

The Fatal Illusion of Absolute Freedom

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08/01/2026
19 Recep, 1447

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INTRODUCTION: THE SEDUCTIVE LIE

The modern Western world operates on a seemingly reasonable principle: "*You have the freedom to do whatever you want as long as you don't harm others*" or "*Your freedom ends where mine begins.*" This sounds fair, tolerant, and respectful of individual autonomy. It's the foundational principle of classical liberalism and has been enshrined in law, education, and public discourse across the West.

But this principle, despite its superficial appeal, is intellectually incoherent, practically impossible to implement, and socially destructive. It is not a philosophy, it is a recipe for chaos disguised as tolerance. This article will inshAllah (By the Will of Allah) demolish this idea through logical analysis, philosophical critique, historical evidence, and practical examination.

PART I: THE LOGICAL INCOHERENCE

Problem 1: The Impossibility of Defining "Harm"

The entire principle rests on the concept of "harm", you're free to do what you want as long as you don't "harm" others. But who defines harm? How is harm measured? Is harm only physical, or does it include psychological, social, economic, spiritual, and cultural harm?

Consider these scenarios:

Scenario A: A man decides to walk naked through a public park. He says: "*I'm not touching anyone. I'm not physically harming anyone. This is my freedom.*" But parents with children are horrified. Children are exposed to explicit nudity against their will. The community feels their public space has been violated. Is this harmful? If yes, why? If not, why should parents not have the freedom to raise their children in an environment free from public nudity?

Scenario B: A person says: "*I watch pornography in my private home. I'm not harming anyone.*" But research shows pornography contributes to sexual objectification of women, increases demand for sex trafficking, rewires the brain's reward system leading to addiction, destroys marriages and families, and contributes to a culture where women are commodified. Is this harmful? The consumer didn't directly touch anyone, but the industry he funds harms thousands. Where is the line?

Scenario C: Two men kiss passionately in public. They say: "*We're not harming anyone. This is our freedom.*" But religious families believe their children are being exposed to behavior they consider immoral and harmful to their moral development. Who is right? If you say "*the religious families have no right to impose their morality*," you've just imposed **your** morality, that public homosexual displays should be accepted, on them.

The Logical Problem is that harm is not objective. Harm is defined by a moral framework. Different moral frameworks define harm differently. Therefore, the principle "*do whatever you want as long as you don't harm others*" is meaningless without first establishing a shared moral framework that defines what harm is. But establishing such a framework requires moral judgment, the very thing liberalism claims to avoid. This is a logical contradiction at the foundation of the entire system.

Problem 2: The Infinite Regress of "Whose Freedom?"

"*Your freedom ends where mine begins.*" This sounds reasonable until you examine it closely. Whose freedom takes priority when freedoms conflict?

Example: The Mosque and the Nightclub

A Muslim community builds a mosque in a neighborhood. They have the "*freedom of religion*" to call the adhan (call to prayer) five times a day through loudspeakers. A nightclub owner opens next to the mosque. He has the "*freedom of enterprise*" to play loud music until 4 AM.

The Muslims say: "*The nightclub's loud music violates our freedom to worship peacefully.*" The nightclub owner says: "*The mosque's call to prayer at dawn violates my customers' freedom to sleep and my freedom to operate my business without religious imposition.*"

Who is right? Both are exercising "*their freedom*" but these freedoms directly contradict. You cannot give both parties full freedom, one must be restricted. How do you decide? You need a hierarchy of values, a moral framework that says "*this freedom is more important than that freedom.*" But this requires moral judgment, the very thing liberalism claims to avoid by saying "*everyone is free to do what they want.*"

The Logical Problem here is that Freedoms constantly conflict in complex societies. Resolving these conflicts requires a hierarchy of values, a moral framework that prioritizes some freedoms over others. But this means society is not based on "*do whatever you want*", no, it's based on a specific moral system that determines which freedoms are more important. Liberalism pretends to be neutral but actually imposes its own hierarchy (individual autonomy above communal morality, sexual freedom above religious values, etc.) while claiming it doesn't.

Problem 3: The Impossibility of Neutrality

Liberalism claims: "*The state should be neutral. It shouldn't impose any particular moral vision. Everyone should be free to live according to their own values as long as they don't harm others.*"

This is logically impossible. Here's why:

Every law is a moral judgment. Consider:

- Legalizing abortion is a moral statement: "A *fetus is not a person with rights*" or "A *woman's bodily autonomy supersedes fetal life.*"
- Banning abortion is a moral statement: "A *fetus is a person with rights*" or "*Life begins at conception.*"

You cannot be neutral. The law must either allow abortion or ban it. Either choice is a moral judgment imposed on those who disagree.

The same applies to:

- Gay marriage
    - Legalizing it says "*homosexual unions are equal to heterosexual unions*", a moral judgment.
    - Banning it says the opposite, also a moral judgment.
- Prostitution
    - Legalizing it says "*sex can be legitimately commodified*", a moral judgment.
    - Banning it says "*human sexuality should not be bought and sold*" a moral judgment.
- Drug use
    - Legalizing drugs says "*individuals have the right to harm themselves through substance use*", a moral judgment.
    - Banning drugs says "*society has a duty to protect individuals from self-destructive behavior*", a moral judgment.

