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Freedom through Rebel

The concept of freedom can be contradictory according to the Alexander Hamilton play. However, freedom is not a matter of living in free country. It’s a matter of being able to live in a just society without the notion of being judged for being different. Of course, public sentiments should be taken into account before saying or doing something that is different. This freedom of not hurting public sentiment is a process of long struggle and education. One must learn not only oneself, but also learn the society around him or her to be able to be accepted and be accepting. Only then can one have a just society where true freedom exists.

Frederick Douglas drew the image of himself - brave determines black enslaved rebel on a beautiful yet simple state in his “Learning to Read” passage. He wrote, “If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the inch and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell (Frederick, 1845)”. The author became friends with white children in shipyards who would sympathize with him, give him hope and sometimes in return of bread they would give him “more valuable bread of knowledge”. He would carry his books with him and quickly finish his tasks to study for a while, and when he would be left home to take care of the house, he’d learn how to read by studying the books and notes of the young Master Thomas, who was the sin of the authors’ owner. The author rebelled against oppression by using his very tender but extremely advanced wit to firstly overcome his fear of getting caught always finishing tasks given to him by his Master. He would not trust anyone, nor would he talk about personal feeling with anyone but the white friends he made during the time he worked on his errands. He made friends wisely as well. He knew that his friends wouldn’t talk to anyone about befriending a black slave, because that would simply bring an uncomfortable situation upon themselves. The author simply wanted to learn, but he didn’t go to the extent of killing his Master like other slaves of that time. He maintained his limit, yet he was determined. In his case, going to the extent of finding freedom by being a rebel was the extent of healthy determination.

Gloria Anazdúa, in her article “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” describes that she was sent to the corner of the classroom for “talking back”, when actually she was just speaking in her own language. She was told, “if you want to be American, speak American. If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong (Anazdúa, 1987)”. It is actually sad that even today many children and adults all over the country are being told to either speak “American” – a language that doesn’t even exist or leave the country. The writer couldn’t practice her rights of speaking English in Mexico, nor could she practice her rights of speaking Spanish in the United States. She had to be ashamed of her own language, Chicano Spanish because it was something of the mixed sort, derived from English and Spanish. However, the writer eventually found her identity-based freedom by realizing that her language and culture are what makes her an individual. She had to rebel against herself to blossom as a proud Chicana. She had to be patient internally to come out and identify herself as what she truly is so that she can practice her rights properly. A similar language oppression occurred in Bangladesh in the early 1950’s at a larger scale. Bangladeshis believe that their mother tongue, Bengali, is their identity and that faith is the reason why a country named Bangladesh exists, where people speak their own ethnic language. Suffering from not knowing the answers to ethnicity and race-based questions can be awfully confusing. One can become imprisoned by one oneself within the social stigma. Through self-recognition and understanding human rights, one can rebel against the social stigma to gain freedom from one’s own mind.

In 1952 when leaders of West Pakistan wanted to force Urdu on the Bengali speaking East Pakistan, the students of Dhaka University revolted. They laid down their lives so that they could speak in their language. This language movement gave birth to the independence of East Pakistan. When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of East Pakistan won the general election of Pakistan in 1970, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of West Pakistan refused to hand over the power to Sheikh Mujib. This became a national crisis and on the night of March 25th,1971, under the command of Yahyah Khan, Pakistani armed forces carried out a massacre in Dhaka, and after midnight Sheikh Mujib was jailed. Previously, on 7th March,1971, Sheikh Mujib indirectly declared independence of East Pakistan from West Pakistan. On March 26th,1971, Major Ziaur Rahman declared official independence from Shwadhin Bangla Betar Kendra on the behalf of the Great Leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, also known as the father of the nation of Bangladesh. After that, a war broke out, and continued for 9 months against the Pakistani army with the help of the Indian army until December 16th,1971 when the Pakistani army surrendered to General Aurora of the Indian army. Three million people sacrificed their lives and countless women were raped during the war just to give birth to Bangladesh. New Statement reported, “If blood is the price of a people’s right to independence, Bangladesh has overpaid.” (Bangladesh Genocide Archive, 2012). The example of independence of Bangladesh shows to what extent people can go to in order to rebel against oppression. People of Bangladesh broke the limit and went beyond any limit if any limit did exist. But such extreme revolutions will always come with a price and Bangladesh paid the price of blood and rape.

Freedom has always been a golden egg. Mankind has been in search of freedom from the very beginning. The movement of gaining freedom always started with small ideas by people who were thought to be out of their minds. But in the end freedom was always won with determination, strong faith and with the courage of a rebel against established ideologies. Freedom is not just an idea that promotes the demolition of outside influence. Freedom is the idea of acceptance, compassion and sound knowledge to embrace difference and diversity as what makes a society more united. To me freedom is unity and acceptance.