

Daheshist Ideology

The Dimensions of Freedom According to the Founder of Daheshism

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By: Dr. Ghazi Brax

The concept of freedom has multiple dimensions, such as: spiritual, psychological, intellectual, religious, political, and social. Throughout history, many were those who had dealt one or more of its dimensions, however, very few were able to use this knowledge to significantly influence life. Leading the pack, were those rare heroes that applied their views in daily life and, subsequently, suffered bitterly in their struggle for freedom. They were persecuted, subjected to physical and mental anguish; and drank from the chalice of death—all for the cause of freedom. They were immortalized through out history as torches that illuminated the path of the ideal struggle to those who refuse to live humiliated under the sun. Genius pioneers, such as: Socrates, Christ, and Gandhi, did not call for an armed struggle leading to a bloody revolt, rather, they were satisfied in making their manner of life as a paragon to be emulated. Their efforts led to peaceful intellectual revolutions that caused significant influences on the turn of events. The founder of Daheshism in his struggle for freedom—in all of its dimensions, especially the religious and intellectual dimensions—in a society that suffered from and continue to suffer from many fetters, followed the same path as those immortals mentioned above. In this research, I will discuss the many dimensions of freedom according to the founder of Daheshism.

1-Spiritual Freedom

According to the teachings of the founder of Daheshism, the origin of human freedom exists in the essence of the Spirits themselves. Those are “Mother Spirits” that the entire creation emanated from and are “Divine Breaths” living in the Worlds of Spirits—Worlds of truth, good, and beauty—and do not live in bodies. When the Creating Force created the Spirits—prior to the creation of the physical universe—they were created in Its Image and Likeness and placed within Them Its Divine Essence, where freedom is inherent. For this reason, the freedoms of humanity, spearheaded by intellectual and religious freedoms, are but branches from Eternal Freedom.

The founder of Daheshism says: **“When God created us, He gave us will and choice.”** In many of his writings, he repeated this theme by saying that freedom is a **“Heavenly blessing”** and a **“Divine gift”** that God gave us and it is **“a gift from the Creator to His Creation.”** This freedom is the foundation that the comprehensive Divine System of Justice is built upon—a system that rewards or punishes man for his deeds, thoughts, and desires. For this reason, tampering with freedom—especially intellectual and religious—is the same as tampering with Divine Justice and every assault on freedoms is an assault on the Eternal Divine Will. According to the founder of Daheshism, even Spiritual Guidance should not be by compulsion. Speaking for Jesus of Nazareth in addressing

Adoum, the son of the Apostle Peter, Dr. Dahesh says: **“My dear Adoum, you reap what you sow. This is the Divine Justice that is not influenced by silly mundane factors, as usually is the case on this earth. I have come to earth exclusively in order to put in place a Divine Law for it to abide by. That’s if earth wished it with its own choosing and free will, otherwise, woe to the inhabitants of earth.”**

The last sentence should not be taken to mean that penalty is imminent, but rather to clarify that a horrible penalty will be inflicted on human beings if they willfully choose not to abide by the Divine commandments. This freedom of choice is also stated in the Qur’anic verse: “There is no compulsion in religion; true guidance has become distinct from error. Thus he who disbelieves in the Devil and believes in Allah grasps the firmest handle that will never break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” Sura Al-Baqara (256) Based on this, it becomes a legitimate right to defend freedom—an act considered to be of the same stature as self-defense. The founder of Daheshism considered the defense for freedom to be a “sacred Divine duty.” That’s because it is in defense for an eternal sacred law. Anyone who assaults freedom is just like assaulting the Divine Will and assaulting the human being himself, in his Spiritual essence—the basis for his life and personality. However, do human beings exhibit the same freedom that Divine Spirits exhibit?

