FREEDOM AND WILL POWER IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF KARL JASPER: IMPLICATIONS ON CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Abstract
Freedom is the absence of coercion and constraints and will power is the ability of human beings to make choices without external influences. The philosophy of Karl Jaspers' clearly illustrates the position of man in making choices and exercising basic human rights and freedom without fear of reprimand. Using the method of critical analysis, this paper finds out the philosophical undertones present in Karl Jaspers' notion of freedom and self-will as it can be applied and evident in our contemporary Nigerian society.
Keywords: Freedom, Will Power, Philosophy, Contemporary Nigeria Society.

Introduction

The word "Freedom" stands for something greater than just the right to act in whichever way one wishes to act. It also stands for securing to everyone an equal opportunity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Freedom is a term which is synonymous with liberty. It has been a point of deliberation among various epochs of philosophy in both ethical and political circles. A man is said to be free to the extent that he can choose his goals or the course of his conduct without being compelled to act as he would not himself choose to act. It is the absence of the imposition of one's will by any other authority. Karl jasper is reputed for his philosophy of freedom which he considers not free but gained. According to Jasper (1959), "Freedom is not absolute; it is always bound at the same time. I do not have it, I gain it" (p. 32).

On the other hand, Karl Jasper raised a strong philosophy of will power. In his opinion, man can be said to possess the power to decide what to do whether it is good or bad. This study attempts to test the extent to which Karl Jasper's philosophy of freedom and will power applies to the contemporary Nigerian society with emphasis on the need to practically and realizably encourage the freedom of all citizens and allow them rooms to make choices without fear or favour.

Definition of Freedom

According to Encyclopaedia of philosophy, freedom is a condition characterized by the absence of coercion or constraint imposed by another person. It is also the absence of the imposition of one's will on another person either by the superior, the state or by any other authority. When freedom is perceived as this, it designates the area of conducts within which each man chooses his own course, and it is protected from compulsion or restraints. Bergson (1981) defines freedom as that which "involves not only the relation of man to nature, but that of nature to God and God to man" (p. 126). The general notion of freedom in relation to outward reality has become a serious and

a living problem in modern metaphysics. It touches this problem as far as power of obeying the moral imperatives is concerned, and it demands that at least, the mechanism of nature should not be indifferent or inimical to its activities. The freedom of man as well involves the exercise and satisfaction of specific interest and forms of activities which are accepted as possessing special moral and social importance without internal or external force.

Freedom in general is the state of not being forced or determined by something external in so far as it is joined to a definite internal faculty of self-determination (Brigger, 1971, p. 146). From the assertion of Brigger, we can say that freedom involves personal determination to choice. It is the capacity to make a contributive value in an act. Stating further, the 20th century chambers dictionary defines freedom as "not bound: at liberty: not under arbitrary government: not strict, or bound by rules." (p. 498) Freedom is the power to act in accordance with choice (Dewey, 1960, p. 267). From Dewey's assertion, one can be seen as being free when he has the power to act or not to act in a particular manner. There are no strict rules governing his conducts and dealings. Some scholars however, believe that freedom can best be regarded as being left alone. That implies that the more one is being left alone the freer he is. Although, for the libertarians, freedom is identified with the protection of all people and their property from the violation of their natural rights. They argue that the idea of freedom is one facet of the idea that I am my own person and not a slave or a partial slave to another person. To uphold this believe, the New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary says that, "freedom is the enjoyment of personal liberty, of not being a slave or prisoner, the enjoyment of civil right (p. 376)."

