

## Ever-elusive Freedom

How does one explain why Americans talk so enthusiastically about *freedom* when they're probably the least free people on the globe (using the definition philosophers use for material detachment)? Freedom from worldly desires is my definition of freedom. If freedom to an American means free from faceless rulers who exploit them, then the joke's surely on them. George W. Bush used the word 'freedom' as though he and those he was addressing knew what he was talking about. The great bulk of his listeners have never given it a moment's thought. I'm sure George hadn't. They just assume it means 'to do what they want within reason without obstruction.' George wasn't free. He couldn't just do what he wanted within reason. During his presidency, he did exactly as he was told to do. Had he refused, he would have been assassinated "by some nut-case like Oswald". That's how power works in the home of the brave and the land of the free. So if the man with whom the buck stops is a prisoner to nasty powers that be (a criminal oligarchy in the plutocracy), what hope does John Doe have of savouring a little freedom? Buckley's chance is my guess. Zero. Unless, that is, he learns what freedom means, and dedicates himself to its pursuit. The fact is that most peo-

ple alive at any given time won't experience that rare privilege.

The great irony about the Christian ex-President is that by the definitions that apply at the metaphysical level, a soul is oppressed, fragmented and incomplete whilst he remains an idolatrous believer in the doctrine of others (in this case Protestant Christianity, as devised by men). Men's minds are enslaved to one doctrine or another. That is the human condition. We're not free. If so few of the victims come to see this, it's because the doctrines have in-built defence mechanisms. They tell their victim that if he doubts the truth of their faith, he'll be damned for all eternity. That separates the men from the boys, or the sheep from the goats. I've had the men from a born-again revivalist faith work this number on me. Two of them still limp today. It's a man's duty in life to make his own beliefs, in good conscience, not adopt the dictates of those who threaten him with eternal agony if he remains independent (as if they knew of such things, the arrogant fools). Buckling to this or any threat is electing to abdicate one's birthright of freedom. This is, of course, where George's freedom came undone. If you're prepared to buckle to one form of oppressor, the way is clear for others to join him. Since nobody is home, gate-crashers have carte blanche to invade the GWB personality or soul at will. And they did: the religious

Right; the oil cartels; the corporate mafia; the plutocracy in general, etc ad nauseum.

The first lesson in freedom consists in knowing that you have to be extremely courageous to even want it, let alone pursue it. The Bible says the gate to that path is narrow; so narrow that few find it, and many are those who don't. You can see why so many of us compromise and end up justifying our particular form of enslavement. You can only claim to be free when you're prepared to die for the privilege of being free. Most people aren't prepared to die, for that or anything else. They want to live as long as they can. As long as that's what dominates the decision-making, most people will exist in one form of slavery or another. Unlike Americans, I've never considered myself privileged to live in a land of the free. Australia isn't free. It thinks it is but it's oppressive and stifling in its narrow-mindedness. Only fools think it's free, and they keep it that way by their ignorance and denial of reality. I tried changing that by running for parliament twice. I vowed never to attempt it again.

I learned that the system by which men rule the mob is by its very nature corrupt, and if you try to change it, you're destined to be disappointed if not injured. If you doubt this, name one politician who can rightly claim to have changed the system and left it purified? Lincoln, when he freed the slaves? No. They merely got slotted into a different, more subtle, form

of slavery shared by the white trash. The stigma of being black survived the Lincoln's Proclamation, as did the stigma of being poor and without hope. Lincoln wasn't an alchemist; nor was Christ. Some miracles are impossible. What really needed to be confronted cannot in fact be confronted, and Lincoln knew it. He'd have to change every individual soul in America and the world. There is no magic wand that does that trick. The only person who can do it is the individual soul itself. It's destined to do it by trial and error over many lifetimes, and it's destined to succeed--eventually.

Lincoln may have been more advanced spiritually than the rest of his countrymen, but he was powerless to guarantee freedom to anybody but himself. He freed himself from the bankers—the other enemy he said he had during the Civil War—by creating the greenback to finance the work without the bankers' 36% interest fee. But Lincoln's freedom was in his mind, the only place it's to be found, being a spiritual thing, not physical or material. We'll never know freedom until we understand what this means. You won't learn this sort of thing in a religious or educational institution. If you do learn it, it'll be because you, personally, suffered sufficiently to abandon the habits that enchained you.

Serfdom is about pandering to your fears and prejudices that others exploit. Freedom is about abandoning irrational fears and taking responsibility for your self. Knowing this won't make any miracles happen. But it

may change, if only ever so slightly, the sort of decisions you make. If that's the case, you're moving a little closer to that narrow gate that, in our really conscious moments, we all secretly yearn to reach.