Personal Human Destiny

The founder of Daheshism considers absolute freedom impossible to exist except in the Divine Spiritual Worlds—a realm where Divine Perfection exists without physical dimensions. So, every imperfection and consequently every weakness, whether in knowledge, power, or any other aspect, is a restriction on freedom in its perfect meaning. In this context, no matter how extensive freedom is on earth, it is only a partial and relative form of freedom, for human beings are restricted by the laws of nature that govern earth, as well as, by the Spiritual Order that the Divine Will imposed on them. The life of a human being is bound by a specific limit and subjected to sadness, anger, pain, fear, thirst, and hunger, as well as, to diseases, weakness, and to an imminent gradual disintegration that leads him from youth to old age and finally to death. The founder of Daheshism says that misery and anguish were man’s own lot since birth... **“Sadness and joy were carved into my soul along with other human factors that I was not restricted by prior to my coming to this corrupt earth.”**

Since the Creating Power endowed human beings with a mind, which is an infinitesimal fragment of Divine Intelligence, man was able to gradually use his mind to enhance his capabilities with respect to the forces of nature by first inventing the wheel, followed by the automobile, airplane, and rocket, in order to circumvent the restrictions of distance and to expand his horizons. He also discovered the various medicinal drugs to fight germs and diseases, as well as advanced science in all disciplines... However, despite his great advances, he will still be subject to death, sadness, and misery resulting from disasters, expected and unexpected events, and the tests of evil experiences. His scientific knowledge will remain limited; his ability to predict the future will remain nonexistent; and most of the doors to unlock the secrets of the universe will remain shut. But why was man subjected to these natural and Spiritual restrictions? The answer, according to the

founder of Daheshism, is a matter of merit. That man merited these restrictions through the choices made with his free will in acting upon or yielding to the various activities, thoughts, and desires in previous life cycles that trace back to the first instant of his fall from the Spiritual Worlds. Dr. Dahesh says: “We wish we can return to the Other World in a pure state as was the case when we left it.”

The founder of Daheshism is horrified by the despicable state of man and his misery if compared to his state prior to his fall and wishes that **“he had remained pure in his Lofty World instead of living amidst the filth of this life.”** His view that man merited life on earth can be summed up by the following: **“I believe in the existence of Divine Justice and that all the misery and grief of life that are inflicted on us are mere retributions for all the evils and sins that we had committed in our previous life cycles. For this reason, we should accept all the sorrows of life that befell us without complaining or being annoyed. Rather, we should be content with Divine Justice and its noble order.”** This is not predestination, for according to the founder of Daheshism, fate that fetters man is a personal fate that he had made for himself with his own will in the course of his successive lives. “For man makes good or evil for himself and it is not that good or evil follow him, but rather, he is the cause of their attachment or separation from him based on his activities.” According to Dr. Dahesh, **“God does not punish man or an animal, but rather it is the man or the animal that punishes himself according to his thoughts and activities.”** This saying coincides with the Qur’anic verse: “Surely, Allah does not wrong people at all; but people wrong themselves.” Sura Yunis (44)

In summation, the founder of Daheshism sees earthly life, no matter how prevalent freedom is, as a horrific large prison that is impossible to escape from, except through the process of death. He says: **“I liken life to a horrific huge cage, and I liken human beings to birds trapped within it. No matter how many trials and how much effort the birds exert to overcome the constraints of the cage and escape from it, they are unsuccessful. Not until death comes and liberates them from this strict bondage and spare them from this heavy constraint.”**

2-Psychological Freedom

This strict bondage does not describe the freedom of willpower as much as the freedom to choose activities, thoughts, and personal desires of evil or good inclinations, consequently leading to Spiritual elevation or degradation. It is possible for man, even if he is imprisoned, to direct his thought and desires towards love, compassion, and forgiveness, or towards harm, hatred, and crime. Whatever direction he chooses to take, his willpower will either [Spiritually] elevate or degrade him and that this psychological freedom is governed by a comprehensive Divine Order. Speaking for Zeus, the supreme god, the founder of Daheshism in *“The Legend of the Weeping Candle”* says: **“I am bound by a Divine Order, that I had placed and imposed on the occupants of earth. This Order applies to every being, whether through birth or otherwise, and prevents even the gods and goddesses from controlling any human being and regardless of the extent of his crimes.”**

It is impossible for an individual to control the willpower of another (i.e., to control his psychological freedom) because man's reward and retribution, the pair of scales of Divine Justice, are based on psychological freedom. I had pointed this concept earlier in my discussion of the dimension of Spiritual freedom. However, the founder of Daheshism does not see in the freedom of human willpower a true freedom for the soul. The freedom of willpower is the basis for man's judgment, but it does not provide the soul with true freedom, but rather a relative freedom to the extent of the soul's liberation from the shackles of degraded inclinations. Anything that restricts the soul from movement towards what is lofty and towards the Spirit—the Divine Mother Spirit that the soul originated from—constitutes a shackle for the soul.