The socialist understand freedom as that which is needed to overcome social, political and legal inequalities. Freedom of man can be viewed as self-creativity. It embraces what man can make out of life, and it further seeks for itself to understand the responsibility of man in his environment. This agrees with the position of Frantz Fanon that man's freedom is always responsible and engaged. In the words of Frantz Fanon (1967), he gave a vivid account of what he feels about freedom:

> I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone; that of demanding human behaviour from the other. One duty alone; that of renouncing my freedom through choice. (p. 30)

To this effect, Frantz's conclusion is that freedom involves choice and this is in line with Dewey's view that freedom is allowing one to make a choice without coercion. Thus, Dewey expresses that,

> The freedom worth fighting for is secured by the abolition of those oppressive measures, tyrannical laws and modes of government. It is liberations, emancipation, the possession of active manifestation of rights, the rights of self- determination in action. (p. 267)

Freedom can also be considered as one of the inalienable rights of man. According to the Declaration of American Independence in July 4, 1776, "…men are created equal that they are endowed by their creator with inalienable rights and among those are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" (p. 4). This declaration points out that everybody is by nature a free being. But freedom is fought for and not gained. For this reason, human beings always fight for their freedom, to be free from the tyrannical laws as Dewey will call it. Every human being deserves to be free by nature and enjoy the civil rights such as freedom to life, freedom of speech, freedom to assemble among others. To be free is to be the master of one's actions as well as his world. It is for this reason that many countries fought for their independence in order to rule themselves and shape their destiny freely. In Locke's contribution of freedom, he reiterates that freedom without law is slavery. According to Locke (1960), "absolute freedom has no meaning…where there is no law, there is no freedom" (p. 108).

From the above, Locke seems to hold the same stand with Karl Jasper who understands freedom as being incomplete, instead, he regards it as something he can gain. To further buttress this point, Jaspers (1959) says, "Freedom is not absolute, it is always bound at the same time. I do not have it, I gain it" (p. 162). In another area of his explanation of the element of freedom, Jasper holds a stand that without law, freedom is not realizable. This stand of Jasper and Locke concerning the question of complete freedom seems to be the same with some of the ancient thinkers. These thinkers argued freedom is not complete instead; they regard it to be external and internal. Internal freedom refers to as liberty to be all that we can be. It is also freedom from isolation, suffering and death as well as all that prevents us from being alive. For these ancient thinkers equally, since everyone must die, no one can attain a total inner freedom while still on earth. Therefore, the inner freedom can be achieved by means of the external freedom. Among the medieval thinkers, external freedom is only a means to an end and not an end itself. To attain the internal freedom is to respond to God's love in our daily lives. Freedom aims towards good. This is because when freedom is without fidelity to love, it is not freedom but licence. Anslem of the mediaeval philosopher says that "Libertas, in so far it is ordered toward good absolutely cannot act evilly, and it cannot be conceived as potentia peccandi et non peccandi" (as cited by Mondin, 1991, p. 250). This power of freedom Anslem maintains belongs not only to the free will which absolutely speaking is the power to act or not to act.

Kinds of Freedom

There are different types of coercion and constraints from which man tries to liberate himself in an effort to realize his true self in the society. This introduces us to the various kinds of freedom such as psychological, social, physical, and moral and freedom of choice.

Psychological Freedom

This is the freedom of the mind to function in whichever way it wishes to without being influenced by any external factors. According to Okolo (1993), "…what happens to the mind or soul of a people in the terms of future progress and self-

realization is vastly more important than the external or materia" (p. 21). Psychological freedom is capacity which a man has to choose what to do and what not to do when all conditions for acting are present.

Social Freedom

As the name suggest, social freedom is the absence of social determinism or constraints. It involves the freedom a man possess particularly because he takes part in the social functions, groups and other social activities. Social permission to do what on the psycho-physical plan one can do, having no power to do something , means being prohibited by social authority from doing something which in the psycho-physical sense, we can do (Hoemle, 1945, p. 1).

Physical Freedom

This type of freedom implies liberating one from any physical constraint. When a person is incarceration, he is not physically free because he cannot leave his prison cells as he wishes. He is restricted, he is not free. But once he is free from the cell, he immediately regains his physical freedom and can now go about his business. There are certain acts which can deprive a person of his freedom in a society. This is because; man does not exist alone and is only free when he has not encroached on the boundaries of others.

Freedom of Choice

Freedom of choice refers to the ability to make choice between alternatives. According to Grimsley (1960), freedom is the choice of our being (as brave, cowardly, generous and mean). Man is a rational being; this tells us that man cannot make a choice without the use of his rational faculty.

