

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th

Subject : English

Chapter : 1

Chapter Name : Freedom

Q1 Point out the difference between the slavery of man to Nature and the unnatural slavery of man to Man.

Answer. The renowned dramatist and critic G.B. Shaw has explored the concept of freedom in this lesson. His pragmatist perspective pinpoints the fact that a man can never be completely free. He is a slave in one way or the other. However, the type of slavery he chooses is entirely upon him. The first type- slavery of man to Nature, is inherent in every human being. We are all slaves to our instincts of hunger, sleep, cleanliness, dressing up and bearing a child (in this case additional slavery for a woman). These natural duties are a part and parcel of our lives and every individual from the highest order to the lowest, are all slaves to their nature, as he says, "These natural jobs cannot be shirked." However, the second type of slavery is the worst form according to the playwright. It is the slavery of Man to Man. The type of slavery where we let someone else take the upper hand and let them shift the weight of their slavery to our shoulders. It is the type of slavery where we give in the hard labour required to complete the task but the fruits of that labour are enjoyed by someone else. Thus, this form of slavery is extremely unnatural and distinctly different from slavery to Nature which is an inherent part of being human.

A second and perhaps the most important difference between both the types of slavery is that man to Nature slavery gives us comfort and joy. We find a great amount of pleasure in giving in to the demands of nature. However, the slavery of man to man is unnatural and hateful and degrading both physically and mentally. It creates class wars between the privileged and the underprivileged, between workers and capitalists. Ultimately, there can be no peace as long as this type of slavery exists.

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Q2 What are the ways in which people are subjected to greater control in the personal spheres than in the wider political sphere?

Answer. Nature exerts some amount of control over every living being. Human beings, as a part of nature itself, cannot shirk away from the responsibilities which nature thrust upon them. The natural urges of eating, sleeping, drinking, etc are all a part of that control which nature exerts upon us and its the first type of slavery. In our personal spheres thus, we are all slaves to nature. Even if we wanted to escape these duties, it would be physically impossible to do so and we are slaves to nature in this respect. However, in the second type of slavery i.e. man to man slavery, the control exerted on us is by an external source or a person. It remains our decision to abide or avoid that person's dictums. Hence, in the wider political sphere, it is our decision to follow a leader or unfollow him based on our circumstances. But in the personal sphere, we are all slaves to nature and do not have much of a choice when it comes to complying with its orders. Hence, people are subjected to greater control in the personal sphere than in the wider political sphere.

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Q3 List the common misconceptions about 'freedom' that Shaw tries to debunk?

Answer. G.B. Shaw has debunked quite a few misconceptions about freedom in this work. He starts the essay with the very question which drives home the theme of the essay very clearly, "What is a perfectly free person?". According to Shaw, no person is entirely free. He is either dominated by nature or by another man. The nature to man slavery consists of our inherent desires and needs and instincts which we cannot shirk away. It is a part of who we are. Thus, the first misconception that an individual can be completely free is debunked here.

Secondly, Shaw talks about democracy and the freedom it really holds. In any democracy, freedom is an important aspect. However, the rulers or the leaders seek to twist that to their own needs. They have convinced rather fooled the masses that through their right to vote and elect, the rulers ruling over them have been their own choice. They succeed in fooling the masses that through democracy, they exercise power over themselves. But in reality, the candidates chosen in the election are mere acquaintances of the rulers themselves. The freedom of choice between the candidates is not really choice because whoever is chosen would be from the ruling class influenced by the rich who will work according to the whims and fancies of the ruling class. The masses would not be benefited in any way. Thus, he debunked the concept of freedom in democracy as a farce.

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Q4 Why, according to Krishnamurti, are the concepts of freedom and discipline contradictory to one another?

