

# *So if the Son Makes You Free, You Will be Free Indeed*

by Father Matta El Maskeen (Matthew the Poor)

## **Freedom:**

It is the most precious mystic element mankind can obtain from God.

Man is born into the world a slave, contrary to the popular saying that people are brought into this world by their mothers free. The freedom of which they speak is a bestial, earthly freedom. Natural freedom is that man does what he wants according to the natural instincts with which he was created. He acquires them through clearly defined and strongly controlling law of inheritance. Whatever man within his family did a thousand years ago at birth, during the stage of crawling, childhood and youth, he does the same today. The only difference is that some customs vary between one nation and another, and some traditions differ from one family to the other. For example, every nation is governed by certain influences of heritage that acquired through the effect of development by means of education, sophistication, culture and imposed religious requisites.

In addition to the tradition influences obtained from their forefathers, every family has also the influences gained through the effects of society. Added to them are the rules and laws imposed by governments on their peoples with the aim of shaping the nation into a mold suited to its military, religious, or cultural ambitions. The members of every family are also directed by the father and mother's power, unique temperament, education and culture. The result is that the family member grows up influenced by the father and mother's temperaments and their degree of education and culture.

All of these influences produce a citizen and family member who emerges committed to the mold of the nation and the family. A follower of general and special principles, he has been educated by general popular customs and special family traditions. This takes place in a wide or limited range, depending upon the individual's degree of adherence to these general, family, scholastic and religious traditions and teachings, common and unique.

The actual freedom of the individual remains limited within the narrowest of confines, in an ironclad collar. It opens and narrows, yet it continues to be an ironclad collar that has its characteristics in every nation and every family and from which the individual cannot depart. If he does, he is ostracized by society and the family. These are the limits of natural in which and for which man is brought forth from his mother's womb. For these reasons, the saying is deceitful that claims people are born free from their mother's wombs, for a slave is born of his mother's womb a slave, a prince is born of his mother's womb a prince, a heathen is born from his mother's womb a heathen, a Jew is born from his mother's womb a Jew. The same applies for the Muslim, Christian, and atheist.

In the midst of this vast devotion to nationalities and their traditions, and to families and their traditions, the Son of God was born from a Holy Virgin. Without a father, he was born of the Holy Spirit and God was His Father!

Heaven thus invaded the earth, and God introduced to humanity a completely new Divine element, unrelated in any way to nationalities and uncommitted to any family ties.

Before the Son's entry into the world, mankind, every man, was a slave to the world, to his nation, to family heritage and traditions. The world was ruled by Adam's sin by which he had been corrupted. The nation was governed by the world that corrupted it, the family was ruled by the homeland that corrupted it and all were ruled by the effect of sin that the Devil had dictated to humankind, Adam. He forced it onto man, every man, by his consent, corrupting humankind and establishing it in him.

It spread and settled in among all men who accepted it without resistance, rather, consenting to it and enjoying it and accordingly desiring it, loving it, then worshipping it. To remove this imposed transgression and corruption, God sent His Son to the world with its nations and families, freeing it from the subjugation to sin's corruption and slavery in all its general and specific forms.

Christ proclaimed, "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36.) The Jews contested him, trusting in the metaphorical fantasy that they were Abraham's children and were never slaves to anyone: "They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been in bondage to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will be made free?'" (John 8:33.) Here, Christ reveals to the world His mission from God, His Father. Through Christ we know that God loved the world: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16.) From the beginning, He is the creator and organizer. There, in eternity, before the existence of the heavens and the earth He planned His creation. He loved the creation of His hands and planned its happy ending, so that man would have the fortune of partaking in the life of heaven. Having lived on earth to complete his perfection through being cleansed from sin and being sanctified, he emerged from the world of dust to be received, with those who are spiritual, in heaven as a heavenly spiritual citizen.

The Son's entire mission to the world was solely for the world's salvation from the bondage of sin. Sin enslaved the world with all its nations, families, and individuals. Everyone was corrupt, having gone astray and in need of God's glory. Sin in all its kinds and forms pervaded, settling within all humanity, subjugating man's soul and spirit to worship the fantasies and falsehoods of sin under forms, names, morals, principles, religions, and beliefs. It served itself, in the flesh, as if it were a god to be worshipped, to the extent that it falsified the truth. In the midst of this

terrifying and well-contrived lie that pervaded the world came the Son. Bearing God the Father's message, He established the basis of the only truth with His words, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth... For such the Father seeks to worship him... The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."

Thus came the first heavenly proclamation for destroying the worship of the flesh and everything physical (animal) that was impregnated with all the passions and works of sin. These, Satan had controlled from the time of Adam and his descendants. In this way, and with one word, Christ removed the worship of animal offerings, of purifications, and the law's interpretations for cleaning with water the body and its members from defilement and impurities. Christ thus annulled from Moses' Law the interpretations for purification from defilements, in detail and in their totality.

