

WHY BELIEVE IN FREE WILL??

Paul Davies, the physicist, held that belief in free will is so valuable that it could be “a fiction worth maintaining.” He meant that we like the doctrine. But if it is not true what will happen will happen so it makes no difference.

Free will means I am the free cause of my actions. I am not programmed to do what I do.

Religion says that to pretend I do not have this power or to ask others to, is to put me on the level of the man who denies the existence of gravity. It is said that there will be little spiritual peace in the one who tries to maintain this façade. But you can be happy and not believe. Religion has to claim what it claims for it claims to be good for us and how can it be if its most important doctrines are actually insignificant in real life.

Why believe in free will?

-We may believe because we feel free.

-We may believe because we think free will is plausible or proven.

-We may believe because we want to think we freely make ourselves the kind of people we are. It seems hard to take pride in your achievements if you think you are an automaton.

-We may believe because it explains where evil has come from. We have misused our free will and caused evil. God is not to blame for evil and suffering so we are.

The ordinary person believes in free will because he or she likes to think that he or she is not a puppet but an independent self-made person. The religious person agrees but adds another reason which is that if we have no free will then God, if he exists, is to blame for the evil we do. Perhaps, the ordinary person has a reason to believe in free will. But for anybody to suggest we must believe in free will to preserve God's good name and to make out that he therefore has a right to be worshipped is disgraceful. Believers will hold that as God's honour comes first, we should forget any reason but that one. Us wanting to believe we are free agents matters little or not at all.

If you really want to see yourself as, and be seen as, an independent self-made person, you simply have to deny that it happens merely with God's permission and assistance.

How can you enjoy having free will and be grateful for it if you only have it to preserve God's honour? And that honour is not impressive - it speaks of a self-centred God who gave us free will for himself and not us.

Religion professes to believe free will for the sake of teaching that we must freely avoid evil. Belief in God implies that it must do this for it says God is to be honoured above all and not blamed for evil. Therefore blaming us for evil takes priority over anything else. If we have free will, it is because God (or his inventors) wants to blame and condemn us. That is a negative and discouraging reason to have people accepting that free will is real.

The argument that we have free will or disaster x, or y, or z will result, makes no sense. You can't make a doctrine true by giving it a purpose. That is like saying that maths is true for we won't get a job unless we believe maths is true. Your perceptions are forced on you whether you want them or not. Mathematics is about training yourself so that your perception works correctly in relation to calculations.

Our natural feelings are that if we have to kill a person to save lives, we should still take no pleasure in the death but only in the lives we have saved. Also, if a person does evil we should take pleasure only in his good side. This tells us that belief in free will is abnormal and emotionally useless though nearly everybody believes in it. Free will is no good if we have to blind ourselves to evil in others. It is not an important belief if we are to just turn it off.

The notion that we have free will has been acquired by the conditioning engaged in by religion and its prodigal puppet, society. The free will belief is a mental illness. It's a neurosis. It has to be cured. Let us cure it. All our disorders proceed from irrational thinking and the subconscious mind is clever and it can even move ouija boards so it knows if we have any contradictory or harmful thinking in us and this thinking will cause it to lead us astray.

The popular reasons for belief in free will are futile. And when God is brought in, the reasons take on a nasty sinister hue.

TESTED EVIDENCE AND CLAIMS ARE THE BEST BUT FREE WILL UNTESTABLE

Free will cannot be scientifically tested or tested any other way. You make a decision in a specific split-second. You cannot have that second over again. Imagine all that happened since and all things were exactly the same again just before that split second. Would you choose differently? Nobody thinks you would or could so belief in free will is an illusion - it is what people don't really believe in but think they do.

Before you can accuse anybody of making an immoral decision you need to send them back in time a few times to see if they will keep deciding the same thing. Once is not enough in case it is just coincidence. And the worse the thing the person has done the worse it is to accuse them of doing it freely without proof. You cannot prove free will by experimentation. It contradicts science which says that doctrines that are not testable and pass tests are not important like tested ones are. Tried and tested and verified doctrines are important in themselves and also because they embrace the need for evidence and respect it.

THE REPENTANCE ARGUMENT FOR BELIEF IN FREE WILL

People worry that you cannot be contrite or repentant if you don't have belief in free will for there is no point. And if there is no free will there seems to be no point in regretting the bad you have done so you can just hope you will not do it again. If you killed a man and it was your programming and nothing could stop it not even you then how can you be sorry for it and wish you would go back in time and undo it? The only reason why being sorry matters is that it makes you a better person. But you cannot change what you were or did. So it is about now. Changes have happened since you did the bad thing that make you resolve never to do it again. It is about the now. So it does not matter if you murdered with free will or not. Free will or no free will you cannot have the chance over again and in the present moment you feel you have learned that you will not do it again.

CORRELATION STUDIES

Studies regarding how belief or doubt or disbelief about free will affect people's performance as decent social entities sometimes argue that doubt or disbelief increases the chance that you will do harm.

Belief in free will makes students work better at school.

They will probably not cheat for they want to earn their good exam results.

Those who doubt or do not believe get lazy and will exercise poor self-control or even become conniving and nasty.

Belief or unbelief in free will have nothing to do with attracting you to cheating. It is nice to see how you do without any gimmicks or cheating. It is about you having enough respect for yourself to learn your own potential.

The notion that if there is no free will then you have permission to behave badly and cheat is responsible.

If nobody has free will that should motivate us to make people as happy as possible for though they don't deserve it they as good as deserve it.

SAM HARRIS - WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE DO NOT BELIEVE

"I'd like to address the common charge that it is simply self-contradictory to talk about the illusoriness of free will while using words such as "choice," "intention," "decision," "deliberation," and "effort." If free will is an illusion, it would seem, these qualities of mind must be illusory as well. In one sense, this is true. It would perhaps be more precise to speak of "apparent choices." But the distinction isn't generally relevant at the level of our experience. In terms of experience, there is no contradiction between truth and appearance. Even in the absence of free will, I find that I can speak of choices, intentions, and efforts without hedging."

"Seeing through the illusion of free will does not undercut the reality of love, for example—because loving other people is not a matter of fixating on the underlying causes of their behavior. Rather, it is a matter of caring about them as people and enjoying their company. We want those we love to be happy, and we want to feel the way we feel in their presence."

FINALLY

Psychology explains what we try to do but not what trying is. Free will is an attempt to explain the meaning of trying. The matter is so complex and nuanced but it is high time psychology tackled free will more.

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