Karl Jasper's Notion of Freedom

According to Jasper, freedom is something that is lived in any concrete existence. This existential freedom is for Jasper self- assurance in any decision as a historic origin. It is a lived certainty rather than an intellectual truth which comes through the human action. Hence he says, "I am sure of freedom for myself not in thought but as *existenz*, not in musing about but in action" (p. 162). It was also noted by Jasper that freedom is not complete especially when we look into its constitutive elements. Man does not have it but he gains it, he realizes his freedom through his actions. It is incomplete because all the constitutive elements of freedom are not absolutely available to man. Furthermore, freedom is revealed in the movement from one expression to another, this is because a single liberty does not indicate freedom since it may refer directly to existence and not to free existence. This movement from one expression to another involves the movement of will which leads to a choice. But one has to choose between two alternatives. A man cannot make a choice when only one thing is present. Jasper believes that freedom also involves responsibility, that is one is responsible for whatever choice one makes even if it is at his detriment at the end of the day. Freedom for him is something lived and not something discussed or thought of. Jasper (1967) reiterates that "there is no choice without decision, no decision without will, no will without necessity, and no necessity without being" (p. 163).

Freedom is the actualization of oneself through effective choice. This is because choice and self-being are the same. Thus, to deny a man the right to choose is equally to deny him existence. To a concrete sense, freedom entails freedom from and freedom to. 'Freedom to' is the capacity of a man to actualize and master his own world. Man struggles to free himself from certain constraints and more significantly, to act or perform his actions freely. 'Freedom from' on the other hand is to bring 'freedom to' into danger. Again to place obstacle to freedom through external barriers is to rob man of his power of self-realization which for many philosophers is man's highest ideal and this self-realization is gained and not given.

Elements of Freedom in Karl Jasper's Philosophical Enterprise

Human actions are influenced by various elements which include among others:

Knowledge

Man is the only being endowed without intellect by the creator of the universe and all within it. Man does not only have the knowledge of other creatures but also himself. Man by nature desires to know. According to Aristotle, man has the ability to know and to be aware of things around him because of his rationality. This ability to know in man is what the anthropologists will call self-consciousness. He knows that he is working, eating, writing and reading. He is even aware that he has to die like every other animal that has life. To this Jasper (1967) says,

My knowing what is passively and necessarily happening does not free me from any necessity but it lifts my knowing ego beyond mere necessity (p. 155). As man understands the options available to him, he gets himself involved in freedom. To this effect, Jasper (1967) posits that "to be involved myself, to understand the thing I must do is a moment of freedom" (p. 13).

Knowledge helps us to see the realm of possibilities, and this implies man's ability to choose the best among many alternatives. This means that whatever one chooses depends on one's knowledge about such a thing. Furthermore, in his philosophy of existence, Jasper said that knowledge is a necessary condition of our living. It is not limited. Knowledge gives man the deepest awareness of what to do. It is the moment man comprehends what to do that one gains liberty. It has been asserted by Karl Jasper that knowledge does not make one free, but invariably, there can be no freedom without knowledge.

Choices

Freedom implies choice, being able to choose between many variables. Here, freedom goes with responsibility. For Jasper, the word "choice" expresses that in man's free decision, he is not only conscious of acting in the world but also of creating his own being in the historic continuity. Jasper (1967) says,

> I know that I not only exist that I not only am the way I am, and therefore act in the way, but that as I act and decide I originate both my actions and the way I am. (155)

From this assertion, choice seems to be between the objectives, that is to say, freedom is the choice of oneself. But in a situation where man cannot act or make a choice especially when he wishes to wait for the ideas to develop as he sees all premises and possibilities, the friction between the incomplete totality and the need to live, to choose, to decide at a particular point in time can also indicate lack of freedom. The most difficult thing about choice is "I choose." This is because, except there is an opportunity to choose, man cannot be said to have freedom of choice. He cannot be held responsible for outcome of his action, but ones his is able to choose, decide and compare one object or one suggestion and another, he can be held accountable for the consequences of his choices. Nevertheless, Jasper affirms that in choice one resolves to be oneself in existence. It is when man is left to make choices that he truly discovers himself and his worth.

