

HOW BELIEVERS IN GOD COMPARE THE ATHEIST AND THE CHRISTIAN PROBLEM OF EVIL

No matter how much suffering and evil happen Christians say that God is with us and against them and will deal with them only as far as we ask him to. The irony is that the evil of accusing human nature of something so monumentally terrible and refusing to let the only answer help is a new problem of evil! No problem is not enough. It is a fatal problem.

So concerning the problem of evil as in God and suffering being both real and seemingly mutually exclusive who has the worst one? The atheists? The believers in God? Let us take a look at the difference it makes.

For atheists:

-Those who suffer great evil are left without hope.

-Those who suffer are left without the chance of finding God in the depth of their despair. Atheism insults those people who suffer horribly and who still think life is worth it.

-There is no God looking after the universe so there is no telling to what extent we can abuse our free will. Thus fear is increased.

-If you think there is no God, you can believe that you can wipe out all life on earth with nuclear weapons for he is not there to intervene.

-Atheists have no reason to be sure we really have free will. This reduces us to puppets who feel free but are not really free and are victims of chance. Atheism robs us of our human dignity as free sons and daughters of God.

-The atheist view that evil conclusively refutes the existence of God implies that evil is such a great power that it can rule the day. This is a bleak idea.

-The atheist expects God to not tolerate evil at all. This is unreasonable. It overlooks the fact that tolerating something does not mean one approves of it. And there will be evil that God does not tolerate though we do not know it. [We need to see such evidence, that he did act, so that we can see that there is evil that will not be tolerated. Tolerant beings have to put a limit on tolerance and tolerance demands a limit].

-The atheist denies God and does away with the being who is the standard of goodness and perfection. The atheist then ends up with a problem of good. The problem of good asks how good could be real or implemented if there is no good God that makes good. This problem is worse than the problem of evil. The problem of evil acknowledges that God is perfect goodness. The problem of good suggest that good is only a human invention and what is good can be changed according to human fashions. Atheists seem to think they are good people and that is why they consider the problem of evil to be so serious. But this involves creating an even more serious problem. The problem of evil can be a difficulty but the problem of good is a catastrophe.

-Many atheists state that rather than evil disproving God's existence, it is evidence that God does not exist. They think that evil makes God's existence less plausible. They have no right to reject such a loving God and the greatness of faith in him without proof.

-The man who sees his wife seemingly doing evil may choose to trust her that she knows better than he. He is able to exercise the virtue of trust though he does not understand. The atheist deprives himself of the chance to exercise this virtue in relation to God. Thus atheism makes the problem of evil worse.

-Atheism denies that good is an objective moral value. Thus there is nothing stopping the murderer from saying, "I like killing and nobody can give me evidence that it is really wrong. Your opinion is that it is wrong. Mine is that it is not so why don't you respect my opinion?"

For believers,

#Good is more powerful than evil. Good is a power while evil is nothing but good in the wrong place. Evil is not a power. God did not make evil. When evil is just faulty good it follows that good must be the default state and therefore the powerful one.

#God can use evil to bring an equal amount of good or even more good out of it. The parent gives the child freedom that may allow him or her to hurt others and himself or herself but the parent keeps enough control to bring good out of this. Controlling the child's every move would be a worse evil than letting the child make mistakes.

#If there is a God, he allows us to do a lot of evil merely out of respect for our free will but he is still working for good. That is to say, we can be confident that if an evil person wants to make a virus that will make everybody on earth die horribly that God can act through divine providence to prevent that person getting the opportunity. The person could make the virus but God can guide someone to make the antidote.

#Evil exists because God has given us the dignity of being beings who have free will and we have abused that gift. We caused evil not God. God gives us free will so that we can love for love is a voluntary thing and also because of the dignity and worth merely having free will gives us. Free will is good in itself and worth the damage we do with it.

#The believer holds that evil is a problem in the light of the goodness of God but not a contradiction of it. Thus the believer does not see evil as a power that may overcome all things. The believer sees evil as good that is in the wrong place. Evil is parasitic on good. The believer has hope in the triumph of good. The atheist cannot have that same hope.

#The believer knows that God may have to allow evil to happen because trying to stop it will make no improvement or will limit human free will too much.

#Believers hold that God alone is perfect. We always fall short of him. It seems evil to atheists that God would arrange for us to be imperfect but believers find it understandable. God is not under any obligation to make us as smart as he is for example.

#To atheists who see evil as evidence against the existence of God rather than a disproof, Christians can say that as God controls the universe it is only to be expected that we cannot know exactly why many evil things happen. He sees the complete picture. If we could see it we would understand.

THE ARGUMENT IS MANIPULATIVE

The argument that evil is worse in principle and practice for one who thinks there is no God, making it a bigger problem for the atheist is one manipulative argument. It tells you how awful evil is if there is no God and how there is no hope of it being overcome. But the bad results do not make the argument true! If the non-existence of God is too much to bear that does not mean God exists and that we could be okay.

In fact to argue that the unwanted results mean that there must be a God is itself an evil, or immoral if you like, argument. Its nonsense, it is a lie and if you need to lie to have faith in God then atheism is what you should prefer. A morality founded on a lie is not morality. The argument solves a problem of evil by creating a worse one. To argue that there is a God for its terrible if there is not is really to tell a lie. It solves nothing. To solve the problem of evil with an immoral argument is just saying, "Yes the end justifies the means!"

Is faith in God really a good thing if it is based on that fear? No. The argument seeks to scare. It is beyond cruel to try and horrify people into believing in God. It is a recipe for bigotry and obscurantism and war.

ABOUT THE BABY

A baby is dying and could be saved.

The atheist and the believer both know on a scientific basis that a baby is a living conscious being. The person in the presence of the baby has some decisions to make. This forces a question on her whether she is atheist or believer - it is forced remember. The question is, "Will I help the baby to feel as well as possible or will I let it die?" The recognition of what the baby is comes before any moral approach. The recognition SHOULD come first. So morality is NOT EVERYTHING. If you see the recognition as a moral matter then it follows that moral matter comes before any other moral matters. In other words, first and foremost recognise the child. The question of how the child is to be treated comes after and is not as important. The question of why you must help and what authority tells you to does not matter at all in such a serious situation.

FINALLY

The atheists who say if nature is hurting people or even (hypothetically) God, they will defy them to bring good out of it are pro-active and motivated. The divine plan idea means that the plan fights evil not you and you are not really doing anything. If you are a pawn for your boss the scheme is doing the work not you. It is plain now which side is degrading good people. You are even expected to acknowledge and go along with the divine plan. This leads not to dignity but

learned helplessness.