The strongest shackles that restrict the soul and prevent its Spiritual elevation are the shackles of greed and sexual desire. The founder of Daheshism wrote extensively about their dominion over the soul. Human beings are all slaves to money and made it their "golden calf." It is a god that managed to unite humanity in worshiping him and in doing so they have sold their honor, conscience, and religion and abandoned the Heavens. As to sexual desire, the opinion of the founder of Daheshism in the strength of its domination can be summed in his saying:

"O sexual passion! How much it influences the individual and makes him a slave to its horrible dominion and obey its unbeatable willpower."

He also portrayed eloquently its influence in a stanza titled "Stormy Desires" by saying:

**"O animalistic desire that sweeps the processions of humans
You are the wonder of this universe and its unique marvel
You dominate our minds and distract our thoughts
You restrain us with sturdy shackles that make our escape difficult
You control our nerves and willpower without any help in sight
Therefore, you overwhelm us until we surrender to you in humiliation."**

Many were the instances where Dr. Dahesh combined money and sexual desire and viewed their unity as the source of human misery, calamity, and psychological enslavement. However, is there an end to this psychological enslavement? It is the view of Dr. Dahesh that since it is impossible for anyone to subjugate man's free will, he can choose the Spiritual path through righteousness by practicing virtue and accepting idealistic human values. Adoum, the son of St. Peter, asks Jesus: "Is there a path to Heaven? Where is it?" He answers him saying: **"It is in your heart and the heart of every human being living on this earth. The path to Heavens becomes clear to you by doing good deeds. At that point, you can walk the path until your reach its amazing gates and then you proceed with a heart full of joy and happiness."** When Jesus pointed to a bright star full of great glory, Peter beseeched him to reach the peak of this glory and Jesus responded by saying: **"This is within your reach if you wanted it."** The essence of the Daheshist Mission is based on relighting the path to spirituality that leads to the salvation of man from all shackles of servitude. The founder of Daheshism says: **"I wish humanity believes in my faith that leads to liberation from this life—a life that is full of evils."**

This has been the stance of Dr. Dahesh on freedom in its spiritual and psychological dimensions. These two dimensions are rarely elaborated on by those researching freedom except for the philosophers in them. What are the stances of Dr. Dahesh from freedom's other dimensions?

3-Intellectual and Religious Freedom

Considering the narrow constraints imposed on psychological freedom, the hopes of freedom for the majority of people are limited to the intellectual, religious, political, and social freedoms, as recognized by the human rights laws of 1948—laws that were enacted after long and bitter struggles endured by many nations. In addition to the American Revolution of July 4th, 1776, and the French Revolution of August 26th, 1789—a revolution that brought about “the declaration of human and citizen rights”—the 1st half of the 20th century had seen many revolutions calling for the principles of freedom at varying levels and dimensions. The 2nd half of the century is characterized by the struggle of the United Nations in making sure that nations abide by the preservation of all aspects of human rights to their citizens—especially those pertaining to the personal and private freedoms.

The founder of Daheshism was one of the few that contributed throughout history in documenting the living saga of freedom. It was because of freedom that he faced persecution by the Lebanese government during a period when an oppressive regime reigned on the country. Bechara el-Khoury (the Lebanese President at the time, 1943-1952) and his evil accomplices from the clergy and citizens, conspired against Dr. Dahesh in order to force him to abandon his activities of promoting a Spiritual Message that calls for the unity of religions. They tried to muzzle him and to legalize his activities by unsuccessfully attempting to pass a law in the Parliament. Alternately, they resorted to bribing most journalists who, in turn, attacked Dr. Dahesh and fabricated lies about him in order to defame him and in doing so, to drive people away from him—especially the intellectuals who flocked to Dr. Dahesh after they have had enough lies and deception from some religious authorities. They also denied him and his supporters from responding to the false and horrible accusations. However, when they discovered that their attempts did not produce the desired results, they turned on him one of the religious factions that played a big role in the Lebanese civil war and the destruction of the country. On August 28, 1944, they arrested Dr. Dahesh and imprisoned him for 13 days without due process of the law, because they could not produce any evidence against him. They held him in the “Al-Raml” prison—a prison known for its torture—and then a presidential decree was issued to strip him from his Lebanese nationality and to expel him from the country to the Syrian-Turkish borders, where he can be subjected to the lines of fire, in a region that was still an active battlefield during World War II. In doing so, the Lebanese President exceeded his legal authority and violated the constitution that he took an oath to preserve.

