

Debating 'Religious Exemption' from Vaccines Ignores the Real Freedom-Destroying Elephant in the Room



What's Wrong With 'Religious Exemption'?

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[Source](#)

My article below challenges the prevalent assumption that the state may mandate vaccination. I am NOT anti-vax, but just anti-coercion and pro-bodily-autonomy. If you find this view offensive or disturbing and would like to continue living in blissful ignorance while the very underpinnings of free society are under attack, then please don't read this.

There's something deeply troubling about the whole debate over "religious exemption" from mandatory vaccination. It avoids the real elephant in the room. Who granted the government the authority to mandate vaccination in the first place? What happened to bodily autonomy?

Some point to the fact that the state doesn't coerce anyone to vaccinate, and as such, doesn't technically violate anyone's autonomy. Of course, this is a specious argument. Mandatory vaccination effectively bars a child from school. Depriving a

child of an education is coercive. Education is a right, not a privilege.

For a working single mother, homeschooling is simply not an option. For many couples who both work, staying home to homeschool children condemns their family to indigence. This “non-compulsory” law forces them to choose between vaccination and poverty.

How can free society tolerate such cruel and intolerant policy?

Some folks argue that personal freedoms must be restricted (read: violated) when there’s a public safety risk. Their reasoning: measles can be deadly, and an unvaccinated child is at greater risk to contracting the dreaded disease and spreading it further to others. Since this child arguably poses a risk to the community, they argue, he may be barred from the public whose safety we are trying to safeguard.

The problem is that infringing on individual’s rights in the name of public welfare is a risky business. We’re treading on thin ice, constitutionally-speaking.

Let’s first assess the actual risk that this one child poses. She is presently healthy, indistinguishable from a vaccinated child. The fear is that there is a higher statistical possibility that she may contract an infectious disease.

This reasoning might also lead us to conclude that children from ethnicities who have higher incidents of juvenile delinquency may be barred from society too. After all, a student from such ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds surely increases the statistical risk for school violence.

Muslim children may be barred from schools too, since they are certainly at higher risk of radicalization and jihadism. Where do we draw the line? Is the threat of measles more lethal than that of school shootings or suicide bombings?

Nevertheless, irrational fear of disease seems to provide an excuse to curtail individual freedoms more so than other security or safety concerns.

The loudest voices in our society justify the banning of the unvaccinated due to public safety risk. Public health outweighs an individual's rights, they argue. I'd assume these same people enthusiastically support the NSA (National Security Agency) recording our conversations and so-called concentration camps at the border, both of which supposedly exist to protect the public.

However, that's not the case. These same outspoken proponents of mandatory vaccination are oddly silent when it comes to the state suspending other civil liberties. Instead, they often protest these government abuses, yet nod in approval when unvaccinated children are barred from school.

[Even more inexplicably, they'll clamor for the rights of unvaccinated migrants (and their unimpeded integration into American society) yet advocate sequestering unvaccinated children of U.S. citizens.]

So I ask them: why do you believe individuals are any less entitled to medical freedom than they are freedom of mobility, speech, or expression?

You'll fight for a woman's right to wear hijabs, in spite of the conceivable possibility that she's hiding a weapon underneath, but have no qualms forcing her to submit to bodily injection in the name of preventing potential harm to the public!

You deplore "apartheid" policies that exclude Arabs from crossing a border to mitigate security risks, but cheer when unvaccinated children are shunned from the public, banned from school, treated as pariahs and untouchables... all because they supposedly pose a public health risk!

I'll be the simple son and ask the obvious question: why is this apartheid different from all other aparthoids?

When [New York City] fines people for not complying with mandatory MMR (mumps, measles, rubella) [vaccination], you cite an increased risk of measles from the unvaccinated population. Yet you deplore racial profiling and police's biased attitude towards minorities, even though there's an increased risk of violent offenders coming from that same minority population.

You have zero tolerance for bias against black people but plenty of tolerance for bias against unvaccinated people.

You'll champion a woman's inviolable right to consent yet turn a blind eye when teen-age girls are penetrated with an intravenous needle under duress! Poked and force-injected with someone else's bodily fluid (i.e. that of aborted babies, not to mention monkeys and other mammals)!

You'll stand up for a woman's choice to kill her nine-month-old fetus but reject her choice to decline the Hepatitis-B vaccine for that same baby one day later!

Why the double standards? Why are you okay with infringing on individual's civil liberties only with regards to vaccines? Who gave the state exclusive rights to our bloodstreams!?

It's irrelevant that there's a vaccinating majority. Since when do we condone dictatorship of the majority?

We simply cannot tolerate such egregious violations of individual citizens' rights. There's too much at stake. Bodily autonomy is sacrosanct. An individual's right to medical choice is inviolable. This is the U.S.A., land of the free!

