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INDIVIDUAL AND SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Many things are said about freedom and many things occur in the name of freedom. There are also many opinions about what freedom means. Independent, however, of these things, the meaning of freedom is based on one good which man has from his creation and that is free will, in other words, the right to choose. Based on this, every person defines the manner of his life, in a positive or negative way, analogous to the political, social and spiritual atmosphere in which he lives. With these presuppositions, two ways of freedom are distinguished: 1) individual, and 2) spiritual freedom.

Individual freedom

The Apostle Paul, referring to individual freedom, says that it does not bind man to sin because his choices are not influenced by the law of God's justice. "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness." (Rom. 6:20). It does not mean however, that the person, who in his choices includes trampling on the will of God, in other words sin, he is really free. Even if, furthermore, he does not believe in God, sin exists as a passion which denotes man's free will and makes him be dragged by the passion whether he wants to or not. In other words, sin in the form of passion exercises moral force but also spiritual force on the human soul. It does not allow the soul to calm down, or to think correctly. It makes "your members, slaves to impurity and iniquity" (Rom. 6:19) notes the Apostle.

Sin not only dirties the soul, it darkens the mind but it also makes man iniquitous, an apostate before God. Some of our choices may not be unlawful to secular justice and to our superficial opinion, as for example fornication and adultery which have unfortunately been decriminalized in the so-called Christian countries. These iniquities may also be having social forbearance and acceptance. However before God they are actions which draw spiritual death, perdition as the Apostle Paul stresses, "for the end of those is death" (Rom. 6:21). Because faith frees the healthy spiritual powers of man's personality. And with the enlightenment and guidance of the grace of God he is led to wise, prudent choices which unbind him from the force of the passions and of sin and man ends up really free, the controller of the passions, of the desires and of his thoughts.

Without force but with free will, "you were enslaved to righteousness" says the Apostle. The believer voluntarily obeys the saving commandments of the Gospel and defines the way of his life in the life of the Church. He obtains the mind of Christ and the ecclesiastical train of thought. He becomes a partaker "of true

freedom” according to the sacred Photios. And the result is tasting eternity and the blessedness of God, in other words, the permanent and immovable wealth of the grace and life in Christ.

Freedom in our age

In today’s age many taboos have been surpassed, as every type of moral and spiritual limitations are called. However contemporary man doesn’t feel free. Despite the plethora of means of learning and information, despite the achievements of science, the human passions remain, and at given moments they betray man, they soil his dignity. And he asks how he reaches such strayings and behaviors. And then it becomes perceived that the moral and spiritual freedom of man is a work of the grace of God. Human imperfection and his tendency towards sin has one reward, the loss of the divine breathe from the world of his soul. Because “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), as the Ap. Paul notes. In other words, the reward we get for our choices without the enlightenment of God, is death, the loss of our spiritual freedom.

The exhortation of the great apostle of the Gentiles, is more timely and useful than ever, “in the freedom, therefore with which Christ freed us stand, and do not again be burdened with the yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). Let us remain firm in the freedom which the Lord gave us and not be caught again in the bonds of sin. Christ with His sacrifice on the Cross, freed us from every violence, every slavery, every captivity of sin of the world. Whoever of us came to know the liberation from the guilt of sin perceives the invaluable value of divine mercy. And whoever doesn’t feel free, despite the great squandering of their individual freedom, let them gaze at the incarnate and resurrected Christ and let them ask Him to make them fellow partakers with faith and repentance in His divine passion. So that they taste the majesty of His love and mercy and feel the air, the breathe of spiritual freedom as a divine gift of eternal life and salvation.

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