

Liberty Under Siege

President Ronald **Reagan** said: Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

Using a metaphor, I see our individual liberty as a lamb, surrounded by packs of wolves, hyenas, and hordes of other beasts' intent on devouring it. Sadly, not many shepherds with big sticks are protecting the lamb.

Liberty is the heart and soul of America. Liberty embodies the most precious treasures of humanity by encompassing seven forms of freedom that collectively make us human. Without liberty, we are simply another species of primates. Islam is anathema to each and every one of these freedoms.

Liberty is a priceless personal treasure given to each and every one of us by the Creator. And it is the case with any treasure, there are those who covet it and do whatever they can to rob us of it.

"Freedom is not free," it is said adroitly so often that it has become a cliché—a truism. If freedom is not free, and I certainly subscribe to that, then those who don't work to earn it, yet enjoy its fruits, are either freeloaders, thieves or both.

The attempts to rob us of our freedom either totally or in part takes endless forms. Governments, for instance, find it to their advantage to chip away at our liberty to make their task of ruling us easier by prescribing and proscribing the minutest aspects of our life and actions. I hardly need to list the nearly infinite ways that governments constrict our

freedom.

Just one silly example should make the point. Former New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, decided by fiat to ban the sale of large bottles of soda in his fiefdom. He felt it was bad for the citizens to consume too much soda in one gulp. Is it okay, Mr. Bloomberg to imbibe several cans of beer, a few shots of whiskey while we down a 16-ounce steak with all the fixings? I await his ruling on this question.

Then there are religious obligations. They are in fierce competition with governments to tell us what we can do and what we can't do. And of course, Islam takes the cake in this infringement. Religions, and Islam, in particular, draw so many lines that we feel trapped in a Hampton-Maze type of place with no way out. All these prescriptions and proscriptions literally confiscate power from the individual and enhance that of the institution.

Political parties, social clubs, and endless other organizations adopt platforms, bylaws, and codes of conduct of dos and don'ts to achieve the same objective of robbing our treasure and thereby enriching themselves.

In the unceasing battle between personal liberty and forces that covet it some compromises are unavoidable, necessary, and occasionally useful. We, humans, are gregarious creatures. We live in societies that require common rules, perforce, include such dos and don'ts.

Surrendering some of our personal liberty to a society is a form of payment we must make. Yet, we must also be alert not to overpay by being vigilant members and not simply docile robotic subjects.

In democratic societies, we, the individuals, have a degree of recourse when we feel attempts are being made to rob us excessively of our liberty. We may resort to petitioning our elected officials, vote them out of office if we can,

participate in demonstrations, and so forth. We may demand and succeed in having discriminatory laws such as those against minorities and women dropped from the books and laws protecting children from exploitation adopted.

Yet, after all, is said and done, individual liberty is oftentimes a losing battle. Just too many institutional and bureaucratic forces are at work non-stop to rob us of our precious liberty and freedom.

Liberty is your most prized possession and democracy is the shield that protects it. Yet, this shield of democracy is vulnerable and needs to be repaired and strengthened on a regular basis. I am calling on you, the individual freedom-loving person, to play your part in the defense of freedom.

“What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” –Patrick Henry

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