Answer. J. Krishnamurthy believed that the concepts of freedom and discipline are contradictory to one another. Discipline tends to bind an individual within certain restraints of tradition and morality. When bound by such restraints, true freedom can never be achieved. Discipline is imposed upon individuals by an external force. As such, the individual is not allowed to question the traditions. Without questioning, experimenting and free-thinking, there cannot be intellectual development and sensitivity and thus, true freedom can never be achieved. We become robotic, unable to empathize or be sensitive to the struggles of other individuals. Without questioning, we simply give in to the traditions mindlessly and there is no intellectual growth in following something blindly. And without any intellectual growth, there can never be freedom. Thus, the concepts of freedom and discipline contradict each other.

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Q5 How does the process of inquiry lead to true freedom?

Answer. Questioning or inquiring about the present set of rules and traditions that our ancestors have imposed upon us, will help in developing other perspectives and lead to the functioning of our intellectual faculty. Through inquiry, we also develop sensitivity to the struggles of others. As a result, our intellectual faculty expands and we achieve more knowledge than we could have received when we were bound by traditions. This knowledge helps us achieve true freedom. Thus, instead of complying with the traditions completely, we must inquire about their relevance in order to have a broader understanding of their importance, thereby securing several perspectives and developing our intellect. This will lead us to true freedom.

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Q1 According to the author, the masses are prevented from realizing their slavery; the masses are also continually reminded that they have the right to vote. Do you think this idea holds good for our country too?

Answer. G.B. Shaw is known for his wit and satire as an author and playwright. His sardonic tone takes a more acerbic turn as he gradually debunks the concept of democracy in this chapter. According to him, democracy does not really explore freedom. It is instead slavery in disguise. The masses are brainwashed continually and the type of slavery is changed according to the convenience of the rulers. Like he says, “When chattel slavery of the negro sort costs more than wage slavery, they abolish chattel slavery and make you free to choose between one employment or one master and another and this they call a glorious triumph for freedom, though for you it is merely the key of the street.” The change in systems does not necessarily create any sort of benefits for the people ruled. However, when it is questioned then the masses are reminded that they had a right to vote and that the rulers against whom they are raising their voices have been chosen by them in the first place. The candidates for whom the masses vote are the rich friends of the rulers, so in retrospect, the vote does not create any difference or benefits at all. However, the newspapers (also under the influence of the rulers) assures the masses that their vote has decided the ruler and that this constitutes the freedom that democracy offers and oddly enough the masses are fooled with such assurances, thus believing in the ‘freedom’ called democracy.

The entire scenario on democracy painted by Shaw in this chapter holds true for our country as well. The huge edifice of democracy in our country is built on the so-called foundation of the three pillars of the Indian constitution, namely ‘of the people, for the people and by the people’. Nevertheless, in reality, the people themselves get caught into the web of choosing the best from the group of worsts and the masses get entangled into the magic of being eligible to vote thereby enslaving themselves into being ruled by one party or the other.

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Q2 ‘Nature may have tricks up her sleeve to check us if the chemists exploit her too greedily’. Discuss.

Answer. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the age of machinery, production of goods had increased manifold. There have been new-age technologies which have helped in speeding up the process of agricultural productions resulting in thriving produce. There are ways to increase the quality of the raw materials to get the best end products. However, too much of the exploitation of natural resources can have adverse effects. The use of chemical fertilisers, in factories as well as in agricultural fields creates an impact on nature. If exploited to a great extent, nature retaliates back in the form of natural disasters. For example, too much use of pesticides and insecticide

in the fields may contaminate the groundwater and subsequently the nearby water bodies, rendering them unfit for use and leading to a water crisis in the area, which may eventually result in droughts. Thus, what Shaw means to say is that there should be a check on the use of natural resources otherwise, "Nature may have tricks up her sleeve to check us if the chemists exploit her too greedily".

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Q3 Respect for elders is not to be confused with blind obedience. Discuss.

