instance) becomes fully liberated when it finally grows into being all that it is meant to be (in this case, a mango tree). Now, sub-human reality attains liberation by purely deterministic process – the various "laws of nature" which are inbuilt into them and hurry them on to attain this goal. Human beings attain self realisation partly by natural deterministic processes (the child grows into adult, his or her body gradually develops and matures into full stature by a kind of automatic natural process which does not, in any way depend on freedom – except insofar that freely

assumed exercise and health-care can help work out a more sturdy, athletic from). But, "being human" is no more physical goal. It involves developing "character", commitment to values, principles and goals worthy of a human being. Now, to attain these, human being must use her/his freedom. Whereas other things on the face of this earth reach their full flowering by a purely natural, spontaneous and determinist process, the human person must also make use of freedom to attain liberation.

It is in this sense that many contemporary psychologists prefer to speak of freedom as not so much a state with which we begin life, but as a goal or project to work for throughout life. I think there will be less ambiguity and confusion if we make use of the words "freedom" and "liberty" ("liberation") in this connection.

Insights from Frankl, Ricoeur

There is also what Viktor Frankl has called man's "last and greatest freedom", that freedom which no one can take away from her/him – the freedom to make meaning. A person can be unjustly imprisoned, deprived of freedom of speech and her/his most fundamental rights, but s/he is still free to make whatever meaning s/he wishes out of her/his condition. In her/his moving and personal account of how s/he and so many of her/his follows maintained their sanity as well as their sense of dignity and this most basic freedom while interned in Hitler's concentration camps, he explains how this was possible (Frankl 1992).

Paul Ricoeur is speaking about the same thing from a slightly different aspect and with another vocabulary when he makes his famous distinction between the areas of the voluntary and in voluntary in our life (Ricoeur). There are certain things in our life, with regard to which we seem to be not at all free – the date and place of our birth, our parents, the particular physical body we have, the circumstances of our death. But there is an element of voluntary reserved for us even with regard to these things: It is up to us to freely choose what shall be our attitude to all hindrances and impediments, things to be regretted and rejected. Or we can make of them positive assets, assimilate them into our lives and build upon them. If ours is "*une liberté seulement humaine*" (a phrase which we would like to translate – the grandeur of human freedom, no more and no less), if it lacks the sovereign autonomy that Sartre would like it to have, it still has an area of the voluntary boldly carved out for itself right in the heart of the involuntary. Thus it becomes possible to find a genuine act of freedom in saying a meaningful YES and act not merely in a proud Sartrean NO. For a YES spoken to the "involuntaries" of our life can be a way of assimilating them positively into our fundamental options and life style and a great advance on the road to full personal liberation (Pandikattu 2011).

Freedom that Unites, Not Isolates

If liberation is the ultimate goal of human being and freedom is the most human means to realise this goal, it follows that acts of authentic freedom will bring persons together in community rather than seek to isolate and insulate themselves from each other (Desbruslais 1997).

The human person is a social animal. This is not just a pious platitude but even the most superficial phenomenological surveys of the human person will bear this out. At the merely physiological level human person is "built to live with

others". Of what value and use would our ears be if it were not to hear some human voice and how frustrated our "organs of speech" would be were there no other ears to hear them – let alone the other deeper dimensions of ourselves, sexual, psychological and so on? The perfection of the faculty of the will is realised in an act of love, of self-gift (which is the great act of freedom). Paradoxically, our freedom is best and fully used when, through it, we make a total interpersonal gift of ourselves to another. Hence, the solitary Robinson Crusoe cannot achieve liberation – the development of his full self – unless and until he finds some way of relating to human society, to community. This, of course, is not to endorse any kind of "hard life" in these agglomerations of people, lonely in a crowd, that seem to characterise so much of contemporary urban life. A mere assemblage of persons within a given area does not constitute a community. That arises when there is a genuine inter-personal, intersubjective relationship. It is true that certain minor rights and preferences will have to be sacrificed because of practical difficulties. But in a genuine spirit of sharing and mutual growth.

4.9 SOME RELATED QUOTABLE

1) *One of the commonest experiences is to meet someone whose belief that he cannot help doing what he is doing (or failing to do) is often an excuse for not doing as well as he can or at least better than he is at present doing.*

   (Sidney Hook, *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science*, London, Methuen, 1978, p. 179)

2) *It is now widely recognised among moral philosophers that, no matter how irrefutable the logic of absolute or naturalistic determinism may be, sane and rational human beings, in order to retain their sanity, their rationality, and their human purposefulness in living, still stubbornly insist on deciding, choosing and acting as though they were autonomous, dignified, and free individuals. This is the phenomenon, above all, that still needs to be explained.*

   (H.W.Hintz, in *Determinism and Freedom* ... p.166)

3) *And now, without comment, here is a "beaut" from Robert Burns: "Freedom and Whisky gang thegither"(i.e. go together)*

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is the "last and greatest freedom", according to Victor Frankl?

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2) What is Ricoeur's understanding of freedom?

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4.10 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we have seen basically the interdependence, dependence and independence of human begins and attempted at a definition of freedom.

4.11 KEY WORDS

Appetite : Though in common parlance, this word is used exclusively with reference to our craving for food, it seems worthwhile to extend this term in a general sense to every human (hence, more or less conscious) process whereby we strive towards some good or pleasure or, conversely, seek to avoid some evil or pain. In this sense, "appetite" is more or less a synonym for "tendency", "drive", "striving" or even "dynamism".

Liberty : It is connected with freedom seeing the freedom as a means to liberty. Furthermore the best thing would be to situate both these terms in the general context of a dynamic world view. In a dynamic world-view, nothing is a finished product. Rather, everything is, consciously or not, striving to realise itself fully, tending to become all that it is meant to be, bursting towards its full flowering by a kind of inner urge. If we have described a "liberated person" as one who is fully human, fully alive, let us extend this concept, by analogy to all reality.

4.12 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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