

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Freedom / Right to Choose

The word independence is only mentioned once in Quran and has a different meaning than the definition we in the US celebrate on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

*[23:91] GOD has never begotten a son. Nor was there ever any other god besides Him. Otherwise, each god would have declared independence with his creations, and they would have competed with each other for dominance. GOD be glorified; far above their claims.*

The word freedom is not mentioned directly in the Quran except as an explanation in 33:72 *We have offered the responsibility (freedom of choice) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. But the human being accepted it; he was transgressing, ignorant.*

There were 17 definitions for freedom in a dictionary I looked at. Here are 10.

1. the state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint.
2. exemption from external control, interference, regulation, etc.

3. the power to determine action without restraint.
4. political or national independence.
5. personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery.
6. the absence of or release from ties, obligations, etc.
7. a particular immunity or privilege enjoyed.
8. civil liberty, as opposed to subjection to an arbitrary or despotic government.
9. the right to enjoy all the privileges or special rights of citizenship, membership, etc.
10. the right to frequent, enjoy, or use at will.

The freedom that we celebrate in the US on July 4<sup>th</sup> concerns our independence from British rule.

When the initial battles in the Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did were considered radical. By the middle of the 1776, however, many colonists had come to favor independence, thanks to growing hostility against Britain and the spread of

revolutionary sentiments such as those expressed in the bestselling pamphlet "Common Sense," published by Thomas Paine in early 1776. The main points made in the pamphlet were that government's purpose was to serve the people and America had a rare opportunity to create a new nation based on self-rule. Centuries before the existence of the internet, *Common Sense* managed to go viral, selling an estimated 500,000 copies.

Now it's 246 years later and so much has happened. Although this country has done so many wrongs to so many people, we are still one of the most free and prosperous nations on earth. God has truly blessed us to live in a free country. To be able to practice our submission, openly and freely. In our busy lives I feel it is easy to take for granted just how blessed we are to not be living in an oppressive country where despots and tyrants rule and have no regard for their people who suffer greatly often just to obtain the basic needs of life. May God help us to continue to be appreciative that we live in one of the freest countries in the world.

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But it's the 17<sup>th</sup> definition of freedom that, in my opinion, is the most important one: the power to exercise choice and make decisions without constraint.

The power to make choices.

Although the word *freedom* is not literally in the Quran, the words—choose, chooses, chose, chosen—occur almost 100 times.

Many verses talk about things that God is choosing to do:

*[2:105] ... GOD showers His blessings upon whomever He chooses. ...*

*[2:90, and many others] ... He chooses from among His servants. ...*

*[2:269] He bestows wisdom upon whomever He chooses ...*

*[3:37] ... GOD provides for whomever He chooses, without limits."*

*[3:42] ... O Mary, GOD has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you from all the women.*

*[4:125] ... GOD has chosen Abraham as a beloved friend.*

*[7:144] "O Moses, I have chosen you, out of all the people, with My messages and by speaking to you ...*

*[29:62] ... whomever He chooses from among His creatures ...*

*[72:27] Only to a messenger that He chooses, does He reveal from the past and the future, specific news.*

*[34:39] ... He increases the provisions for whomever He chooses from among His servants ...*

*[40:15] ... He sends inspiration, bearing His commands, to whomever He chooses from among His servants ...*

*[28:68] Your Lord is the One who creates whatever He wills, and chooses; no one else does any choosing. Glory be to GOD, the Most Exalted. He is far above needing partners.*

No one else does any choosing! This could be considered a great paradox. But not so for the believers because we know that God is in full control.

*[57:22] Anything that happens on earth, or to you, has already been recorded, even before the creation. This is easy for GOD to do.*

So even though our eternal outcome has already been recorded as well as our minutest of actions in this life, we don't know what that outcome is. So, we have to make choices ... the correct choices to try and achieve the outcome we desire. And I think we can all agree that outcome is to make it to heaven. God gave us free will. The power to make our own choices to determine our eternal life. That is true freedom.

We made the choice eons ago to question God's absolute authority. So now we are here trying to pass the ultimate test. And when we take a test, we have a choice to make, to study or not to study for that test. And if we don't study there is a good chance we might fail the test.