However, after one month from his expulsion, the founder of Daheshism managed to secretly return to Beirut, where he launched a massive publishing campaign against those

who victimized him and victimized the people. In his campaign, he exposed their scandals and shortcomings by producing from his undisclosed location 66 *Black Books* and 165 pamphlets targeted at the oppressors and their supporters. His powerful writings and relentless efforts, by day and by night, led to a state of revulsion felt by the people towards their oppressors and financial abusers that ultimately caused the fall of Bechara el-Khoury from power and the transfer of the Presidency to Camille Chamoun (1952-1958), who at the beginning of his rule restored the usurped Lebanese citizenship to Dr. Dahesh. The chapters of this story of oppression and constant struggle for the sake of truth and freedom are written in the historical correspondence between the founder of Daheshism and Dr. Muhammad Hussain Haykal, who held the positions of: President of the Egyptian Senate, President of the Constitutional Party, and owner of the magazines "*The Weekly Politics*" and "*The Daily Politics*."

It all began in the summer of 1951, when Dr. Haykal vacationed in the Lebanese resort town of "Duhour al-Shware," where he contacted the Daheshist poet, Halim Dammous and inquired about the circumstances leading to the stripping of Dr. Dahesh from his Lebanese citizenship. Consequently, he met with Halim Dammous, Dr. George Khabasa, Dr. Fared abu-Suleiman, and Mrs. Marie Hadad, the writer, painter, and a persistent Daheshist, who was the sister of Laure, the wife of Bechara el-Khoury. Laure urged her husband to imprison her sister. Consequently, Marie Hadad remained in prison for many months, however, upon her release, her faith, willpower, and belief in the founder of Daheshism were much stronger. Soon after the visit by the group of Daheshists, a correspondence between Dr. Haykal and Dr. Dahesh took place revolving around his persecution and the stripping of his Lebanese citizenship. Also, the topic of intellectual and religious freedom consumed a great part of this correspondence.

In the first letter of Dr. Haykal he wrote: "I mentioned to you in the letter that I sent you with our brother, Mr. Halim Dammous, that the act of stripping any human being from his citizenship is a reprehensible crime and a detestable sin that tyrants resort to in order to fulfill their oppressive objectives. The stripping of someone from his nationality as a result of stating a personal opinion is even a greater reprehensible crime and detestable sin, because the citizenship is a component of someone's life and the holy link between the individual and his country. It is also the vehicle that allows the individual to have rights that are guaranteed by the homeland. Actually, it can be argued that the impact of capital punishment by execution is less severe than stripping someone from his nationality, because the executed individual is buried in the soil of his homeland and his relatives are privileged to honor his remains. Their pleasure is even greater and more complete if this individual had died unjustly due to an expression of opinion, because he would become the bright torch that lights the path for humanity. Didn't you mention in your letter the unjust execution of the great philosopher and first teacher, Socrates? His oppression served to elevate his status higher and higher over the ages. So, congratulations my friend, because you were attacked and oppressed for trying to fight prejudice and its ugliness; and you were persecuted and expelled for trying to shelter humanity under the umbrella of religious brotherhood...Although expelled from your homeland, it is your right to take as a role model the saying of Mr. Jamal el-Deen al-Afghani:

‘If I live, I will not be deprived of food
And if I die, I will not be deprived of a grave
I am as resolute as kings
And my soul is that of a free man and will not be forcefully enslaved’.”

What we conclude from the correspondence between Dr. Dahesh and Dr. Haykal is that the founder of Daheshism is a proponent of absolute intellectual and religious freedom. He references the second chapter of “On Liberty” by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) when he said: “If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. Were an opinion a personal possession of no value except to the owner; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.”

