

THE FREE WILL DEFENCE - BLAMING PEOPLE NOT GOD FOR SIN AND EVIL

The real problem of evil is not what or who is doing the evil but that evil is vile for it is a meaningless thing - its what is made of non-control or random and threatens even more disorder. The free will defence then is evil for ignoring this point.

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 us. Its not our 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.

The defence runs as follows. "A robot cannot love or hate but can only go through the motions. To be able to love or hate one must have free will. God wants us to love one another and him and this is the basic reason why he lets us sin and suffer. Our suffering and wickedness are worth free will. God cannot stop suffering without removing our power to love."

It is interesting that it is always said to be God who wants the love and not us. Would we care if we only went through the motions of love and thought we were free but were not? No - we think our pets love us though we do not invest them with free will. This shows that the defence is not really worried about what we go through at all but what God who has all things and who owns all things wants. To accept the defence is to be anti-love despite its claim to be pro-love. God must be against love when he gave us free will and thereby inferred the defence was right for the defence is not right for love is forbidden. The defence is incoherent. If all love starts with self-love then the God theory forbids love for it forbids self-love and demands that we make dirt of ourselves before this allegedly superior being.

Jesus made it clear that all our love must be given to God. You love others only because he asks it meaning the only one you love is actually him. That would make the free will defence purely about religion and God.

The free will defence implies that God alone matters (not just comes first) for when he makes it possible for us to do terrible things and inflict astonishing pain he must be doing it because he is not satisfied with anybody going through the motions of love for he could make us imagine we are free and he could trick himself. When he can allow evil though he is good he can do that. This leaves us with a terribly selfish deity.

Freedom for and freedom from are different. Is free will freedom from control? Yes. Is it freedom for doing something? Yes. If there is a choice which one should be chosen? Freedom from. Freedom for cannot happen without freedom from. This means free will is more about us than anything else. It contradicts the notion that God alone matters. And what about freedom for? Is freedom for me to help dying babies more important than for me to offer my freedom to God? Yes. That is another reason why the free will defence is evil nonsense.

The free will defence would appear to justify God letting us sin, that is, giving us the freedom to sin. But this would only be if free will resulted in more love and goodness than in sin and evil. It would be sheer madness to say that if free will were used only to do evil or to do mostly evil that giving it would be justified. It is held that the defence is no explanation for natural evils like earthquakes and plagues. But some would say that there are evil spirits who have free will and they are responsible for them. They try to explain every evil with the defence. But God can make the evil spirits imagine they are harming us as they afflict an illusionary world while we are safe in this one. Religion may propose another explanation: that they are punishments for the abuse of freedom. Since sin implies that punishment is right then the defence is an indirect explanation for evils that were not directly caused by human actions for it blames them on sin that needs to be punished. The defence leads directly and ineluctably to the punishment theory. Our will is conditioned and affected by our environment anyway so God could have made sure we have one that is more conducive to goodness.

Evil and sin are a falling short of good. It follows then that God hates using them for a purpose and hates needing them for a purpose as well but we force him. You can't say God exists and have little or no evidence for him and then accuse the human race of being so depraved just for the sake of that being or belief to be more precise. Yet those who do this are the ones who would be angry at people who condone what their parents do in tramping over others just on the assumption or on the grounds of weak evidence that their parents mean well.

Free will is an evil theory for it is generally based on the false belief that we cannot believe in right and wrong without it and if you are going to reject a doctrine that denies free will just because you don't like the consequences or supposed consequences then you can't say you believe in right and wrong anyway for you are rejecting logic. Any system of morality built on the doctrine contradicts itself and is not really good.

The free will defence is the lynch pin of the good God doctrine. Without it, it would be more obviously unintelligible. But even with it there is little improvement. Some in the Church admit that the free will defence is wrong and does not get God off the hook because God is supposed to be closer to me than I am to myself (see 25-30, An Intelligent Person's Guide to Catholicism). These are the ones that use the excuse that we just have to accept that God is doing right to be so involved in our sins though we can't understand how he could be. They say that God is not one of us so we cannot judge him. But then what sense does it make to trust a being like that? You can't trust just anybody. You need adequate grounds for trusting and this doctrine is taking away any hope of finding a reason to trust God. It boils down to ordering people to trust God just because the Church says so. So who gets the benefit and the honour then when that is the motive? The Church of course! Notice this: to say the defence does not get God off the hook is to say that God consents to our sins just as much as we do which can only mean he sins when we sin. Talk about not being allowed to judge God cannot obscure this fact.

God is supposedly infinitely superior to us. Thus his dignity takes priority. If we have to be hurt or him, then it should be us. If we abuse our free will, God is far more responsible for that than we are. He gives us the power to abuse it in the first place. We only use the power. He makes it. Thus our free will that can be misused is not worth it. Thus God is evil if he exists. The free will defence is a miserable failure.