

What a Spoon Has in Common With the Liberty Bell

A riveting story from Sweden details the cry of freedom from young girls who will risk their lives to escape the horrors of female genital mutilation (FGM) and, ultimately, sexual slavery as their childhoods are destroyed. These girls have devised a last-ditch rescue effort by hiding a spoon in their underwear that will set off metal detectors during the airport screening process to enable them to get a private questioning that could lead to their freedom from genital mutilation or child marriage barbarity.

The spoon is becoming a symbol of freedom, just like the iconic Liberty Bell, which was first rung on July 4, 1776 to announce the vote for independence—the vote for freedom. It was later dubbed the Liberty Bell by abolitionists as the symbol to announce the freedom from slavery.

Inscribed on this special bell is a proclamation of liberty:

“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”

The aspiration of this declaration is the yearning of every human heart, and it is now being expressed in a sacred space by the spoons these young women are carrying.

Imagine the courage that swells in the hearts of these girls as they secure the spoon and execute this plan, and the relief and tears of joy when the alarm signal is detected and the passage to personal freedom is achieved through that spoon.

It is good to applaud the ingenuity and courage of these girls, but we can also take the further step of joining them in solidarity and community.

We gratefully inherit the gift of personal freedom and are called to protect it and pass it on to others. Suppose we start by practicing placing a single spoon at our dinner table to remember this act of courage? By doing so, we will have invested ourselves in remembering these girls at least once a day. We will use the spoon as an opportunity to discuss female genital mutilation and educate our families. We will be quietly challenged to take further action by investing in another's freedom. {eoa}

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