Neutrality is impossible. Every legal and social arrangement embodies a moral framework. Liberalism is not neutral, it imposes a specific moral framework (individual autonomy, relativism, secular humanism) while dishonestly claiming to be neutral and "*letting everyone do what they want.*" In reality, liberalism prohibits traditional moral enforcement while permitting and even celebrating behaviors that traditional moralities condemn. This is not neutrality at all, this is the victory of one moral system (liberalism) over others (traditional religions and philosophies).

PART II: THE PHILOSOPHICAL INCOHERENCE

The Atomistic View of Human Nature

The principle "*do whatever you want as long as you don't harm others*" assumes humans are atomistic individuals, isolated, self-contained units whose actions primarily affect only themselves unless they directly impinge on another atomistic individual.

This view of human nature is false. Humans are social beings. We exist in communities, families, cultures, and civilizations. Our actions ripple outward, affecting others indirectly, shaping culture, influencing norms, setting examples, and contributing to the moral atmosphere of society.

Example: The Normalization of Promiscuity

An individual argues: "*My sexual choices don't harm anyone. If I sleep with 50 people, that's my business. I'm not forcing anyone.*"

But consider the indirect effects:

- Every person who normalizes promiscuity makes it harder for those who value chastity and commitment to find partners who share their values.
- Widespread promiscuity increases STD transmission rates, even among those who don't engage in promiscuity themselves.
- Children growing up in a hyper-sexualized culture absorb these values, even if their own parents try to teach differently.
- The culture of casual sex devalues marriage, making stable family formation more difficult, leading to more single-parent households, which statistically results in worse outcomes for children (higher poverty, lower educational achievement, higher crime rates).

One person's "private" choice contributes to a cultural shift that affects everyone. There is no such thing as purely private action in a society. We are interconnected. What you normalize through your behavior becomes the environment in which others must live.

The False Dichotomy of Harm

Liberalism operates on a false dichotomy: either an action directly and physically harms another person (in which case it can be prohibited), or it doesn't (in which case it must be allowed).

This ignores vast categories of harm:

Moral Harm: If you believe homosexuality is morally wrong (as traditional Christianity, Islam, and Judaism teach), then public celebration of homosexuality harms you by creating a society that actively promotes what you consider moral corruption. Liberals dismiss this as "*imposing your morality*," but they're imposing *their* morality in return.

Cultural Harm: If you value modesty, public displays of immodesty harm the culture you want to preserve. If you value family, the normalization of non-marital sexuality harms the culture you want for your children. These are real harms, even if they're not physical.

Spiritual Harm: If you believe certain behaviors displease God and invite His punishment on society (as most traditional religions teach), then widespread sin harms everyone by bringing divine wrath or removing divine blessing. Liberals dismiss this as superstition, but in doing so, they privilege their secular worldview over religious worldviews, which is itself an imposition of values, not neutrality.

Liberalism recognizes only physical, direct harm as legitimate grounds for restricting freedom. This is arbitrary. Why should only physical harm count? Because liberalism is materialist, it doesn't recognize spiritual, moral, or cultural realities as real. But this materialism is itself a philosophical position, not a neutral fact. By privileging material

harm over spiritual/moral harm, liberalism imposes its materialist philosophy on everyone else.

PART III: THE PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY

The Slippery Slope is Real

Liberalism's defenders often dismiss "slippery slope" arguments as logical fallacies. But history proves the slippery slope is real when there's no principled stopping point.

Example: Sexual Liberation

1960s: *"We just want contraception to be legal for married couples. This doesn't harm anyone."*

1970s: *"We just want no-fault divorce. If a marriage isn't working, people should be free to leave."*

1980s: *"We just want sex education in schools. Knowledge doesn't harm anyone."*

1990s: *"We just want homosexuality to be decriminalized. What consenting adults do in private doesn't harm anyone."*

2000s: *"We just want civil unions for gay couples. We're not asking to redefine marriage."*

2010s: *"We just want gay marriage. Love is love. This doesn't affect your marriage."*

2020s: *"We just want children to be able to transition genders. Affirming their identity doesn't harm anyone. If you oppose this, you're a bigot who should lose your job."*

Each step seemed reasonable in isolation. But each step made the next step inevitable because there was no principled stopping point. If the principle is *"do whatever you want as long as you don't harm others,"* and harm is defined subjectively, then every boundary can be pushed.

Where does it end?

2030s? *"We just want polyamorous marriages for women recognized. Love is love."*

2040s? *"We just want incestuous relationships decriminalized between consenting adults. Who are you to judge?"*

2050s? *"We just want pedophilia recognized as a sexual orientation, and as long as the child 'consents'..."*

You think this is absurd? Many people in the 1960s thought gay marriage was absurd. Now it's the law and you can lose your career for opposing it. The slope is real because once you abandon objective moral standards, there's no logical place to stop.