Resolution

Resolution is the product of man's reflection on a particular issue at stake. It is not a rational will that makes man to take some finite action resolutely despite everything. Resolution is not conditional, and its probability cannot determine the action of man, otherwise, he cannot arrive at any existential resolution. Nevertheless, being unconditional, it is direct. Although, its immediacy is not that of existence, is the same thing with self-being. Resolution and choice usually coincides. Resolution leads to choice because it is only after man's reflection on confusing issues that he will be able to make a choice among the things presented to him. The choice he finally makes is his resolution. Resolution can also be indirect. That means, it is not a result of deliberate or calculated action, but that which goes on through those things that cannot take place with it. In indirect resolution, man does not actualize his self-being, because he is not always the master of his actions and decisions. A person under this condition may be acting under the control of an external force. Resolution is indirect when there is an expression of consideration and weighing of possibilities and of infinite reflections. This is why Jasper (1967) states precisely about freedom that:

> If I have not considered everything, if I have not weighed the possibilities, if I have not lost myself in infinite reflection, I am acting on blind intuition, rather than arriving at a resolution. (p. 157)

Any resolution one has taken is irrevocable. One's resolution can be tied to a time that is always in the past, and this type of resolution gives a concrete foundation for the present. If a man eventually leaves off his resolution, it then denotes that he is cancelling what he is in it, and he is annihilating himself at the same time. Again, of he abandons his resolution; it signifies a discontinuity because Karl Jasper sees a resolution as that which begins the movement that can give man's life a self-reliance, constancy or continuity in the assimilation of existence.

Karl Jasper's Concept of Will Power

Man's will is influenced by two factors: "freedom" and "determinism." This means that man can only will a thing when he is free and determined to get whatever he wills.

Our wills are limited and changes overtime, and because it is limited and narrower, one cannot will everything at the same time. When we will a thing, it is our intellect that helps us to realize the distinctiveness that exist in our will, and the means through which our will is made a reality. When the will is willing, it provides both the knowledge of the will and the means are made distinct before him by his intellect. To this, Jaspers (1967) says "When my will, my clear sense of purpose wills a thing, both the thing and the means to it must have been set before me by my intellect" (p. 140).

Man cannot will the whole; instead, he is capable of willing within the whole. To this effect, man then can be said to be "real only at a place in the whole, in the active performance of our narrow finite realization" (Jasper, 1967, p. 140). Furthermore, man's will rest on freedom which puts it into a state of suspension. That is, a state from which the same very freedom brings it to a resolution. Here he seems to be advocating two types of will when he says

> The will that wills itself is not the one that wills something. The will that wills something can be described as psychological phenomenon. The will that wills itself is the active assurance of being which my volition is something derives from the ground of freedom. (Jasper, 1967, p. 140)

Any action one performs after a necessary length of consideration can be termed wilful, intended or voluntary action. In a voluntary action, there is will power and freedom to do or not to do an act. Where there is a choice between two possibilities, man's will then becomes its own freedom or anti-freedom.

Furthermore, nothing is good or evil in itself. But the goodness or evilness of a thing is ascribed to it by the human will, because human can will either its existence or its destruction. According to Jaspers (1967), "not certain work as such are good or evil, it is my will that either wills my being or ruins it in willing something else" (p.140). Therefore, man can be said to possess the power to decide what to do whether it is good or bad. Man is not a devil but out of his own volition, he is free to be evil. The power to decide what to do and what not to do is for Jaspers man himself.

