

Development Dawns with Mental and Social Freedom



Everyone is born free, without any bondage, racial, ethnic, religious, or even political. So, all people, including animals appreciate freedom— maybe mental or social freedom. Most human beings do not know about their freedom as social animals. They have been enslaved to someone or something since their ancestors' time. They never try to get free from it because they are always in myth. For this, one person tried to get rid of myth for the first time in western culture; he is none other than the great philosopher Socrates (470-399 BCE) in Athens, ancient Greece. As a philosopher, it appeared to him that there is a 'soul' inside everybody, in addition to the physical body. He reviewed, developed, and taught it to others in order to teach the freedom of the human mind.

Human thoughts were equated to the wind or rain by the philosopher and psychologist William James. He has argued about "free thoughts" in order to investigate the mind. It is said that "James himself emphasized the notion of the individual self or person as a continuous 'stream of consciousness' capable of exercising free will." Furthermore, he emphasizes that thoughts are going on like

wind or rain. He says, "If we could say in English, 'it rains' or 'it blows,' ... we must simply say that thought goes on. He appreciated free will, and in his search for truth, he tried to develop it stage by stage. James first defines our basic ability as free will, which revolves around chance." He simplifies the question about free will as follows: "It relates solely to the amount of effort, attention, or consent that we can at any time put forth."

"For man, the mind is the cause of bondage, and the mind is the cause of liberation. Mind absorbed in sense objects is the cause of bondage, and mind detached from the sense objects is the cause of liberation."

Aside from that, there are some people in the world today who prefer to think freely and believe that everything should be free. They are called freethinkers. It is estimated that approximately six percent of the world's population is free-thinking. It is defined as: "A freethinker is a person who forms their own ideas and opinions rather than accepting those of other people, especially in religious teaching. In some contemporary thought, in particular, free thought is strongly tied to the rejection of traditional social or religious belief systems." They say freethinkers are those who were 17th to 19th-century philosophers and scientists. According to history, Theologian Anthony Collins (1676-1729) was the oldest, most wealthy English free-thinker in the 17th century, and there were many freethinkers in the 18th and 19th centuries, as

there are today. Another few free-thinkers were Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1731), Denis Diderot, Thomas Paine, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer. The term "freethinker" was first used by William Molyneux in a letter to John Locke, a famous philosopher in psychology and history. Jonathan Swift referred to the term freethinker as "the atheists, libertines, despisers of religion, and all those who are usually mentioned under the name of freethinkers."

Meanwhile, in 1718, Ambrose Philips published a weekly journal, "The Freethinker, in which he used the term freethinker as "free from prejudice." Therefore, they've allocated a day to commemorate it as 'Freethought Day' on October 12th every year. To my mind, if you are free from every bondage, you are free from all prejudice. And if you are bound to any bondage, cannot find the truth or freedom. Because we are talking about development in both inner and physical

terms. That's because real development is not merely development in agriculture or military progress but also inner development. For that, there must be freedom to think, write, and speak, but there should not be extremity, as extremity could ruin a society.

Among all these freedoms, mental freedom is crucial for everyone in a society. Though human history says behind the scenes that most human beings hate mental freedom, It proves that through the life of Socrates. In ancient Greek history, he just tried to put a foot in the freedom of humans, showing the human inner world. But his disciples had to take it forward, as Socrates was given capital punishment for trying to explain the inner world of human beings to society. Before this period, there were ancient philosophers in the East, in India, reviewing mental freedom. They have also argued and depicted the mind process—how it rises, continues, and falls. According to their canon, not only does thought rise and fall, but it multiplies it without any hope. Therefore, it is said, "One must deliver himself with the help of his mind and not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul and his enemy as well." In this review in the Bhagavad Gita about the mind, it is emphasized that the mind must be trained, and then it can deliver the condition of the soul. It's further explained as:

"Mana eva menus. yāṇām' - Kāraṇam' bandha moks. yoh.

bandhāya vis ayāsan' go - muktyai nirvis. ayam' manah. "

"For man, the mind is

"For man, the mind is the cause of bondage, and the mind is the cause of liberation. Mind absorbed in sense objects is the cause of bondage, and mind detached from the sense objects is the cause of liberation." According to this clarification , we can understand that bondages and liberation arise in the mind, and the detachment from them makes liberation. Therefore, freedom arises only in the mind, not on the outside. Naturally, we gain every sense from the outside and store it on the inside. Besides that, when Julia, the daughter of Julius Caesar, declares the liberation of Apollonius from slavery, in Julius Caesar's story, he explains another freedom to Julia. At the earnest request of Julia, Apollonius was released from prison, and Julia declares that he was released, at the prison gate. "I've come to take you home!" says Julia to Apollonius, her teacher, a philosopher. " Then he says, "I'm not coming with you. I will stay here. I am not a Roman, Julia.

I am a slave.” Julia says happily, “You’re not a slave any longer. You’re free! I am freeing you now!” But Apollonius says in a happy mood, “Freedom is not something you can be given. It’s something you have to take.” She says again, “It felt as though you were free. I thought you were happy.” Apollonius replied courageously, “I was. But isn’t happiness what I’m seeking out something else?” Julia asks in curiosity. “What?” Apollonius replied calmly. “DIGNITY.” And then he went back to prison.

If there’s mental freedom, there’s social freedom as well. Accordingly, social freedom comes from the mental state of a person if he has love, compassion, and empathy. But on the other hand, love is a mirage according to some social phenomena. In some cases, there is no love even for their own children, as there is a craving or greed among them. Because of the lack of compassion. Therefore, it must be empathy, which means in psychology: “The ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place.” It’s depicted in Eastern philosophy as “to compare yourself to others before saying or doing something to them, mentally or physically.” Then there would be freedom mentally, and society would reach development.

Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero

(B.A., M.A., M.Phil.)

Expert Psychological Counselor and

Meditation Instructor

Siriwardhanarama Buddha Dhamma College

Mano`daya Meditation Center

Siriwardhanaramaya, Temple Lane, Kollupitiya

sirirevathad@gmail.com

dhammavedi.com