This means that the act of suppressing intellectual and religious freedoms has no place for it in Daheshism. Also, there is no place in Daheshism for intellectual compulsion of any kind or on any subject. It is the free soul that accepts the freedoms of the people and has no place within it for narrow mindedness and closed mindedness. It takes tolerance as its motto and understanding others as a priority, because anyone that cannot understand the positions and views of others cannot feel their pains, sorrows, and needs, thus erecting a barrier separating them from him and leads to lack of communications, hatred, and enmity. This result is not in line with the Spiritual values that liberate and elevate the soul.

In addition, Dr. Dahesh and John Stuart Mill view those who force others to believe in or avoid a specific religion as being not prone to error. However, not being prone to error is not a human trait and those authorities that claimed to be not prone to error, had brought people calamities and misery over the years. That’s because anyone claiming to be not prone to error places himself as the shadow of God on earth and possessing absolute truth. The execution of Socrates and the Catholic inquisitions of Galileo are two historical proofs against those claiming to have monopoly over the truth. Our human knowledge was and will continue to be relative and partial. No one has knowledge of the absolute truth except those who merged with the Divine Spirit, thus attaining knowledge and the secrets of the universes—what is known and unknown to us.

Freedom, a Natural Right

There is agreement between the founder of Daheshism, John Stuart Mill, and all thinkers—who were active in setting the fundamentals of revolutions that led to the

creation of democratic regimes—that the concept of freedom being a natural right of man is synonymous with life itself. New scientific and philosophical ideas interacted since the 17th Century, and encouraged the belief in a comprehensive universal system and natural law that included man. Throughout the 18th Century, the era of enlightenment, views of French thinkers became prevalent and the idea that the natural rights of man—to include the right to be free—had emerged and that citizens did not relinquish these rights to their government, but rather, they relinquished to the government the right to protect these rights and to safeguard the opportunities to exercise them. The failure of any government in protecting the natural rights of its citizens, gives them the right to revolt against it, because the structure of government cannot hold without a social agreement to safeguard and protect their rights. It is only intuitive for Dr. Dahesh to take such a position on freedom, because this concept is extended from his comprehensive view of the universe.

The Creating Force had placed a Spiritual Order based on justice and governs all creatures, to include man. Justice cannot prevail from the human aspect unless man enjoys his individual and general freedoms, because his retribution will be based on them. Therefore freedom is a natural right that cannot be taken away. Dr. Dahesh says: **“Individual freedom, or general freedom, is not a game to be suppressed by governments or by the powerful elites due to hatred and anxieties festering in their chests—as though it is a nesting place for poisonous snakes. Yes, it is not their property to suppress from or award to whomever they feel like, but rather they [individual and general freedoms] are natural rights of the individuals and of the nation and are synonymous with life. We have not heard of any man on earth who claims to have the right to give or take life except God. It is God Almighty that created all people free. The 2nd Caliph of Islam, Omar Ibn al-Khattab, may God rest his soul, said in his immortal saying: ‘How could you enslave people when their own mother gave birth to them as free individuals?’”**

The Law is the Shield of Freedom

It is the view of the founder of Daheshism—as well as the view of most political thinkers—that in a democratic nation, the sociopolitical bond that binds a citizen to a government does not require him to relinquish any right to it except the right to protect him from those trying to suppress his freedoms—especially his individual and general freedoms—and the right to restore what rights were taken from him. In democratic nations, the judicial branches of government are independent of the executive and legislative branches in order to avoid personal abuses by those in power or by any other authority. In the second letter of Dr. Dahesh to Dr. Haykal he said: **“In all advanced nations, the law is the shield of freedom from the threats of rulers and those of authority. It draws its sharp double-edged sword and stands in front of their faces ready to cut off their desires, restrain their deception, and to save any individual from those who want to prey on his freedoms, trample over his rights, and using their evils to attack his truth. Such would be the position of any just and impartial law.”**

