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Liberty: An Alien Freedom

Over two centuries ago rebellious yet enlightened minds converged to declare humanity's unalienable rights: "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Every man or woman born inherits these rights and is secure in his/her ownership of them. An attempt for equality was established and freedom deemed humankind's prerogative, but how could a dictum drafted generations ago possibly fathom the complexities of the world today? We inhabit a world alien to the adept philosophers of old. The conditions of the world remain amorphous. One may see a medley of international communication and a blossoming oasis for technology and culture. The other views a cacophony of belligerence and bigotry fueled by contrived nationalism and petty conflict. Whether or not you solely choose to believe in one of these two worlds—I implore you to accept the veracity of both descriptions. Liberty is a concept that exists in the minds of romantics. So what is liberty today?

First allow me to impart my story. This is not a tale of immeasurable tragedy or one plagued by tribulations, just an account of an immigrant and the struggles faced by a boy contemplating liberty within his own life. I was born in a country with a sublime veneer. One that displayed a culmination of the world's architecture, cultures, foods, and scenery. From mountains to rainforests. From neoteric skyscrapers to venerable temples. A country brimming with ideas, religions, and ethnicities. A country that bears the title: "The World's Largest Democracy." India. Although astounding and incessantly burgeoning towards the future, at its core India remained a veneer. We left India. Why leave a place so beautiful and brimming with possibility? Exactly that: possibility. The world has a duality and India was no exception to the world. We left because of corruption widespread within a democracy backed by avarice. We left because of an inundation of people without the proper number of equal opportunities. We left in search of a freedom to find work and opportunity and a life free of corruption and limitation—in search of liberty.

We arrived at the United States of America, "land of the free, home of the brave." To any country outside of the west, America was a lighthouse. We were ships, captivated by the promise of a new and stable life that emitted from the lustrous image that America portrayed. We were

one of the lucky ones. America delivered on its lofty promise. We found work, a house, friends and a connection to our roots, and my parents found an education for their children—for me. I found a place where I could start a new life, with new people, brimming with opportunity for those who made the effort. I would be an ingrateful wastrel if I ignored the opportunities handed to me; however, there remains an unavoidable truth: I am not a citizen. To anyone else that may seem a petty reason for indignance, but to an immigrant it is everything. Fifteen years of my life I have lived alongside American friends, studied at American schools, bought American clothes, ate American cuisine, and adored America's conflux of culture, but I was not American. My life in this country cumulates to a government document somewhere that I belong to a country thousands of miles across the world. That here I was just a "legalized alien." An alien in my own home.

Liberty is an extension of freedom the freedom to work without discrimination, the freedom to learn without boundaries, the freedom to exist without prejudice, the freedom to call a place home. I believe that a place with liberty does not exist in this world. It is an ideal and like most ideals, exceptionally difficult to achieve. But not impossible. Certainly not. America grants multitudes of freedoms to its residents, though in order to have true liberty, we, on a personal level, must collaborate. I do not mean that each and every human must be a progressive thinker 2 and start a foundation to change the world. I just ask that people accept each other regardless of where they come from, what they believe in, and the differences they have. The people of a nation grant liberty to one another and through the people the nation itself will move towards equal freedoms. If we recognize that everyone around us has an equal standing in this world, then maybe we can create liberty ourselves.