

Do You Really Own Yourself?

By David Melechinsky

Many Americans are waking up to the fact that their governments-- local, state, and especially federal, are becoming increasingly invasive and tyrannical, and to an alarming degree. This is a mostly healthy reaction, but it has not been without certain trends which, if left uncorrected, could unwittingly lead to tightening the screws on the emerging enslavement of mankind. This article will not be concerned with the dangers inherent in movements espousing vigilante tactics, anarchy, refusal to pay lawful taxes, or the like, but rather with an all-too-commonly heard error which seems to be at the foundation of most, if not all, of these trends: the concept of *self-ownership*.

“Self-ownership”, on the surface, has a very appealing sound to it. It suggests freedom, self-determination, the right to do what I want, whenever I want. A typical argument holds that self-ownership is the only bulwark against slavery and tyranny, because, it is reasoned, if I do not own myself, then the State must own me. And, if the State owns me, then I cannot pose any rational objection if the State chooses to dispose of its property (that is, myself) as it wishes. And if that is true, I am not free, but a slave. Therefore, if I am to be free, I must assert my right to self-ownership. This line of reasoning, taken to its logical conclusion, has been used in an effort to justify abolishing laws against prostitution, abortion, sodomy, assisted suicide, drug abuse, pornography, treason, and many other things historically regarded as incompatible with a civilized society. Indeed, there are many who take this to the conclusion that all government should be done away with entirely!

But let us take this concept of self-ownership to yet another logical conclusion. What is the ultimate test of ownership? If I *really own* something, I have an inalienable right to SELL it. (If my home is mortgaged and I try to sell it, I will very quickly get some static from the bank that still owns most or part of it!) Suppose I decide to exercise this “right” to sell myself, and do so? What would that make me? What do we call a person who is owned by another person? That is correct: a SLAVE. And if the buyer is not an individual, but the State, what am I? I become less than a serf, for even the serfs had inalienable rights. So, in the name of freedom and rights and opposition to slavery, we must now claim the “right” to be slaves? Some bulwark against slavery and tyranny that is! And indeed, many “libertarians” actually openly proclaim that, to be truly free, we must all have the “right” to sell ourselves into slavery if we choose to do so!

Is it possible that there is a flaw here? There is indeed a flaw, not in the reasoning, but in the premise of self-ownership itself. Let us take an example of something I *do* own. I am composing this article by means of a computer. It is *my* computer, which I built from components I purchased lawfully and morally with the fruits of my labor. I therefore own it. I probably even have the bills of sale to prove my ownership of it. Question: Do I have the bill of sale on MYSELF? Did I make myself out of raw materials? Am I in any way responsible for my own coming into being? Fact: I do not, did not, am not. I therefore do not own myself. Neither does the State own me. Indeed, *the State cannot ever own me*. Why? *Precisely because I do not own myself*, and therefore have no “right” to sell myself

into slavery. And this is because ***I am owned***. For I am indeed Someone's property. I am the property of Him Who ***did*** create me; of Him Who does indeed possess the "bill of sale" for having redeemed me upon the bloody Cross of Salvation.

It is God my Creator Who owns me (and every other person and creature) by right of creation. His Son Our Lord Jesus Christ owns me by right of redemption. Everyone on earth, and the earth itself, and the entire universe-- all these are the property of Almighty God. And even our "property" is actually His as well-- we are His appointed stewards. And now I have uttered a very controversial saying-- and a most inconvenient truth. For there are those who would like us all to believe otherwise! Who might want a person to believe that he owns himself? How about a would-be trader in slaves? How about a budding tyrant? You and I may or may not be enlightened enough to refuse to sell ourselves to the highest bidder, but what about our neighbors? The fact is, many, if not most, people in our United States of America have effectively sold themselves to the highest bidder, the Federal Government. This is how they get on the dole, which most will have done by age 65.

Behold the major underlying motive for the recently stepped-up attack on public recognition of God and His Ten Commandments! Why has God the right to command us? It is because He owns us and we are His! ***But this ownership is also the sole origin and definer of our rights***. If we have the right to life, it is only because God has commanded us not to murder each other. If we have the right to property, it is only because GOD has COMMANDED that we not steal what He has given us from each other. If we have the right to worship God, it is because God has commanded that we do so. And so forth. Our rights are a direct consequence of the Ten Commandments, which are a consequence of the fact that God owns us. Enter the tyrants of the State whose established religion is secular humanism. These goons know they cannot own you ***as long as you pay homage to a power higher than them***. But if they can convince you and your neighbors, through the instrumentality of their stooges in the Media, that God's Commandments are a threat to your liberty, and that you own yourself, half their struggle is won. All that remains is negotiating the purchase price and the consummation of the glorious experience of ten simple commandments replaced by billions of complex regulations. I appreciate the efforts of those who labor to restore freedom and preserve what remains, but am greatly saddened when well-meaning people unwittingly undermine the cause of true liberty by buying into the myths of the tyrants. Let us all beware of attractive but faulty premises that can cause us unwittingly to lead the rest of humanity into slavery in the name of liberty. God is the only Author of human Liberty. We have rights ONLY because HE has Rights.

**GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS:
YOUR BEST BILL OF RIGHTS!**

RIGHTS OF GOD:
1-2-3. Right of God to be worshiped and obeyed by His creatures. Right and obligation of Man to do so.

RIGHTS OF MAN:
4. Right of parents and lawful authorities to be obeyed.
5. Right to Life.
6. & 9. Right of husbands and wives to the exclusive vowed love of their spouses.
7. & 10. Right to one's own property.
8. Right to hear the truth.

MAN has Rights only because GOD has Rights!