The impartiality of the justice system in the United States, if compared with that of Lebanon during the rule of the tyrant Bechara el-Khoury, is what made Dr. Dahesh admire America's freedom, laws, justice, as well as the role of the press in criticizing the faults of governors and public officials. He admired America despite the greed that controls many of its citizens and the widespread permissiveness that parallels most European countries. Dr. Dahesh says in "Memoirs of a Dinar": **"The greatest individual in this country [America] is equal [in rights] to the least significant. There is no master and slave throughout the entire nation characterized by the great eagle flying over a decorated flag with stars and stripes."** It is appropriate for the reader to compare the American and the Lebanese justice systems during the rule of the tyrant Bechara el-Khoury, and where Dr. Dahesh portrays in "*Memoirs of a Dinar*" a shameful aspect of this comparison. Speaking through the voice of a golden Dinar, the protagonist of his book, he wishes for the capitals of the east, after demolishing the shackles of imperialism that restrained them at the time, to enjoy the freedom that America enjoys. The admiration of Dr. Dahesh for the fairness of the law and for the intellectual freedom in America is also reflected in another of his writings (1948) titled "*O ship! Quickly Depart*" where he responds to the call of Raji el-Ra'i, a Lebanese judge, for the Lebanese expatriates to return to Lebanon.

"Right is taken, but never begged for"

Once the justice system becomes corrupt in a specific country, those whose rights and freedoms had been usurped, would have no choice but to rely on themselves. As to the methods taken, they can be in the form of an armed revolt or an intellectual revolution that aims to promote enlightenment and unite public opinion. Dr. Dahesh followed the second method taking Gandhi and Jesus Christ as his role models. Jesus, the Nazarene, **"Lord of the Noble Revolution"** that **"he launched in order to: destroy the fetters of oppression and exhaustion; cut loose the fetters of bondage and slavery; and fulfill a golden dream ever present since the Creator created this sad and miserable world. A dream propagated by a confused humanity... He struggled relentlessly for 33 years calling everyone to destroy the constitution of force and killing, yet only a few answered his calling fearing the powerful and unyielding Roman Empire. Those few were taken by his lofty teachings that enlightened their hearts with the sublime lights of Divine knowledge. He did not despair, gloom, retreat, or surrender, but rather, he attacked the Caesar of Rome through Herod, the tyrant of Palestine, the birthplace and rearing place of the Son of Heavens. In the end, the sacrifice became great and the enmity widened..."**

That was the intellectual revolution that the Nazarene launched and the one that Dr. Dahesh had followed suit anew. However, instead of letting Herod hear his words verbally, he made him read it through documented words that would strike him and his accomplices like thunderbolts. Dr. Muhammad Hussain Haykal proposed to Dr. Dahesh his willingness to discuss the subject of his persecution and the stripping of his nationality with the late Lebanese President, Bechara el-Khoury, however, Dr. Dahesh refused due to his belief that "Right is taken, but never begged for" and his confidence that he will regain his freedom and his usurped nationality right without concessions,

flattery, or mediation. His certainty was based on a Divine justice that provided him with a supernatural Spiritual knowledge as well as on historical lessons that affirm that freedoms are snatched back from tyrants through heroic and lengthy struggles.

In his second letter to Dr. Haykal he said: **“For this reason, I hope my noble-minded brother does not take it on himself to talk to the main person responsible for stripping me from my nationality. There will come a day when every tyrant and unjust individual will receive retribution for his bad deeds and be rewarded for his good deeds. Such retributions and rewards will be of the same genre as the deed itself. The coward, dishonorable, and immoral individual is not the one who will punish the tyrants when the hour of judgment comes. History teaches us that not a single oppressive tyrant escaped the horrific punishment. The oppressed individual will make his oppressor drink from the cup of oppression and humiliation until he becomes intoxicated...I have no doubt that the hour of judgment will come sooner or later. At that point, I will fiercely wring the necks of my enemies. On that day, the bells of horror will reverberate and fear will fill the heart of everyone who usurped the holy right that my God had given me as a natural right to enjoy—just like every creature that God Almighty created...”**

There is no doubt that the response of the founder of Daheshism to Dr. Haykal reflects a prophecy, a year in advance of the civil revolution that overthrew the Presidency of Bechara el-Khoury. This prophecy could also be added to other prophecies foretelling the Lebanese civil war that trimmed the claws of Dr. Dahesh’s enemies and clipped their wings. Truth be told, anyone who examines the many publications of the founder of Daheshism, will see many themes about the struggle for freedom, the end of an oppressive ruler, and the fate of a submissive nation.

