

Why man is heartless for saying God permits suffering and evil: faith in God makes suffering worse or should!!

Faith should intensify suffering

Atheism is accused of saying that God can never let us suffer if he loves us. Christians say he can as long as his reasons are good enough.

D.Z. Phillips stated that nothing not even God has the right to hurt people or make them suffer to help them (page 101,102, Philosophy of Religion for A Level, OCR Edition (Anne Jordan, Neil Lockyer and Edwin Tate, Nelson Thornes Ltd, 1999).

If there is no God and no plan, there is something noble about trying to grow through your suffering. If there is a God there is nothing noble about it because it is refusing to admit that nothing has the right to make a person suffer horrendously so that the person might say for example not care so much about money. Religion assumes that virtue is worthy any personal cost. It is important but not that important! In fact, feeling you have to agree with your suffering is a part of suffering. Religion is cruel for saying you have to accept God's will. Accepting suffering and accepting suffering as God's will are two different things. They differ as much as being hard hard by a stone on the head and being deliberately hit by somebody however well meaning that somebody is.

Believers think God lets sinners suffer because he uses it to help them wish to abandon their sins and repent. This contradicts the religious teaching that sin is self-destruction, you erase and ruin your dignity and your relationship with God. You cannot fix self-destruction by sending suffering. To try and treat your suffering with suffering as the God belief demands is only going to worsen it. If you think it works then you are wrong.

If God is what gives your life meaning then surely you crave being with him? Thus your suffering will only be worsened by belief in God. You will feel like a bigger failure than ever for you will think it must be your fault that you feel such a way when God is there trying to help you. The believers think that the more you suffer the more you will want him and to be with him. But encouraging them to believe is encouraging them to feel worse. If they crave happiness they are being encouraged to add to their problems by craving God! To tell a sufferer that God loves them and has a purpose for them is cruel and fanatical for these reasons.

There is another. Suffering means you experience your existence as no longer worthwhile. If a person experiences meaningless existence it is harassment to tell them their life has meaning and that God cares. It is virtually dismissing their experience. Suffering would be a stronger experience that there is no God than any alleged religious experience that seems more benevolent and desirable. What gives you the right to claim that suffering can agree with the loving care of an all-powerful God? You can't know how another person suffers so how dare you say their suffering does not refute God. If you said, "Annie was abused by her father. But she should see this does not disprove his love for her" you would rightly be seen as a do-gooder and a hypocrite. Why? Because you don't know what it was like for her. And so it is with God and suffering people.

If I say I believe in an all-good God and then say I also believe there is no justification for his letting people get depression then I am lying. I only imagine I believe in God. One "belief" cancels the other out.

And I am complicit in God's evil for I desensitise myself to it and praise it and hope that others copy me and do the same.

Believe or else!

God by definition has to be your ultimate and total concern - you are interested in him for him and not for you. The notion that it is best for people to believe that God loves them despite the terrible things that happen to them and the terrible diseases he creates for them is an interesting one. The alternative seems to be feeling your suffering is utterly useless and that you are alone and unloved by the creator. That would mean more suffering. But you cannot believe in God and reverse him just because atheism is too painful. That is akin to letting yourself be blackmailed - "Believe or else!" Real belief is based on evidence not on need. If you believe something because you need to, that is not real belief. And your devotion to God is fake if you want him for your sake and not his. And if you sense nobody loves you as you suffer, it need not worsen your pain. You may learn acceptance. That would be brave and commendable.

God hurts for us to fix it?

Do you feel that you should not object to God hurting you on the basis that he is likely to take it away? That is the attitude: "I just HAVE to put up with it for God will take it away or make it worthwhile." There is cruelty in suggesting or implying that a person has to accept their suffering. It needs to be free not forced. It is terrible to insinuate that the sufferer who won't accept is blocking God's intention to bring good out of the suffering. Don't say, "Maybe not accepting is part of God's plan too for that it suffering as well". If you do then admit that you are okay if people accept or do not and then do not pretend that you promote faith to help people.

If there is a God then he made the AIDS virus. Christians will say he did so for a purpose, perhaps so that we might lovingly tend to those who are afflicted and that the AIDS victims might learn from their sickness. So God uses people like things. The concept of God letting evil happen for a purpose is at heart quite callous. You need very strong evidence before you can justify doctrines such as that people are bad enough to choose to rot in Hell forever and that God is right to let people suffer. If you don't, then you can accuse the loner next door of being a killer just because you think you feel he is or because you have flimsy evidence. The bigger the claim the better the evidence must be.

God cannot ask us to love him more than any other person. Who cares how much somebody is loved as long as they are loved enough? Therefore he is not important enough to excuse attempts to justify him letting AIDS afflict people. Religion insults suffering people by saying God is to be loved most of all. Jesus said we are to love God with all our hearts and souls implying he is to be our only real love. That callousness was off the scale.

Is good a person?

Religion says good is a person and good is God so it must then be necessarily good for us to love God. If belief in God is necessarily good for us it follows that it is more important to love him than for him to exist! Thus we end up treating the suffering of others as a means to help us love God. That is disgraceful and demeaning.

All love must go to God says Jesus

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The next greatest is to love one's neighbour as oneself. So loving and caring about others is less important. God might be a different kind of person than us. Just because he is good and because he made us does not mean he is entitled to any more love than anybody else. In fact he is perfect and good and happy and is entitled to less love. Rights are based on needs. He does not need our devotion so we have a right to refuse it to him. Even if God exists, we do not have the right to give him such importance in our lives that we condone and justify the horrible things that we think he lets happen to innocent people and children. The Mother Teresas of this world, despite outward appearances, are the most selfish people of all for they value a concept, God more than the people they help. The people are only tools they use to please God.

Retribution

The main reason people wish to believe in retribution from God in the form of everlasting suffering in Hell or in sickness or depression or whatever is in the hope that people will be deterred from doing wrong. So they hope that people will be hurt for doing evil. This is vindictive.

The Hell doctrine suggests that God will triumph over evil for some not all. Those who go to Hell will not be part of the triumph. If a faith can say such a failure will happen what are you going to say if a new faith comes that argues that God does great good for us but because of human free will evil will triumph one day and nobody will live forever?

Finally

Suffering is horrible and horrendous. Those who are into religion hope to use it to prepare themselves to handle suffering. It cannot work. Until you suffer you will not realise that you cannot prepare for it. The experience of a useless existence cannot be prepared for. Preparing for it will only make you worse. As preparing is one thing but preparing in a religious way is different it follows that religion makes it worse. Religion admits what suffering is and dares to tell people to prepare for it! Exploitive!