Answer. The famous writer J. Krishnamurthy, gives us an honest insight into the concepts of freedom and discipline. According to him, respecting elders is entirely different from blindly obeying their orders but we often get confused between both. Respecting elders is definitely important. However, that does not mean that we comply with every word that they say. Centuries of traditions are imposed upon us and we are usually trained never to question them. However, without questioning, there can never be the development of the intellectual faculty. Our mind becomes active and clear and we do not remain frightened individuals afraid to question the doubts arising in our minds and thereby perpetually living in conflict. Without questioning, we can never break free from traditions and live a life of our own. Hence, true freedom can never be achieved through blind obedience and it does more harm than good.

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Q1 Both the texts are on 'freedom'. Comment on the difference in the style of treatment of the topic in them.

Answer. G.B. Shaw's 'Freedom' is a satirical approach to the concept of freedom. Shaw is known for his satirical style of writing and his wit takes an acerbic turn when he debunks the entire concept of freedom through this work. He states historical facts and presents his statements about freedom by justifying them with those facts. He hits directly on the reader's conscience through his sharp intellect and witty observations. He doesn't shy away from expressing his thoughts and his distastes on various topics like democracy, the British government or the concept of freedom in general. Shaw makes strong statements and provides enough proof from history to support his claims

and that is how he treats the topic bringing the truth to the forefront and blowing the cover of farcical institutions.

J. Krishnamurthy, on the other hand, in his work, 'Understanding Freedom and Discipline' treats the topic on a much calmer level. His work is simpler and lacks the sardonic undertone of Shaw's masterpiece. He presents an analysis which he makes about freedom. He talks about the contradictory nature of freedom and discipline and provides a series of explanation which justifies his analysis. Thus, while Shaw's treatment of the topic is satirical taking historical facts into account to justify his statements, Krishnamurthy treats it through explanations to justify his analysis.

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Q2 When Shaw makes a statement he supports it with a number of examples. Identify two sections in the text which explain a statement with examples. Write down the main statement and the examples.

Notice how this contributes to the effectiveness of the writing.

Answer. There are many statements which Shaw make in the text, two of which are as follows:

"The object of all honest governments should be to prevent your being imposed on in this way. But the object of most actual governments, I regret to say, is exactly the opposite. They enforce your slavery and call it freedom." He goes on to justify this statement by providing the example of chattel slavery of the negro, "When chattel slavery of the negro sort costs more than wage slavery, they abolish chattel slavery and make you free to choose between one employment or one master and another and this they call a glorious triumph for freedom, though for you it is merely the key of the street. When you complain, they promise that in future you shall govern the country for yourself. They redeem this promise by giving you a vote, and having a general election every five years or so." He gives further examples in the text when he talks about the American freedom struggle, "From our earliest years we are taught that our country is the land of the free, and that our freedom was won for us by our forefathers when they made King John sign Magna Charta (also spelt Carta)—when they defeated the Spanish Armada—and when, only the other day, they quite unintentionally changed the German, Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman empires into republics."

"The slavery of man to man is the very opposite of this. It is hateful to the body and to the spirit." Shaw provides further examples to justify this statement. "The latest of the great Jewish prophets, a gentleman named Marx, spent his life in proving that there is no extremity of selfish cruelty at which the slavery of man to man will stop if it be not stopped by law.....Thomas More, who has just been canonized, held that we shall never have a peaceful and stable society until this struggle is ended by the abolition of slavery altogether."

The statement of historical facts fiercely drives home the lesson that Shaw wants to give to the readers. The effectiveness of the writing is increased manifold and the readers

experience the same disgust and contempt that Shaw himself felt while penning down the myth of freedom and debunking the farce it is.

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Q3 Notice the use of personal pronouns in the two texts. Did this make you identify yourself with the topic than if it had been written in an impersonal style? As you read the texts, were you able to relate the writer's thoughts with the way you lead your own life?

Answer. The use of personal pronouns has been made in both the texts. Yes, the use of personal pronouns helped us to identify ourselves in the text with the context of real freedom and as both the texts are written using personal pronouns it helped us to relate the writer's thoughts in our lives.

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