*[7:175] Recite for them the news of one who was given our proofs, but chose to disregard them. Consequently, the devil pursued him, until he became a strayer.*

*[10:45] ... Losers indeed are those who disbelieved in meeting GOD; and chose to be misguided.*

Pharaoh: *[10:91] "Too late! For you have rebelled already, and chose to be a transgressor.*

*[2:108] ... Anyone who chooses disbelief, instead of belief, has truly strayed off the right path*

*[3:177] Those who choose disbelief, instead of belief, do not hurt GOD in the least; they have incurred a painful retribution.*

*[35:39] He is the One who made you inheritors of the earth. Subsequently, whoever chooses to disbelieve does so to his own detriment. ...*

*[17:18] Anyone who chooses this fleeting life as his priority, we will rush to him what we decide to give him, then we commit him to Gehenna, where he suffers forever, despised and defeated.*

I want to emphasize the power of choice. We need to put choice as an authorization, as a power that is so huge, that if I ran the world, I would make studying the power of choice part of every school curriculum. That everyone should learn that the power of the choices you make have eternal consequences. From the littlest choice to something that is huge. And here's the paradox: you have no idea what is a little choice or a big choice.

What we are used to doing is believing that a big choice is an obvious one: buying a house, getting married, getting divorced. In fact, those are your small choices. The choices that actually matter when it comes to your health, when it comes to healing, when it comes to positioning yourself, empowering yourself, are the tiny but righteous ones that perhaps you think are insignificant. These are the most powerful choices of your life, that have the most powerful impact on your biology, on your soul, on your sense of who you are, on your well-being, on your whole life map.

We are born knowing certain things; we're wired for it. People instinctively appreciate certain things across the world. For example, we are born knowing that choice is powerful. Choice is among the most powerful things we have got going for us in this world and we know it. Here are some choices that matter, that make a difference.

The first choice is the **decision to actually live a righteous, integrous life**. And when I say make a choice to do that, I'm talking full scale. I'm going to walk the way I talk. I'm actually going to do it. I'm actually going to tell the truth.

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I'm going to live with integrity. I'm going to make my choices according to what I say I believe. I'm not going to betray myself and my soul. I'm not going to compromise myself. I'm not going to put myself in a position that's uncomfortable, or if I'm in such a circumstance I am getting out.

Liars don't heal. Dishonest people, people who lie, people who have moral crises and do not get it, people who blame others for things that they do and they know it, people who make choices and they know another person is going to pay for the consequence of their choice and they are conscious of it, people who know for a fact that they are saying something that is not true and they know another person is going to be hurt by that, people who deliberately say things to hurt somebody. Those people cannot succeed.

Make the decision — the decision to live an integrous life. It means get your act together. You cannot just say I'm a good person; you must live it every day.

And make this choice: **Choose to get up every day and make your day blessed.** You may not know what the day will bring, but it is blessed. Why? Because you are alive and still have time to make good choices by God's grace. What a blessing. Then hold in your heart this prayer: *Thank you God for today. This day of my life will never come again. I will never see this sunrise again and I will never see that sunset. I may never see the person having breakfast with me again. Just this way. You know, nothing in my life like this will ever come again.* That alone, that choice alone should take out of your heart every bitter taste there is. That should shape the life around you with such grace and such beauty. That will make you only want to see the present with great gratitude.

*[17:19] As for those who choose the Hereafter as their priority, and work righteousness, while believing, their*

*efforts will be appreciated.*

*[19:76] GOD augments the guidance of those who choose to be guided. For the good deeds are eternally rewarded by your Lord, and bring far better returns.*

*[73:9] Lord of the east and the west; there is no other god besides Him. You should choose Him as your advocate.*

*[73:19] This is a reminder; whoever wills, let him choose the path to his Lord.*

*[76:29] This is a reminder: whoever wills shall choose the path to his Lord.*

*[2:148] Each of you chooses the direction to follow; you shall race towards righteousness. Wherever you may be, GOD will summon you all. GOD is Omnipotent.*

*[90:10-18] Did we not show him the two paths? He should choose the difficult path. Which one is the difficult path? The freeing of slaves. Feeding, during the time of hardship. Orphans who are related. Or the poor who is in need. And being one of those who believe, and exhorting one another to be steadfast, and exhorting one another to be kind. These have deserved happiness.*

May God continue to guide us to make the right choices. And remember to thank God that we have the freedom to choose.