From what he says about the necessity to struggle against tyrants:

“It is necessary for the oppressed individual, whose rights and freedom had been usurped, to throw at his oppressor fierce thunderbolts in order to destroy him by turning him into rubble and turning the most influential to being the least.”

“Had my determination waned and my will weakened, I would have bowed down to the one that I justly call (a serious criminal). However, my willpower would not wane or weaken as long as I have rights and my rights are as clear as sunlight during the day. For this reason, it is he who should bow down to the law—whose supremacy cannot be surpassed.”

From what he says about the consequence of a tyrannical nation:

“The fragile fundamentals of an oppressive and evil nation committing despicable acts will be demolished quickly and its remains will settle inside the graves until Judgment Day.” And

“I liken the tyrannical head of a nation with a contaminated dump yard piled high with the foulest of dirt...as to those who are showering him with flattery; aligned

with him; following his footsteps; beating his drums; and playing his tune...they are the most contaminated and despicable of insects..."

From what he says about submissive people:

"In my book, the coward doesn't deserve to live at all. It is either we become cowards and allow the oppressive mighty to enslave us, or we show our bravery and heroism in regaining our sacred and immortal freedom." And

"The people of a nation submissive to the oppression of their ruler should wear a yoke instead of the cows and donkeys." Also

"The people of a nation accepting such an insulting treatment without rebelling are dead and do not deserve life."

We conclude from these and many similar sayings that the founder of Daheshism sees in the practice of freedom an intellectual and cultural level well deserved by nations after a long struggle, cultural advancement, and an enlightenment of public opinion. Otherwise, they will be distant from freedom because they are not versed with its burdens. This leads us to bear the responsibility for freedom.

4-Political and Social Freedoms

Lebanon emerged from the French Mandate and gained its independence in 1943. The first President of the era of independence was Bechara el-Khoury. However, were the people of Lebanon truly deserving of the responsibility that independence bears? Bechara el-Khoury transformed the nation to a farm-like operation to be used by his evil associates, family, and himself. He also transformed the people to a cash cow that he can draw from to fulfill his needs. This is a known fact and can be reviewed by what Phillip Hitti and Kamal Salibi wrote about the era of the tyrant in the history of contemporary Lebanon. However, did the people hold Bechara el-Khoury accountable for his actions? The public opinion here plays an important role. The existence and nonexistence of the people are one and the same if they were not conscious of their rights and were not watchful and holding their representatives accountable. A horrible crime was committed against the founder of Daheshism by the President, ministers, and judges...a crime that broke the laws and violated the constitution! Did members of the parliament, who are representatives of the people; question those responsible? No, because the public opinion in Lebanon did not exist.

Dr. Dahesh says: **"The members of Parliament, representatives of the country, rather, the calamity of Lebanon...none of them raised their voice in protest over this gross crime, that no other crime of this kind matches it in harshness and ugliness. "Is it reasonable for the Parliament that was elected on May 25th to raise its voice in defense of the usurped freedoms—being a Parliament that came to be through deception and projected a dishonorable image—a fact well-known to everyone!"**

Practicing political freedom properly requires the election of enlightened and educated individuals and a free and bold press. If ignorance spread over most people, thereby selling their voices and conscience to the highest bidder and did not think that whoever bought them will treat them improperly and retrieve from them multiples of what he had

paid them, then such people do not deserve independence and to carry the responsibility of freedom.

