

WHO ARE WE? by Vladimir Megré

Book 5 of *The Ringing Cedars Series*

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Chapter 12

DO WE HAVE FREEDOM OF THOUGHT?

“What do you mean — *to free their thought*? Everybody has freedom of thought.”

“In the context of your technocratic society, Vladimir, Man's thought is enslaved by the limits and conventions of this world. In fact, the technocratic world can only exist when the freedom of Man's thought is nullified and the energy of his thought is absorbed by it.”

“Something's not clear to me here. Every Man over his lifetime can do a lot of thinking about a lot of different things. There are limits on freedom of speech, for example. There are countries in which there is greater freedom of expression, in other countries less, but everyone is free to *think* whatever they wish.”

“That is an illusion, Vladimir. The majority of people are compelled to think about one and the same thing their whole lives. This is easier to see if you take the topics a typical Man of your world thinks about and analyse them in terms of distinct time segments, adding up the time he spends thinking about each particular subject. By this simple method you can determine the prevailing thought in contemporary human society.”

“Interesting. Let's try determining this prevailing thought together, you and I.”

“Very well. Then tell me, what would you consider Man's average life expectancy today?”

“Is that important?”

“Not all that important, given the uniformity of Man's thinking, but we need some sort of figure for our subsequent calculations.”

“Okay. In our time let’s say a Man lives eighty years.”

“So, a Man is born. Or, to put it more accurately, he has attained the material plane of his being.”

“Let’s just say he is born — it’s easier to understand.”

“All right. Even as an infant he is looking at the world, which is waiting for him to get to know it. Clothing, housing and food are provided for him by his parents. But the parents also attempt, either consciously or subconsciously, through their behaviour, to impart to him their thoughts and the way they see the world around them. The visible process of getting to know what life is all about lasts approximately eighteen years, and over the whole course of these years the technocratic world attempts to impress the young Man’s thought with its own importance. Then, over the remaining sixty-two years of his life, let us assume that Man himself can control the tendencies of his own thought.”

“Indeed he can. But you were saying there’s something trying to enslave his thought.”

“Yes, I did say that. So let us try and calculate how much time he is free to think for himself.”

“Okay, let’s.”

“For a certain number of hours each day Man sleeps or rests. How many hours a day does he spend on sleep?”

“Eight, as a rule.”

“We took 62 years of Man’s life as a basis. If you multiply that by eight hours per day, taking leap years into account, you find that Man sleeps for 587,928 hours of his life. Thus, sleeping 8 hours a day equates to 22 years of constant sleep. Now we subtract these 22 years from the 62 years of his life and we have 40 years when he is awake.

“Now, at some point during their waking hours most people are involved with the preparation of food. How much time do you think Man spends on cooking and eating food?”

“It happens that women generally do the cooking, while men are obliged to spend more time earning the money to pay for groceries.”

“And how many hours would you say, Vladimir, go into the preparation and consumption of food every day?”

“Well, if you take into account the time spent on buying groceries, preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner, that’s probably about three hours — on a weekday, that is. Only not everyone in the family is involved in the cooking. The rest of us... well, we eat, and maybe help do the grocery shopping, or wash the dishes, so that I’d say about two and a half hours, on average.”

“In fact it is more, but let us take your figure, two-and-a-half hours per day. Multiply that by the number of days a Man lives and it comes to 61,242.5 hours, or 25,517 days, or 7 years. Subtract this number from the 40 and there are 33 left.

“Now, in order to be able to obtain food, clothing and housing, a Man dwelling in the technocratic world is obliged to perform one of the functions essential to this world — namely, *work*. And I should like to draw your attention, Vladimir, to this fact: Man is obliged to work or engage in some business not because he really likes it but for the sake of the technocratic world itself, otherwise Man will be deprived of what is vitally important to him. How much time do most people spend each day on work?”

“In our country it’s eight hours, with another two hours or so spent getting to and from work, but every week they get a couple of days off.”

“So now try to calculate how many equivalent years of his life does a Man spend on work which is rarely satisfying?”

“It would take me quite a while to figure out without a calculator — you tell me.”

“All told, for the thirty years of so-called work activity he spends ten years constantly working for someone — or, rather, for the technocratic world. And now from those 33 years of life we have to subtract another 10, leaving us 23.

“Now, what else does a Man do every day over the course of his life?”

“He watches TV.”

“For how many hours a day?”

“No less than three.”

“These three hours amount to 8 years of constant sitting in front of a television screen. If we take them away from the 23 remaining, we are left with 15. But even this time is not free for activities native to Man alone. Man’s thought is subject to inertia. It cannot make a sudden switch from one thing to another. Some time is spent processing and making sense of information received. All told, the average Man spends only 15 to 20 minutes of his life reflecting on the mystery of creation. Some do not think about it at all, while others spend years contemplating it. Anyone can figure it out if he looks back over the years of his life. Each individual is unique — he is more important than all the galaxies taken together, for he is capable of creating them. But each Man is a particle of the human commonwealth, which may be regarded in its entirety as a single organism, a single essence. And once humanity has fallen into the trap of technocratic dependence, this great essence of the Universe becomes closed within itself, it loses genuine freedom and becomes dependent, at the same time activating the mechanism of self-destruction.

“Another way of life, quite distinct from your world’s everyday norm, is lived by people in the communities of the future. Their thought is both free and humane — it has merged into a single aspiration, and is leading humanity out of its dead end. The galaxies quiver in joyful anticipation when they see the human dream merging into a single whole. Creation will soon witness a new birth and a new co-creation. Their human thought will materialise a beautiful new planet.”

“Wow! How grandiloquently you describe these community dwellers! But outwardly they’re just ordinary people.”

“Even their outward appearance is distinctive. It is imbued with the radiance of great energy. Look more closely — here come a grandmother and her grandson riding along...”

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