

# INNER UNFREEDOM

## Freedom from Attachments, Resentments and Negative feelings

### "THE PRISONER"

Encountering our inner prison,  
Our Inner Chains, Our Un-freedom  
We are prisoners. Who imprisoned us?  
Who forged our inner chains?  
How to break free!

#### Aims of This encounter.

- ✓ *To grow in self-knowledge*
- ✓ *To discover our attachments*
- ✓ *To realize that we are in bondage*
- ✓ *To pick courage to fight for 'inner freedom'*

#### Target Audience

All audiences, Christians and non Christians  
Specially Youth and College students

#### Uses of These Notes

For recollections  
For prayer meetings  
As a part of a retreat  
For group discussion  
For personal examination

#### Requirements

Copies of the Poem "The Prisoner" and the questionnaire found in No. 2 below for all

### **1. Introductory Session**

Welcome the participants  
Singing hymns and/or bhajans.  
Opening prayer.

### **2. Personal Work**

*Instructions for the participants*

**First: Read very carefully the poem of R. Tagore: "The Prisoner"**

Prisoner, tell me: who was it that bound you?

It was myself, my Master, said the prisoner.

I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power,

And I amassed in my own treasure house the money due to my King!

When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my Lord,  
And on waking up, I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure house!

Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?  
It was I, said the prisoner, who forged this chain very carefully,  
I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive  
leaving me in freedom, undisturbed!  
Thus, night and day, I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes.  
When at last the work was done, and the links were complete and unbreakable,  
I found that it held me in its grip." (Gitanjali No. 31)

**Secondly, Carefully, answer in writing the questionnaire below.**

1. Are we prisoners? In what sense?
2. Prisoners to whom or to what? How?
3. When did we become prisoners? Where is our prison?
4. What are the things we are running after? What's the wealth we want to amass?
5. In the poem, what is the meaning of "sleep overcoming us"? What sort of sleep is this? How does it overcome us? Has it overcome you too? Explain.
6. What is the meaning of "being prisoners in our own treasure house"?
7. What do the chains stand for in the poem? Are you really free?
8. What are the chains binding us? How?
9. Who has forged our chains? How? When?
10. What can we do to break loose from our chains and escape the prison of our "treasure house"? Explain.

**3. Group Work: Sharing – Feedback - Interaction - Prayer**

- ✓ Each one shares with the group what he has written. (*Share only what you feel comfortable to share*)
- ✓ While the sharing goes on, clarifications will be allowed. No questioning or discussions to be entertained on shared materials.
- ✓ Impress on the members to be very attentive and to listen to what each one says, and how he says it. (*Non-verbal language*)
- ✓ Request the participants to jot down their observations. (*These jottings will be very valuable after a little while for feedback and interaction with the group members.*)
- ✓ After the sharing is over, those who wish may ask the group members to give them "feedback". On the occasion of the feedback, interaction should be fostered.
- ✓ When the member receiving feedback is satisfied, the group members will pray for him aloud and spontaneously.
- ✓ When one person has been dealt with, the next volunteer who asked for feed-back will follow and so on and forth.

**4. An Input on the Main Findings of the Day**

(*Suggested ideas*)

- On attachments. Their nature, how are they born, and their evil effects.
- Inner freedom. True independence.

- Being possessed by our possessions.
- Being enslaved by the people we "love".
- Freedom in love relationships.
- Breaking away from compulsions, even religious compulsions.
- Meaning of being autonomous persons.
- Freedom from fears, anxieties, guilt.
- The enslaving effect of negative feelings like, resentments, rancor, unforgiveness
- Being slaves to human respect and public opinion.
- Falling into the rut of competitiveness, trying to keep up with the Joneses.
- How to be free. Conditions and requisites for inner freedom such as positive self-image, security, self-acceptance, self-love, being ourselves, awareness, radical questioning, away from prejudice, brutal self-honesty, courage, vitality.

## **5. Time for Personal Prayer and Reflection**

Leave the participants alone for personal reflection and prayer.

In silence in the presence of God, let them take notes and jottings on the main ideas and "discoveries" of the day

Next, encourage them to pray spontaneously for one another

You may read extracts from Mathew, Chapters 5 and 6 (Sermon of the Mount) especially

Mt 5/3-10 The Beatitudes,

Mt 5/43-47 Love for enemies

Mt 6/19-20 Love for riches

Mt 6/24-34 God and possessions..

You may read, comment and pray on the two beautiful pieces of writing of Archbishop Alban. Goodier in his book "The Life that is Light" given below:.

### ***Spiritual Freedom`***

- To be Rich or to be Poor
- To be clever or to be dull,
- To be handsome or to be deformed,
- To be strong or to be weakling,
- To be attractive or to be drab,
- To be striking or to be plain.
- To be learned or to be Ignorant
- To be educated or to be common,
- To be in health or to suffer,
- To be active or to be idle,
- To be used or to be set aside,
- To be loved or to be ignored.
- To be Successful or to Fail
- To be honored or to be despised,
- To be rewarded or to be passed over,

- To be known or to be unknown,
- To have friends or to have none,
- To live long or to die soon.

**On neither can I set my Heart  
In both I can equally serve God  
Each is a gift of God,  
And as such has equal value.**

## *Liberation*

**To be slave of nothing,**  
To be the slave not even of myself,  
To be able to make myself obey,  
To make myself say “no”,  
To make myself say “yes”.

**To have a noble end in view,**  
To make myself live for it,  
To be able to use all things for that end,  
A life of sacrifice,  
a life of endeavor

**To be rid of useless burdens,**  
To shoulder my own burdens  
To shoulder the burdens of my fellow-men,  
Understanding all,  
In sympathy with all.

**To look at all things evenly,**  
Shunning none too much,  
For there is good in all,  
Desiring none too much,  
For in all “too much” is evil

**To live thus nobly,**  
To be obeyed by myself,  
This is freedom,  
The freedom of the children of God,  
The freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

## APPENDIX      Group Activities

### Note:

- ✓ If you have time at your disposal, Group Activities prove very effective to drive home the main insights of the event. Do not miss them.
- ✓ The best time to hold activities are the afternoon hours.
- ✓ If you decide to have them, divide the larger group into smaller ones of about 6 to 8 participants each..
- ✓ Assign to each group an activity. Better still allow them to choose their own activity.
- ✓ We suggest here below some likely items for activities.

### Preparation of the Activities

#### Instructions to the Small Groups.

Each group will prepare a "symbolic representation" to be shown to the house, The symbolic representation will express some of the insights group members experienced at the sessions.

#### It may be:

- A symbolic mime
- A parable or a fable
- An active tableau
- Slogan competition.
- 
- An allegoric skit
- A dance drama
- Symbolic drawings, Etc.

### Presentation of the Activities

Each group will present the house its activity.

After each presentation, a short evaluation and discussion will follow.