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VOICE OF ESSENTIAL LIBERTY

ALEXANDER'S
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THE PROBLEM WITH RICH REPUBLICANS

“As riches increase and accumulate in few hands, as luxury prevails in society, virtue will be in a greater degree considered as only a graceful appendage of wealth, and the tendency of things will be to depart from the republican standard. This is the real disposition of human nature.” --Alexander Hamilton, 1788

A week before the unwarranted criticism of Mitt Romney's tenure at Bain Capital, I had a debate with a friend who is himself a successful venture capitalist. Our debate was about the rights and responsibilities that attend free enterprise capitalism.

I asserted that one of his partners, who amassed a great fortune from “payday loans,” a particularly egregious form of usury akin to loan sharking but targeting mostly those with low income, had ethical and moral obligations associated with his wealth.

My friend feigned SHOCK that I would suggest such responsibilities exist, given my unmitigated support for free enterprise, my fervent defense of the accumulation of wealth and my condemnation of Leftist class warfare politics. He acted as if the mere mention of such obligations was tantamount to supporting Democratic Socialism.

Of course, his reaction framed a false dichotomy that often emerges when conservatives mention rights and responsibilities in connection with wealth. He knew better than to question my devotion to Liberty, including first and foremost, my advocacy for Essential Liberty and free enterprise as foundational tenets sustaining our Republic.

Indeed, there is an enormous difference between ethical and moral obligations according to the dictates of one's conscience, and Leftist endeavors to enforce their interpretation of those obligations through implementation of socialist economic policies, which inevitably result in trickle-up poverty. Those differences need to be elucidated, not obfuscated.

The failure of socialist doctrine was evident long before the word “socialism” became part of the common lexicon.

In 1766, for example, Founder Benjamin Franklin wrote in “Management of the Poor,” “I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.”

Unfortunately, that lesson is lost on the Left today, as they endeavor to undermine the authority of our Constitution by replacing Rule of Law with rule of men, and enacting economic policies that are anathema to Liberty.

That notwithstanding, like it or not, ethical and moral obligations are irrevocably linked to our vocations, including those that produce great wealth. How we respond to these obligations will, in large measure, determine whether our Republic can transcend the “Fatal Cycle of Democracy”: From bondage to spiritual faith; From spiritual faith to courage; From courage to Liberty (Rule of Law); From Liberty to abundance; From abundance to complacency; From complacency to apathy; From apathy to dependence; From dependence back into bondage (rule of men).

Though my friend's investment partner has the legal right to make as much money as he can on “payday loans,” that does not exclude ethical and moral questions regarding how he makes his money and to what benefit or detriment of others. He is free to make and dispense with his wealth as his conscience prescribes, as we all should be. He is also free to insulate and isolate his conscience from the overarching ethical and moral dictates that inform the consciences of most Americans. He is free to justify that disconnect with all manner of rationalizations, as too many very wealthy people are predisposed to do. But those freedoms have inescapable consequences both for the individual and our country.

Too often, conservative leaders, both elected and in policy organizations, hide from mentioning wealth-related obligations for fear of offending those who butter their bread. But the average donation in support of *The Patriot Post* from our grassroots countrymen is less than \$50 -- so we

are not beholden to a few wealthy donors, not that having such donor support would influence our message one way or the other.

I believe that conservatives fail to acknowledge the moral and ethical responsibilities related to material wealth at great peril to Liberty.

So, first, who are “the rich”? That subjective opinion varies widely across our nation, for everyone has more than someone.

Barack Hussein Obama, in his classist rhetoric, claims that couples earning more than \$250,000 per year and individuals earning more than \$200,000 are rich. In reality, however, a lifestyle that most people consider “rich” -- living within gated communities; owning multiple homes; commuting in private aircraft, boats and expensive autos; recreating with other rich and famous folks (Obama’s lifestyle) -- requires a much higher income and substantial net worth.

Of course, a well-kept secret is that there are plenty of rich on the Left, and because of the seductive nature of wealth and its influence on those who hold it, I believe they have wealthy conservatives badly outnumbered. Inheritance welfare liberalism, like welfare liberalism and dependence upon the state, has produced generations of Useful Idiots. In terms of their foundational character, liberals who are dependent on inherited wealth and welfare recipients who are dependent on the state for their sustenance never embraced self-reliance as the essential ingredient of a free society.

Unfortunately, too often there is little that distinguishes the Leftist rich from most of ours, other than the fact that limo-liberals are burdened with the hypocrisy of holding great wealth while advocating socialist policies for everyone else. For the elitists on the Left, wealth is evil only when in the hands of those who hold opposing philosophies and worldviews.

So, what are the implications if Mitt Romney, a rich white guy who amassed millions as a venture capitalist, wins the Republican nomination?

Well, presidential elections tend to be decided by Independent voters in the gap between Republicans and Democrats, and that is truer than ever in this election. Thus, it is important to understand that the concentration of wealth in America concerns a much broader cross section of

voters than just Leftist occupiers. According to reputable polling firms, a substantial majority of Americans are concerned about the aggregation of wealth, particularly of the “Wall Street” variety.

Obama and his Leftmedia sycophants have succeeded in elevating this conflict above many other political issues.

The recent criticism of Romney’s role at Bain Capital is a strawman, a classist proxy target for Obama if he opposes Romney. The fact is, neither Bain Capital nor Romney were, or are, heartless leveraged buyout liquidators. Romney has his faults, but he is no “vulture capitalist” as Rick Perry labeled him.

What concerns me more about Romney is that 26 of the 29 members of Congress who received the largest contributions from Bain executives since 2000 were Democrats. Indeed, Bain executives were major supporters of Weiner, Franken, Kerry and Kennedy. Of course, most of the money flowing from Wall Street to Washington supports Democrats.

Romney has thus far politically capitalized on his fortunes made at Bain by rightly claiming his business experience is a substantial qualification for the office of president. However, he needs to frame his wealth in the context of the obligations incumbent upon it. Unfortunately, to date, he has avoided doing so.

There are legitimate concerns about the implications of wealth aggregation on Liberty, and the only way to defuse those concerns is to address them directly.

Obama’s compulsory socialist solution for addressing those concerns was outlined by Karl Marx: “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

Historically, however, it is the voluntary Christian context for wealth that is most compatible with Liberty. Long before the tyranny of statist Marxism emerged, a far superior framework for the ethical and moral obligations connected to wealth was outlined in the Gospel according to Luke, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be expected; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

It is that context to which Romney subscribes, with the subscript of the Book of Mormon. That he should make plain and do it now.

Obama's classist rhetoric on economic disparity has been very effective, and will be central to his political strategy in the upcoming general election. Like a cruise ship captain who detours from the authorized course, Obama's detour from the course of Liberty and free enterprise authorized by our Constitution, with the help of Leftists and Republicrats in Congress, will sink our ship.

If Romney is the nominee, he must boldly distinguish the moral and ethical obligations of his wealth *within the framework of Liberty* as "endowed by our Creator," opposed to Obama's socialist agenda. Romney's accumulated wealth is his "Achilles' heel." Romney will grease the skids for Obama to win the class warfare debate unless he frames that debate now.

Regardless of individual net worth, virtue related to wealth is shaped not so much by what we own, but by

what owns us. I hope Romney has demonstrated great virtue through an outstanding record of generosity. If not, then I hope enough Independents are prepared to vote *against* Obama, regardless of who is on the Republican ticket.

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)