

Free Will Defence improves our help for the suffering and the poor?

The free will defence is an endeavour to shift the blame for evil and suffering from God to humanity. Its starting point is the alleged fact that there is no love unless it is freely given. If you are forced to love, then the love given is not yours. The love is not from you. Its not your own. So you have to be free to be able to love and freedom means being able to choose evil.

God made us free for he wants us to love him and one another. We have misused this free will and caused all the suffering and sinning that are around us. They are not God's doing but ours.

What are the reasons that might attract us to accepting such a doctrine?

Believers say first of all it is true. But it makes accusations and where is the proof that we are to blame for evil not God? What is the point of belief in a nice God if denying innocent until proven guilty is the cost? Such belief would not even be sincere or respectable. Being true does not make it right.

Believers say secondly it encourages us to battle suffering in others for free will though it can be abused is given so that we might be good. But believers see helping others as good only because it pleases God and not because it helps. The notion that we have free will for bettering ourselves and others does not fit the notion of a God who deserves and must get all our love. And you could help suffering people if you hate them or do not care about them when your goal is just to please God. God belief gives you a motive not to help them but to use their plight to please God. You may not even realise you detest them and remember religion does condone hate or indifference to others as long as you don't deliberately have them.

To say that it is good that it is the case that God has given us the choice even if we often abuse it only makes sense if the situation has remarkable potential to draw enough people to do enough good to make it worthwhile. But that is something we have no right to claim - it is up to evidence and research to do the claiming.

Believers say thirdly that because God gave us free will to help and because he is with us he can ensure our efforts bring fruit even if we do not know how. If sufficient good comes out of evil in time when God works on it then God is bringing the good out in spite of the evil and in spite of what the free agents who did the wrong want. So why not stop the evil in the first place if he has that much disrespect for free will? If good can come from evil that does not justify totally soul breaking suffering such as depression or extreme torture.

If there is free will there is only free will to attempt a permanent evil but no free will to really get it. This makes free will only about intention! It makes you more worried about having good intentions than anything else. It makes you self-righteous. Why? It is possible to care only about good intentions than actually being good. It is about you feeling you are doing good and that is all you care about. Intentions are not an end in themselves but are for an end: goodness. Free will being all about intention makes free will out to be designed to do harm and boost "righteous" egos.

It is possible to intend bad and only good happens. But God, if you are into that idea, must then rig it so that some bad results follow the intention is in order that you can feel more drawn to the bad intentions.

It is said, "To believe that we don't have free will is to deny that we have any value. You can't feel good about yourself if you truly believe your good works are just the product of programming not your own free agency. If you feel good about yourself then you believe in free will and can use your free will better for good. We need to believe in free will." What planet are some philosophers on? We don't get motivated to help others by our belief in free will. We help them for we feel happy enough to share our happiness with them and bring them into it.

The free will defence supporters argue that dedicating our freedom to God will naturally lead to greater concern for the suffering and the poor. But notice how it treats concern for others as a side-effect and not as the purpose.

The purpose is making goodness our own in order to please God so others have to suffer so that we might help them. We use helping others as a means of making ourselves holy and good. It is about pleasing God not people even if people are pleased.

The truly good person helps others not that he or she might be good but for their own sake.

Faith in God leads to hypocrisy not goodness. It leads to forged goodness not goodness.

Human acts and choices are not between good and evil but between one level of good and another level. We only do what we call evil when we are attracted by some good. There is no such thing as an evil person. The person simply has chosen

the wrong kind of good. Good, like what we call evil, often looks ugly - think of the dentist! We must see ourselves not as bad but as people with an amazing potential for good. That makes us positive and confident which is essential for living a good life. It follows that belief in free will even if it makes us reasonably good does not necessarily drive us to adore and serve the poor.

It is obvious that a person who does not believe in God can still be good. The notion that God alone matters means that you must fuse good with God and treat them as the same. Thus you can be blamed for being good without God. It is the worst imaginable sin. It is disguising sin as virtue and making sin supremely attractive. If God alone matters then the worst sin is holding that good matters and God does not.

Even if God and goodness can be fused, the fact is that if you had to choose one of them you would be expected to choose God. Thus the notion of giving God all your heart and that it is better to be destroyed than to fail God says your heart must be open to rejecting good for God which means you are justified in becoming evil for God when there is no choice.

Interestingly if you believe in being good for the sake of goodness you will not really need the idea of God. If you believe in maths for maths sake that means it is not about what any person thinks of it. You didn't need to worry about others. You will not insult goodness or maths by caring about deities and what they think.

If God was a person who fixed injustices and thus enforced justice or fairness would it motivate you to freely avoid hurting others or sinning?

What if hypothetically God did not know what you were doing? Obviously fairness and justice do not depend on what he or anybody knows for fair and just are two separate things.

God cannot motivate you to help a baby for the baby's sake only. If you are doing good for the sake of goodness you will be motivated by goodness alone not out of a desire to respect divine authority or to please God or because he is keeping a record of what good you do.

Linking free will to God is just disgraceful. It misses the point. The free will defence is a toxic doctrine. It is for those who cannot bear to do good and have to use religious myth as a crutch to be able to do it.