Nevertheless, there is also the existence of involuntary action. It the action which is not within the power of human will. It is also an action that man does not intend or will. To Donceel (1967), "the way a person uses his inborn capabilities and adapts himself to his environment depends to a great extent on his free volition" (p. 220). This assertion designate that man's power of will determines to greater extent how he lives his life, and how he fulfils and realizes his freedom in his society. The ability of man to transcend himself is regarded as will to power. This will to power helps man to conquer his environment and even surpass it. Everyone will to transcend any situation he finds himself, he wills to realize his true self. Even a servant for instance wills to become the master. To achieve this, he requires services and sacrifices based on freedom and will. As the intellect grasps the knowledge of an object, it helps man to exercise his will power properly in order to come out with a good resolution. Hence Jaspers (1967) says "whatever a man does falls within the knowing self" (160). This

means that man is the master of his own actions. He wills it, he knows it and therefore he is accountable for the consequences except the involuntary actions which he cannot control.

Freedom in the Contemporary Nigerian Society

Freedom has been seen as the absence of force or coercion on one's free will or decision. It can also be regarded as the absence of an imposition of the will of a stronger person on a weaker person. Freedom involves responsibility and the application of one's rationality. This implies that freedom without responsibility is not precisely freedom. To support this stand, Jasper (1967) posits, "when there is freedom, there is responsibility, and where there is responsibility, there is guilt" (236). To further buttress the presence of responsibility and rationality in freedom, Hazel Barners maintained in an article captioned "man and freedom" that freedom is opportunity, responsibility and insecurity. This opportunity is the availability of more than one option from which man chooses the best. Also, man's rationality aids him to exercise his freedom which is the opportunity to choose between two or more possibilities.

Freedom is highly and seriously trampled upon in Nigeria. The citizens are not given a free hand to decide or choose the best among government policies. Although, Nigeria is regarded as a democratic nation but the dividends of a true democracy is not in existence. This is because, the government at various levels imposes its policies and decisions on the masses. Since freedom involves opportunity and responsibilities, the Nigerian populace have it as their rights to decide for themselves what is best for them, so that if afterwards, their choice results in discomfort, they will shoulder the responsibilities. This collective decision by the masses can be done through their representatives since all cannot come together to decide a particular matter. But this idea is a failed one in Nigeria because the people who are supposed to represent the masses go after their own interest.

The rights of Nigerian citizens have been relegated to the background. The freedom to life, assemble, association, religion, fair hearing among others are on theory. Ojukwu (1989) pointed out that:

> It should be the fundamental right of every Nigerian citizen to choose his own culture. This means that a citizen of Nigeria should have the right to decide whether he wants to be Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik… (p. 141)

From the above assertion by Ojukwu, we observe that as free beings, we are free to fashion our future and destiny independently without hindrance from anybody or authority. This is in line with what Karl Jaspers upholds that freedom is the absence of coercion or force, and the enthronement of free choice and decision.

Religious freedom, in Nigeria for instance, which is the absolute right of every man concerning his belief contradicts the religious practice in which one is compelled to practice the religion that is not suitable to him. Every human being has the right to choose whichever religious belief he wishes to practice. But many have been denied

this freedom in our contemporary Nigerian society. Nigeria is a multi-dimensional religious nation which supposed to uphold a more authentic religious freedom, but today the nation has become a typical example where there is no freedom of worship. For the past few years, there have been religious intimidations, looting of property and the destruction of lives of the citizen because of quest for religious domination. Most of the Islamic religious fundamentalist and sects feel that a country like Nigerian with many nations and religious affliation can be manipulated into one religion. Thus, Ibrama (1992) says: "Islamic religion as in contrast to other religions applies intimidations, victimization, brutalization, elimination, subjection, suppression, violence etc." (p. 19). This designate that a particular religion may not be allowed to grow in some parts of Nigeria while another religion is allowed to thrive in every corner of the nation, any attempt to tamper with the freedom of such religion will result to shedding of innocent blood by the members of that religious group. This is religious bigotry and mere fanaticism. The 1999 Nigerian constitution indicates that:

> Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including freedom to change his religion or belief (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. (p. 37)