"And He called the people to Him and said to them, 'Hear and understand; not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man'"(Mt. 15:10, 11.)

"There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him... Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart, but stomach, and so passes on?"... And he said, "What comes out of man is what defiles a man. From within, out of the heart of man comes evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man" (Mk. 7:10-23.)

This means that the Son's mission with which He came from the Father does not concern defilement and cleansing. Rather, it calls for holiness and purification from sin: "For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7.) Uncleanness does not enter man, but, if his heart is evil, comes out of his heart, not from his flesh. Uncleanness does not originally emanate from the flesh, but from the heart and follows its course through thoughts that later become actions. Fornication is originally a thought that emanated from an evil heart that was lured by the devil. The weight of the sin of fornication rests on evil thinking, i.e., on the soul. It is upon the soul that the blame and punishment falls, not on the flesh, because it is the soul which deals with the devil. This destructive brain power does not deal with the flesh, but with the thoughts of the heart.

What Christ said about fornication He also said about licentiousness, killing, theft, greed, malice, deception, fornication, evil eye, blasphemy, conceit, and ignorance. All of these come from thoughts of the evil heart, not from the flesh. The devil only deals with the mind, thoughts and hearts, for as we have said, the devil is not a power of the flesh, but a destructive brain power of

the soul, who starts by destroying in mind his mind, thoughts, and soul.

Worship is being attentive to relationship with God. We understand therefore that worship must rise to the level of the heart, mind, and soul, and not fall to the level of the flesh. Purifications in Christianity concern the heart, mind, and soul. It is from the heart, mind, and soul that emanate the passions and thoughts of defilement that enslave and humiliate the flesh under the bondage of the devil and sin.

This means that it is useless, even impossible, to begin worship and holiness from the flesh and through the purification of the flesh.

Christ therefore said clearly and frankly, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Spirit here refers to the spiritual soul, because if the soul is partial to the flesh and its passions, it becomes an animal soul, and the soul that is partial to the spirit is a spiritual soul. The meaning of worship in the spirit is consequently that of worshipping without physical tendencies and reactions, being ruled by the soul that adheres to the spirit and the spiritual. Therein lies worship in truth, void of all the deception of the world, and the truth is God.

If we go back to the words of the Son, "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed," the meaning becomes clear that the Son's coming to the world was in order to end any worship related to the flesh. For the flesh was enslaved to sin and sin is the work of the devil. So in no way should the flesh be given the opportunity to worship God. That is why the Son restricted the worship of God absolutely to "in spirit and in truth," excluding the flesh, and unrelated to the futile world.

### **How did the Son set us free?**

Absolute freedom belongs only to God, for God is unique and the only being absolutely free from any outside influence. No even inward impulse impinges upon God's freedom. God's freedom for planning and action emanates from a completely free will, founded on a complete and absolute love. The Father loves the Son absolutely, meaning complete love made the Father and Son an Absolute One.. Through the Father's love for the Son, God loved the world in the Son and sent Him to the world to transfer His love--God's love--to mankind. Though a man may love God, we cannot say that he loves Him totally or absolutely. This is impossible, because absoluteness is an attribute belonging to God alone. It was therefore said, "You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mk. 12:30.) This means that man should love God with all his being, meaning, with all the faculties that control man's nature. In this way, his nature will be free from every outer and inner influence, including the devil who was able to affect man's mind, for he is a mental power. Through the mind, the devil infiltrated into man all his passions, making man his slave in

his thoughts or in his passions: "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44.)

So when a man in Adam submitted to the devil's idea, the devil's passions immediately entered man's heart and made him a slave, through the devil's thoughts and actions of the passions that took control of man's heart.

The Son came to transfer man's mind from the devil to God: "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16.) This happened by opening man's mind through the spirit and the word to know the truth, the truth being God:

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; ... He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you (proclaim it to you)" (Jn. 16:13, 14.)

"Sanctify them in the truth; the word is truth" (Jn. 17:17.)

"Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk. 24:45.)

Through the Word, God's word, and through the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, Christ transported man's mind from the devil to God. Thus, man's mind was freed from the devil's bondage and consequently and inevitably man's heart was freed from the devil's passions to the love of God. "For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father" (Jn. 16:27.) Christ confirmed God's love for us by asking Him, "I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known that the love with which though has loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn. 17:26.)

The Son thus succeeded in completely transferring to us the Father's love with which he loved His Son. If the Father's love for His Son controls our hearts, then God possesses us. Thus, the devil is subjugated beneath our feet and we gain the freedom of being His children.