Bob

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### Write for the Submitters Perspective

We appreciate your contributions to the *Submitters Perspective* in the form of articles, comments and suggestions. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your articles or questions at [info@masjdtucson.org](mailto:info@masjdtucson.org) If you want to see past *Submitters Perspective* articles, they are available at: [www.masjdtucson.org/publications/books/sp](http://www.masjdtucson.org/publications/books/sp)

## Peace Explained

Many people think of peace as the absence of war and other fighting. The Quran tells us that Peace is one of God's names:

*He is the One God; there is no other god besides Him. The King, the Most Sacred, the Peace, the Most Faithful, the Supreme, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Most Dignified. God be glorified; far above having partners. (59:23)*

This implies that the word can mean something much deeper.

Submitters / Muslims often use this word, sometimes in its Arabic form, as a greeting or part of a greeting. They ask for the Peace of God (or from God) on another person. Similarly, the Spanish greetings "adios" and "via con Dios" translate "to God" and "go with God" respectively. Perhaps they came into usage during the time when the Moorish Muslims ruled Spain. In any case, using them reminds one of God (Dios in Spanish). That provides a good reason to greet each other with such a greeting:

*... greet each other a greeting from God that is blessed and good. God thus explains the revelations for you, that you may understand. (24:61)*

To me God's name of Peace indicates more than lack of aggression, which He forbids except in self-defense or against oppression (2:190-193). It tells me I must develop a state of peace *within* myself—the peace that comes from absolute trust in and dependence on God.

Of course, to do this I must kill my ego (2:54). If I don't kill it, my ego rules me rather than my allowing God to rule me. In effect, I am making my ego my god—not something I want. That sets up a partner with God and makes me idolatrous.

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I can look at this another way too. If my ego runs the show, especially if I want to devote myself to God, I am at war with myself. Such a state results in the opposite of peace and requires a great deal of emotional, spiritual, and mental energy. Constant stress damages the body, mind and eventually even the soul. In many ways it is oppression: ... *Oppression is worse than murder. (2:191)*

If I find myself in this troubled state, what can I do?

Let me try to share what works for me:

- Before doing anything else I need to turn to God and ask His help.
- I need then to sit quietly or walk as I try to identify the ways my ego is ruling me.
- Whether or not I am able to identify those ways, if I repent to God and ask Him to show me how I need to change, it often brings some specific problem areas to mind so I can examine them more closely.
- It helps me if I make a note of those areas so I don't lose track of them. Then often writing about the issue clarifies it for me.
- Finally, once I have done all that, it also usually helps me to consult with

a good submitter and talk about what God has shown me. Explaining it all to another person helps me put my feelings into words and process them.

Of course, this is just one way of dealing with things that disturb my peace. What works for me might not be appropriate for you. But I pray that this has given you a few ideas which will be of use in your own path to God's Peace:

*O people of the scripture .... A beacon has come to you from God, and a profound scripture.*

*With it, God guides those who seek His approval. He guides them to the paths of peace, leads them out of darkness into the light by His leave, and guides them in a straight path. (5:15-16)*

Lisa

\* \* \* \* \*

*[56:91] peace is the lot of those on the right.*

*[10:25] GOD invites to the abode of peace, and guides whomever He wills in a straight path.*

*[10:10] Their prayer therein is: "Be You glorified, our god," their greeting therein is, "Peace," and their ultimate prayer is: "Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe."*

*[19:62] They will not hear any nonsense therein; only peace. They receive their provisions therein, day and night.*

## Charity Water 2022

Our worldwide Submitter community is aiming to raise \$30,000 through the *Charity Water* non-profit organization, with God's help. The donation link is: <https://my.charitywater.org/masjiduntucson-org/> (project runs through mid-September)

Since 2013 your generous donations have exceeded \$225,000, which has contributed towards building over 30 water projects in Africa (construction on additional wells is still ongoing), by God's grace. (Details are in the link above.) May God accept our charity and guide us to do what pleases Him alone.

*Charity Water* commits to using 100% of the donated amounts to directly fund water projects (i.e., not towards overhead or administrative costs).

*[57:18] Surely, the charitable men and women, have loaned GOD a loan of goodness. They will receive their reward multiplied manifold; they have deserved a generous recompense.*

*[2:272] ... Any charity you give is for your own good. Any charity you give shall be for the sake of GOD. Any charity you give will be repaid to you, without the least injustice.*

*[3:92] You cannot attain righteousness until you give to charity from the possessions you love. Whatever you give to charity, GOD is fully aware thereof.*