

FREEDOM

If I handed you the reader an empty sealed carton or bottle and asked you to open it, I guess you would carefully cut the seal open the lid and peer into the container and exclaim. "Its empty" Ah but it's not, it contains air. This air the most expensive element we can secure remained in the carton or bottle is colourless odourless and free. Yes free. There it was light in weight, invisible odourless, and without form, but without it we as a planet would not survive. And it is free.

As I see it free and freedom are twins, the former denotes one to act at will; not under constraint neither enslaved nor confined. The latter a personal liberty from slavery meaning much of a muchness. The air is free and we have freedom to breathe it. A New Zealander would consider that our drinking water was free to obtain via the tap. Therefore the two main elements in life are free to us and one would have thought also for the rest of earth's population. Not so consider draughts and possession of water for a political gain.

Freedom in the form of speech came along in another form over the last few weeks, that being the Freedom of Speech. Freedom it seems can be measured in many ways, but one measuring stick we accept here in NZ is a way of life. I do not sit well with the "rights clause" of life. The call so often yelled "I have my rights "might not go down to well at the point of an AK47.

We now have people nipping at the edges of the freedom of speech. It's different to the people who hijack planes and fly them into Towers. They are the people who want to relieve us of the freedom we enjoy. They have the love of bloodshed and its apocalyptic end and is designed to close down our freedom. Just for the moment let your imagination run away with you and consider what would happen if these extremists developed nuclear power or weapons of mass destruction, "Rights won't mean much then!"

Over the last three weeks we had people wanting to address an audience on the subject of free speech but in all cases the speakers were not allowed to advance due to extreme interruption, preventing the Free Speech to be held in an ordinary way. Then out came the comments; what it costs to be free, and with it definitions. I thought I knew what it was but freedom has been redefined.

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression including the right to seek receive and impart information and opinions of any kind and in any form; and in the quote from the Chief Legal Advisor at the Human Commission " The right to freedom expression is one of the most valued and well known human rights, however it is not without boundaries being reasonable limitations. Hate, race, gender, colour, sexual orientation, or disability to mention a few. Why the subject of Free Speech is being attacked beats me.

Before we became Freemasons at initiation we were asked the simple question before we enter the Lodge about being free. We all answer in the affirmative for we are free of enslavement. Free to enjoy the fellowship, the ambiance and the solemnity of the meeting. Free to express ourselves in the Lodge Room or Refectory, free to attend or apologise non-attendance.

Free to stay away from the meetings. But let me say this, freedom is a hard task master Take freedom as accepted, and the freedom becomes contagious. It will creep up on you, and like any carrier relieve you of the every belief you thought was free.

Maybe we cannot stop the animus of the world, and that we have difficulty in seeing another point of view and bring peace to the planet but one thing is for sure we can all attend our Lodge meeting when called upon to do so and if for nothing else to demonstrate we are free to come and go to them. Its well worth protecting, even fighting for.