

Choosing Our Authorities



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“One Improved Unit” is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Monday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by the founder and editor Skyler J. Collins. Archived columns can be found [here](#). OIU-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Anarchy means, etymologically, “no rulers.” It does not mean “no rules” or “chaos,” despite what so many who (ab)use the word would have everyone believe. Within my heart of hearts, I am an anarchist. It’s very simple really. I am an anarchist because I reject the idea that anyone else is a legitimate ruler over me. And more, I reject the idea that anyone else (on Earth or in Heaven, as it were) has any other kind of authority over me. And what if I told you (queue Morpheus), that you have the prerogative as a human being to choose whom you will bow down to?

On Earth

“My” police department, mayor, governor, president and millions of their hirelings believe they have legitimate authority over me. They do not, because I have not granted it to them. Certainly they have more power than I do, which is why I perform “my” civic duties, like file a tax return and obey (most) laws. I see clearly the hell they could bring to my life, a cost which I have chosen is not worth it. So I submit, but I do not consent. I do not accept them as having legitimate authority over me as a mind, as a body, nor as a person.

In actually, because of the gun in the room, even if I wanted to consent to their authority, I could not. It is an impossibility so long as a threat exists. I can submit, as I do, day after day, but I do not and cannot consent. And neither can you. That’s not to say that there is not authority that we cannot choose, nor that there is not authority that is forced upon us by nature. Natural law, whatever the details, means that nature has authority over the natural, and human beings are natural, ie. they exist in nature. As important as that is to understand, I am not talking about any of that. What I am talking about is that type of authority that is posited by others as legitimate and rightfully existing. An abstraction, yes, but one grounded in a real state of things. That type of authority that is exercised by masters over slaves, kings over serfs, and congresses over constituents is a farce, and a very bloody one to boot. Those who wield it are nothing but charlatans with power.

In Heaven

Many an earthly “authority” has claimed the sanction of Heaven, of God or gods. The fact of the matter is, God is not here, and thus is not exercising any sort of authority over anyone. Therefore, to believe that God has any authority over you is an act of free will choice. Or is it? I’d like to say that it is, but who was told from birth by those they naturally trusted (can that really be called trust? mustn’t it be earned?) that God, or gods, had legitimate authority over them? That they are somebody else’s creation, and hence, property (of sorts)? I think that as each of us reach adulthood, we have it within us to examine these types of beliefs and truly determine for ourselves whether or not to keep them or to reject them. Many people convert to other faiths all the time, but that’s not to say that it’s easy or painless. I for one have been there and back again, **twice**.

It seems to me that reason would dictate that precisely because I can choose my faith, that God, or the gods, assuming he exists, is respecting my free will, is waiting for me to come to him, not *vice versa*. In other words, he, or they, is standing back and giving me the chance to choose him as an authority over me. Will I go to “hell” if I fail to make that choice or make the wrong choice in this life? I can say that any God or gods that would hold that gun to my head, and therefore not allow me to truly choose, to consent, is not worthy of my love, nor my worship.

Final Thoughts

As I said, you, me, we all have the prerogative as human beings to choose our authority, those who we will (or if we will) bow down to and serve. As it stands right now, I have not chosen anyone, and certainly not anyone on Earth. Anyone exercising authority over me is doing so without my consent. And because they’re pointing a gun at me, I don’t even have the option of consenting, nor do you. I wish circumstances were different. I wish these things weren’t so complicated and messy. But such is life, I suppose.