Also, the freedom of expression and the press is unattainable in the contemporary Nigerian society. Freedom of expression is the right of a citizen to speak in public without interference from the authorities. It is also the ability of a citizen to speak out his mind in any activity that the government is embarking upon or the tendency of every citizen to voice out his view in any environment such that no person finds himself threatened in doing so. The constitution gives every citizen the right to criticize or question any policy of the government which is considered detrimental to the welfare of the masses or individuals. But in the Nigerian situation, such freedom is not practicable. The outcome of this suppression of freedom of expression and the press in Nigeria has eaten deep into the people's interest in some of the national activities. The International Bill of Rights provides constitutional protection for certain individual liberties, including freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the right to assemble and petition the government. For long the Freedom of the Press bill (FOP) has been delayed amidst manipulations inspite of the fact The United Nations' 1948 in her Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers"*. There is much noise about *Hate Speech* than freedom of speech amidst fundamental restrictions. Constraints with regard to freedom of expression of the citizens have increased non-challant attitudes of many Nigerians towards certain media programmes. Majority of Nigerians have completely lost interest in our television and radio news especially the national networks news. This is because they are not given the free hand to inform the audience with the actual happenings in the country. Information passed to the masses is fine-toned to suit the government at the expense

of the general public, and unless the government of this nation resort to the content of the constitution, and apply them deeply, the loss of hope of the citizens can never be restored.

Another area of neglect in the contemporary Nigerian society is the freedom of movement. Freedom of movement can be said to be the right of every citizen of a nation, town or even village to go about, reside, school or work in any part of the country, town or village without any obstacle from within or without. This means that as a free-born Nigerian, every citizen of this country has it as a right to move, live or seek educational, business opportunity in any part of the country. But what is obtainable in our contemporary Nigerian society is quite the opposite. People are not given equal opportunity to live or even study in a place that is not their state of origin. It is this problem that urges Ojukwu (1989) to ask, "Why must students from different areas of the country suffer discrimination even when their parents have paid taxes in the state within which they seek education" (p. 22). Freedom has been ridiculed in our time and nevertheless it has been sacrificed on the altar of corruption entrenched by uncommon practice of federal Character and quota systems exalting mediocrity and neglect of excellence. Federal appointments are visibly lopsided to the neglect and sensibilities of some ethnic nationalities.

Moreover, from the concept of Karl Jaspers and other freedom fighters, we find out that nobody has the right to prevent another person from moving about in his own country. But this right must be rationally applied. Anybody who exercises this freedom must be ready to shoulder the responsibility of his action. To achieve this freedom, all must be conscientiously set about to completely eliminate ethnicity and remove those speculative barriers that separate citizen from citizen.

Conclusion

According to Jasper (1969), freedom is the absence of force. But men fight for this freedom, they do not have it but gains it through those constitutive elements which offer him the opportunity to choose, and realize his being. Jasper also holds that freedom is not absolute since man is bound by human contingencies; hence the material nature of man prevents him from attaining the absolute position of divine in this contingent world. On the issue of will power, Jasper maintains that it is an inner urge in man which helps him to decide whatever he wants to do, and whatever is decided by man is a wilful or voluntary act. So when man's intellect is presented with such perfect good, the will becomes unable to reject it. Moreover, Jaspers holds that nothing is good or bad but it is man's will that makes it so.

In the contemporary Nigerian society, the notion of freedom according to Karl Jaspers is seriously trampled upon. He sees freedom as the absence of coercion and constraints but in Nigeria, this coercion and constraints are found everywhere. Man is free but everywhere he goes or looks, he is in chains. Freedom and equity have been relegated to the background and violence, discrimination and ethnical, religious and political crises is now the message being preached in Nigeria. It has been found out that Karl Jasper made a positive contribution on the issue of freedom and will power. That is why his critics could not find enough loopholes on his philosophy. Hence, freedom

which is the absence of force or coercion from a stronger person to a weaker person and will power is the power to choose from many alternatives should be fought for by all and sundry. This is because, freedom is not supposed to be theoretical but practical and experimental. If Nigeria must advance pass the level she is operating, citizens of this country must be given the freedom to exercise their rights and make choices without fear or favour.

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