Not only may we not force-vaccinate anyone, neither may we ostracize them for not being vaccinated. That's Jim Crow laws revisited.

We may not bar children from schools. It's no different than barring blacks from schools for phony excuse of "keeping the neighborhood safe."

Unvaccinated children are just as human as your own, and they are entitled to an education! A school that will not accommodate all healthy children should not be allowed to accommodate any children. There can be no tolerance for such discriminatory policies in free society.

So that brings me back to my problem with "religious exemption." Why does anyone need an "exemption" in the first place? Any person should be fully entitled to decline ANY medical procedure, no questions asked.

The state may enforce seatbelts, motor-vehicle or aviation safety, consumer protection, etc., but they may not force-medicate healthy individuals. That's a red line that must never be crossed.

Years ago, while we weren't paying attention, the government insidiously usurped our freedoms by enforcing mandatory vaccination policy, while tossing us a conciliatory doggy bone, so-called "religious exemption." That enabled individuals to decline, but for specifically-religious reasons only.

Shockingly, "non-religious" individuals were never afforded such a "privilege." Moreover, an individual could only cite uniquely-religious reasons, and was often harassed by his own coreligionists who disputed his right to his own religious beliefs!

Fast-forward to the present. Now we have an outrageous situation in which self-proclaimed religious experts ridiculously profess expertise on every known religion on earth. These so-called spiritual leaders claim that there are no valid religious reasons for declining vaccination ever.

New York state legislators were only too eager to follow suit and eliminated religious exemption altogether, banning some 35,000+ children from school in one fell swoop.

What is the reaction from the freedom-loving people of New York State? Silence, complacency, and indifference.

Shameful, appalling and deplorable.

Truth is, however, that the population has been unsuspectingly indoctrinated over the course of many years, ever since mandatory vaccination was introduced, even throughout the time that religious exemption had been honored.

Zealous efforts to ensure “herd immunity” have led to “herd thinking.” No one is permitted to question the state-imposed vaccination paradigm. My goodness, independent thinking is viewed as a “public health risk” and suppressed! Anyone who questions the state’s mandate to vaccinate the population is roundly tarred and feathered in the name of “protecting public health.”

Despite their best of intentions, the champions of “public health” have sadly trampled our First Amendment rights in the process.

My friends, it’s time to take back the narrative and reclaim our autonomy. Your body belongs to you and you alone. No one may dictate what you inject into yourself.

Doctors may encourage vaccination, and surely you ought to consider their advice and possibly comply, but that is YOUR decision and no one else’s.

Yes, it’s possible that if the unvaccinated population increases, some diseases might return. Unfortunately, there’s nothing we can do about that, short of vaccinating ourselves and your children.

We may NOT vaccinate other people’s children. If we allow

that, then we are no longer a free country, but a police state. We will have lost everything.

As Patrick Henry famously cried, "Give me liberty or give me death." Is measles worse than death?

(Parenthetically, has there been even one death in the recent measles outbreak in the U.S.? 1,203 cases so far this year, but not a single fatality. Please remind me why measles is so dreaded...)

I'd rather deal with measles than with a dystopian police state, the risk we take if we don't stymie the government's efforts to restrict our free choice and bodily autonomy.

Let's review the opening lines of the Nuremburg Code: The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.

This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved, as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision.

Vaccination ought to be a matter of "enlightened decision," not a "forced" decision made "under duress" by "overreaching" government. Barring children from school amounts to coercion and cannot be tolerated.

Let's all wake up now before it's too late. Yes, religious freedom is under attack in the Empire State and throughout the country.

Under the law, religion is defined as "personal, strongly held beliefs," not necessarily related to organized religion. It's

no coincidence that our Founding Fathers enshrined it in the very first amendment.

When government attempts to tamper with it, all freedom is lost. It is the beginning and end to our cherished liberties, and we cannot afford to lose them.

We already began to forfeit our freedoms when we tolerated state-imposed mandatory vaccine schedule.

Religious freedom is our last stand, so to say. It's time for every freedom-loving citizen to stand up to defend it, irrespective of one's opinions on vaccines.

This is not about vaccines. It's about preserving the essence of who we are as a nation. G-d bless America, and G-d bless our freedoms

This article was reprinted by [The Vaccine Reaction](#) with the author's permission. It was originally published at [Rabbi's Blog](#). Michoel Green is a Jewish rabbi.

*Note: This commentary provides referenced information and perspective on a topic related to vaccine science, policy, law or ethics being discussed in public forums and by U.S. lawmakers. The websites of the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** ([DHHS](#)) provide information and perspective of federal agencies responsible for vaccine research, development, regulation and policymaking.*