

“THE WOULD BE LIBERATOR”

Note:

This fable describes different attitudes and stances towards social liberation under the following aspects:

- *Type of leaders*
- *Exploiters and exploited*
- *Collaboration and commitment*
- *True and false solutions.*

THE FABLE.

Once upon a time, in the country of the Cats, life for the cat population was tough. They had to work very hard for a living. The big boss of the cats “Rabon” was a ruthless and heartless cat. After all, he was the “Great Chief”.

He surrounded himself with a gang of heartless cats who called themselves “The Masters”. Everybody except the “Masters” had to slog. For everybody life was misery, there was no getting away from the daily grind; no one was happy. But, not so for the Masters, of course, Rabon and his loyal friends had an easy and enjoyable life.

One day, a young and very energetic cat “Liberator”, by name, with the help of few of his friends, planned a secret escape from the country of the cats. With old sardine tins strung together, they built a raft and, unnoticed by the “Masters”, sailed into freedom.

To their good fortune, very soon they spotted an island not far away, which to their greater fortunate was inhabited only by rats!

For The Liberator and his companions, life was very comfortable now! In the space of a few days they built houses, they started a sardine cannery and even a rat farm for rodent exploitation!

Of course, all that, demanded lots of work. Very soon the free cats got tired of it. Their earlier enthusiasm died. At this junction, the cats called a meeting to discuss the problem of how best to ease their excessive work and to find a way to enjoy a more leisurely life.

At the meeting, many solutions were put forth, but none met with complete approval. Then Liberator came out with his master plan; “Look, we have in our rat farm hundreds of rats doing nothing but eating and growing fatter day by day. Instead of using them for food, why not force them to work for us? This suggestion was unanimously accepted.

Thence forward, the cats agreed to forgo their favorite dish in order to live a life of leisure. Their only work they had now was to supervise the work of the rats. No doubt Liberator was a genial cat! He was their undisputed leader.

Sometime later, the rats got fed up of their life of slavery; so, they, like the cats had done earlier, planned a secret escape. On one fine morning, when the cats got up from their sleep, they found that all the rats had escaped. Liberator was mad with rage!

As the days went by, there was nothing to eat, and the cats, in order to survive had to work very hard. Liberator lost his popularity. He was compelled to step down. Against his wish, the cats agreed to leave the island and return to their former country.

So, they boarded the same raft that had brought them into the island and left. When they arrived at their home country, they were surprised to see how things had changed for the better. Everybody looked happy and living a contented life.

That was what brought the change. Soon after Liberator and his friends had left their country, some cats secretly organized a rebellion against “Rabon” and “The Masters” and drove the tyrants away. From that moment onwards, everything improved. Now there was peace and justice.

Still a bigger surprise awaited the home comers! When they went to their old houses, they found them occupied by new tenants.. In vain, they, the newly arrived cats pleaded before the chiefs of the village to allow them to occupy their former houses.

Protests, angry words, threats fell on deaf ears! The decision of the chiefs, backed by the villagers was that since the houses of the cats who deserted the village had been vacant for such a long time, they had to be given to the families of the cats who had suffered most, during the rebellion against “ Rabon and the Masters”.

Adaptation of a script of a Spanish Audiovisual : "Liberton"

DISCUSSION:

The story of “The Liberator’ is rich in ideas, we suggest below some themes for discussion.

- ❖ Liberty
- ❖ Equality of rights and opportunities for all.
- ❖ Work and labor
- ❖ Oppression and exploitation
- ❖ The Exploited soon may turn into exploiters.
- ❖ Class struggle
- ❖ Co-operation
- ❖ Social commitment
- ❖ Attitudes to society (dictatorial, democratic, etc).
- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Escapism
- ❖ Human rights.

IDEAS FOR AN INPUT AND REFLECTION.

- There are two types of liberation, one from the inside – *mind and heart* - the other from the outside – *the structures only*
- There are some, wrongly called leaders, who offer wrong solutions to the social problems.
- There is the danger of ‘escapism’ when one is faced with social problems.

- There are false solutions that make us shirk the responsibility and the hard work necessary to bring about social change.
- It is nearly impossible to find true and practical solutions to social evils where the bulk of the population lacks civic consciousness, moral sense and a spirit of unity.
- In all societies “the power elite minorities” constitute the greatest obstacle to liberation.
- Liberation is also, hindered by opportunists who serve ‘powers that are’
- The fact that both, the exploiter and the exploited, are slave to current societal values makes the task of liberation all the more difficult
- Whenever our personal interests are involved, we are liable to prefer ‘soft-pacifist’ solutions to ‘root-and-branch’ ones
- Our ‘selfish’ attitudes help maintain unjust structures.
- The result is that the whole political and economic fabric of society is structured to dominate and exploit instead of to serve and liberate.
- We end up by having a set of economic social and political structures that are nothing but ‘legalized’ forms of injustice and oppression.
- In order to counteract social evils, we have first of all, to develop attitudes which foster a genuinely humane existence, the attitudes of the prophets, who courageously inveighed against selfishness and risked their lives to initiate a process of change.
- The attitudes wanted for a true social change are love, cooperation, collaboration, sharing, renunciation and reconciliation, namely. Christ’s own attitudes as we find them in the Beatitudes.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

1. Point out the differences between liberation ‘from the inside’ and liberation ‘from the outside’. What will be the consequences flowing from these two different approaches.
2. Ask the participants to give examples of well-known liberators and to indicate the kind of liberation they affected or attempted.
3. Prepare posters that explain the following points:
 - The ‘unconditional followers’ of Rabon.
 - A united and disunited people
 - Examples of ‘escapist’ attitudes
 - Instances of how the story exemplifies us in the actual situations of our lives.