The founder of Daheshism says: **“The weak public opinion in Lebanon that lacks the liberation intellect did not care—although any oppression inflicted on any Lebanese citizen should be considered as an oppressive attack on all citizens.”** As to the Lebanese press during that unhappy era, they were unfortunately bribed and resorted to deceiving the people by distorting the truth and propagating ignorance instead of being an instrument to enlighten the public opinion and to fight oppression by exposing the culprits. The founder of Daheshism with the aim of comparing the American to the Lebanese press says the following about the American press: **“As to the press, they investigate every incident and do not leave a single stone unturned. They critique every gaffe the politicians make no matter how silly it is. What is so strange is that a corrective action is taken by the public official being critiqued without complaining and thanking those who brought the error to his attention.”**

The sociopolitical freedom could not be practiced in an environment controlled by ignorance, fear, and lack of care for the truth. Likewise, it is impossible to be practiced in a society where choices have been previously constrained. Nothing can destroy these constraints except for broad education that opens the eyes of the citizens to the freedoms of other nations and their way of practicing them. Likewise, freedom requires a bold and just press whose primary mission is finding and publishing the truth and holding accountable the public officials entrusted to protect the rights of the people and their interests.

Constraints of Freedom With Respect to Moral and Social Behavior

The founder of Daheshism did not find it necessary to place constraints on any dimension of freedom except on its moral and social dimensions. I had previously clarified that the purpose of his Spiritual Mission is to liberate people from the shackles that constrain their souls, enslave them, and prevent them from elevating Spiritually. The most intractable of these restraints is that of the passions of sexual desire. For example, if sexual permissiveness is left unconstrained or monitored, it will turn into a severe illness that attacks the family structure, sever the foundations of social structure, and threatens to disintegrate the nation. For these reasons, governments should place constraints on sexual permissiveness not be crossed by its citizens. Dr. Dahesh mentioned casually the following about Paris, the mother of liberties: **“Freedom is sought by every living being. He serenades and seeks freedom day and night and sacrifices for its sake everything valuable and invaluable. However, this freedom loses its meaning and structure when its moral limits are exceeded and stoops to this ugly level. Human duties impose on those governing to constrain the liberties that pose a danger on the social structure and a severe blow to virtue and manners.”** This is the opinion that Dr. Dahesh declared in 1946 and he did not deviate from it in all of his writings.

He repeated this opinion casually in different forms throughout his travels documented in a series of books titled *“Daheshist Travels Around the Globe.”* In the first of his travels,

he is outraged by the scene of semi-nude women walking through a main street in Hawaii. He is also outraged in New York City by those taking pride in sexual permissiveness and deviation. In Berlin he views a permissive scene taking place in a night club as part of tourism program sponsored by the hotel he was staying as a guest and wonders: **“How could the government permit such a nest, where vices dwell? This is a deep secret that no one understands other than the government that allowed it.”** In the sixth of his travels, he is puzzled and disgusted by the scene of prostitutes in the streets of Amsterdam. In Stockholm, his outrage is peaked over the widespread permissiveness that prompted him to write a literary piece titled *“Earth Will Be Destroyed,”* where he says:

**“It is hard to believe the abomination present in the most civilized cities of earth...!
How could the government permit such a disgraceful filth!
Are there men of virtue and women of high morals in the land!
How could a brother allow his sister to attend the parade of immorality!
How could a husband allow his wife to visit prostitution houses!
The mountains will be torn apart!
The layers of earth will break up!
The deadly thunderbolts of Divine fury will storm our world...
Our world is desperately in need of total and final annihilation.
The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, that God rained on them sulfur and fire and
erased them from existence due to their wickedness and permissiveness, are
nothing in comparison to what is happening today in the most civilized capitals of
the world...”**

The opinion of the founder of Daheshism on constraining moral social liberties follows the same path of Divine religions, as well as the path of Plato and Aristotle, the pioneers of philosophy. These Greek philosophers stressed the need for a society to place constraints on individual activities that threaten virtue and its growth. It is not sufficient for the society to have laws, but it is also necessary for the laws to be just, whereby they allow the most of virtuous people to fulfill themselves through guidance and enlightenment of their minds. Just laws reinforce freedom and proper governing along with freedom should walk side-by-side. The most important duty of proper governing is the education of its citizenry and the most important part of education is the promotion of virtue. In the modern era, the British judge Lord Devlin is of the same opinion and sees that the legal constraints on the individual activities that can damage or corrupt the institutions forming the society can also be applied even in the fields of social and moral liberties. However, as much as religions remain an authoritative source to control the individual inclinations, it is better for the government not to interfere in placing constraints on the individual activities in civil laws. However, what would happen if religious institutions lessen their influence or relegate themselves from the role of controlling individual inclinations?