The Tyranny of Tolerance

The *"do whatever you want"* philosophy inevitably leads to tyranny. Here's why:

When society says *"everyone is free to do what they want and we can't judge,"* what actually happens is:

Traditional morality is banned from the public square. You cannot say homosexuality is wrong without facing social and often legal consequences (hate speech laws, job loss, etc.). You cannot oppose transgenderism without being labeled a bigot. You cannot advocate for traditional gender roles without being called sexist.

But liberal morality is aggressively enforced. You must use preferred pronouns. You must bake the cake for the gay wedding. Your children must be taught gender ideology in schools. Your tax money must fund abortions. You must celebrate Pride Month.

The result: Liberal values are mandatory, traditional values are prohibited. This is not freedom. This is the replacement of one moral system (traditional) with another (liberal), but with the dishonest claim that the new system is "neutral" and "free."

A society that claims to tolerate everything cannot tolerate those who believe in absolute moral truth. Therefore, it becomes tyrannical toward traditional religions and philosophies. We see this now; Christians, Muslims, and others who maintain traditional moral teachings are increasingly marginalized, penalized, and persecuted in liberal societies.

PART IV: THE SOCIAL DESTRUCTION

The Collapse of Shared Values

A society cannot function without shared values. The *"do whatever you want"* philosophy destroys shared values by making moral relativism the only permissible public philosophy.

What happens:

- No common understanding of the good life: If everyone defines "the good" differently, there's no shared vision of what society should aim for.
- No basis for sacrifice: Why should anyone sacrifice for the common good if there is no common good, only individual preferences?

- No social cohesion: What binds people together if not shared values, shared purpose, shared morality?

The result is that society fragments into competing tribes, each demanding their "freedom" to live according to their values, with no overarching framework to adjudicate conflicts. This is the culture war we're living through now, it's the inevitable result of moral relativism.

The Corruption of Virtue

Traditional societies understood that freedom must be ordered toward virtue, toward human flourishing, moral excellence, and the good life. Freedom was a means, not an end.

Liberalism makes freedom itself the highest good. But **freedom to do what?** If there's no objective good, then freedom becomes the freedom to indulge every base desire, every fleeting impulse, every selfish whim.

The result:

- Hedonism: If there's no higher purpose, maximize pleasure. This leads to addiction (drugs, porn, consumerism), because pleasures must be constantly escalated to maintain satisfaction.

- Narcissism: If there's no truth outside yourself, then your feelings become the ultimate authority. This leads to the epidemic of narcissism, victim mentality, and fragile egos we see today.

- Nihilism: If there's no objective meaning or purpose, life becomes absurd. This leads to the epidemic of depression, anxiety, and suicide, especially among young people in liberal societies.

The Statistics Prove It:

Western societies, which have embraced "do whatever you want" philosophy most completely, are:

- More depressed: Antidepressant use has skyrocketed. Suicide rates are rising, especially among youth.
- More anxious: Anxiety disorders are at historic highs.
- More lonely: Despite being "connected" through technology, people report more loneliness than ever.
- Less happy: Despite material wealth, happiness and life satisfaction are declining.
- Fewer children: Birth rates have collapsed below replacement level, people no longer see meaning in creating and nurturing the next generation.

This is what unlimited "freedom" produces: a society of isolated, anxious, depressed, childless individuals consuming entertainment and substances to numb the existential void.

PART V: THE ALTERNATIVE: ORDERED FREEDOM TOWARD THE GOOD

True freedom is not "*do whatever you want*." True freedom is the ability to do what you ought to do, to fulfill your purpose, to achieve excellence, to live virtuously.

Is a fish "free" when it's out of water? It can flop around on land, go anywhere it wants on the beach. But it's dying. The fish is only truly free, able to fulfill its nature, when it's in water, the environment for which it was designed.

Similarly, humans are only truly free when we live according to our nature, our purpose, our design. Unlimited license to do whatever we want is not freedom, it's slavery to our base desires, to fleeting impulses, to self-destruction.

A good society:

- Recognizes objective truth: There is a truth about human nature, about right and wrong, about how we should live.
- Orders freedom toward the good: Freedom is a means to living virtuously, not an end in itself.
- Establishes a moral framework: Society should promote virtue and discourage vice, not pretend to be neutral.
- Protects the vulnerable: Children, families, and the morally weak should be protected from corruption, not told "anything goes."

CONCLUSION: THE FATAL FLAW

The principle "*do whatever you want as long as you don't harm others*" fails at every level:

Logically, It's incoherent because harm is subjective, freedom conflicts, and neutrality is impossible.

Philosophically, It's based on a false atomistic view of human nature and arbitrary privileging of physical over moral/spiritual harm.

Practically, It leads to a slippery slope with no stopping point and results in tyranny disguised as tolerance.

Socially, It destroys shared values, corrupts virtue, and produces a lonely, depressed, nihilistic population.

The truth is that every society operates according to a moral framework. The only question is: which moral framework? Liberalism pretends to be neutral but actually imposes secular humanism, relativism, and individual autonomy as supreme values. It is not "freedom", it is one particular moral system defeating all others while dishonestly claiming not to be a moral system at all.

W'Allahu Alam (And Allah knows best)

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