

## FREE WILL DEFENCE GETS US BLAMED FOR EVIL

Decent people are always careful to ensure that their beliefs serve them and help them serve others. They recognise that nobody has the right to hurt a hair on the head of another person even if miracles and prophets and resurrected saviours tell them to do so. They have no right to insult decency by honouring dodgy prophets and saviours who implied that violence is sacred.

At the core of Christianity, Islam and Judaism is a doctrine that refuses respect for people and which feeds on the suffering they endure to create the theology of a God who is not to blame for it. Namely the doctrine of free will - it is said that we are to blame for evil and suffering and not God. It is parasitic on suffering. The believers are parasitic.

The doctrine of the free will defence says that God cannot control free will. It is cannot. It is not, "God does not control free will." In other words, God is denied for we have the absurdity of an all powerful God making what he cannot control. Free will is the real God.

It is obvious that blaming free will for evil and suffering and really caring about suffering are separate things. It is an evidence-based issue and nobody wants to know that. No they want to think they have the right to guess that the suffering should be allowed by God to happen out of respect for free will! That is three guesses: that we have free will, that we have the type of free will that is all about how we act to God and that we are to blame for evil. Free will could have nothing significant to do with evil. The doctrine has done nothing good. The majority of people are not great humanitarians.

To simply assume or guess that evil and suffering is down to free will is not good enough. It is being flippant in the face of the suffering and death we cause. We cannot say free will is a gift from God and its abuse is to blame for evil and suffering. The evidence has to say it not us. The idea of God asking us to adopt an evil argument to excuse evil is really showing that the argument not only fails but is evil itself. It is the biggest insult of all.

You need evidence that free will is really worth all the suffering it has supposedly caused. You need that out of compassion for those who suffer. You need that to make sure it is the truth. It is important to know it if it is true.

It is indecent to tell a world dictator who oppresses billions that God gave him free will so he could choose to do that if he so decided. That is plainly insulting and is going to make him even more arrogant. It borders on turning into a placebo where you are immune to being troubled by the suffering of others.

You need evidence that God gave us free will directly. Religion often argues that the universe God made is made to function in its own way so he is indirectly involved. So the notion that free will came from God directly and didn't just "evolve" is another assumption.

Human bad deeds are only a small bit of the harm in the world. Even most of these are based on mistakes and failure to see the bad consequences. That needs to be emphasised and in the push to blame free will it is not.

If free will excuses for evil and suffering do not respect your right and need for evidence they are just superstitions and are about defending religious assumptions at the expense of decency.

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.

Blaming human beings not God for evil is ridiculous and callous and dangerous. Blaming implies, "I want to punish you with disapproval." And it implies, "You cannot have the benefits due to a good person because it is not fair to the good person."

Our tendency to think we have free will is seized upon by the Church to make us think it serves a good God. It blames us for evil and exonerates him. Blaming is vindictive because it implies we need to be punished at least by disapproval and by being made to feel guilty as long as we are not sorry. To say we are responsible for sin has the following problem.

Declaring a person responsible without blaming is about telling a person that they can change what is making them feel bad so its all about making them feel better without any concern for God or morality or sin. Declaring that is not a problem for the atheist! To say we are responsible for evil is ignoring the element of sin. For a believer in God, sin is the main thing. It cannot be ignored or its seriousness downplayed and its unfair to if there is a God. Thus the defence of God is only

cosmetic - it increases the evil. It creates a culture of blame and resentment and fear. Free will is not much of a gift from God then!

You need better evidence for the existence of God than for the existence of your neighbour in order to justifiably condemn him or her for being a sinner and thus an enabler of suffering and evil. Also, even if you can prove free will, you cannot really prove how free you were when you sinned. Maybe no matter how free you feel you are actually only semi-free all the time? Maybe though the action was heinous and awful, you didn't fully control it though you thought you did. So in your heart you are not as bad or as responsible for evil as it seems. Nobody has the right to accuse the human race of evil and suffering and not God.

If you are semi-free and when you do evil it is really the good in the evil or that you think is there that you want then perhaps you are fully free when you are doing good and semi-free when you are doing evil.

Even if the free will defence had a point, it would be the case that you are not responsible for being a free agent. You are only responsible for how you use that free agency. God then is more to blame for the evil you do than you are. If you give a free agent a gun, you did more to enable them to kill with it than they did themselves. You might say that you also enable them not to kill with it for you didn't encourage them to kill. But that makes you worse not better for it is a sad excuse.

God is all good and all powerful. He can eradicate all evil right now.

He doesn't. So he is not all good or not all powerful. Perhaps he does not exist.

This is the standard argument that evil logically contradicts God. Some say that one option is that God is not all good but is still very good. Actually that is extremely insensitive of them. A baby suffering needlessly does not make God less than good but evil.

So the options are that God does not have the power to take away evil. That God is evil. That God does not exist. That evil does not really contradict the perfect goodness and power of God.

The Christians take the last option. They redefine evil to accomplish their "solution" to the paradox of evil and God. The argument for them has a hidden premise. The premise is that ultimately evil is all down to the abuse of free will. If a baby takes sick that is because we live in a world separated from God and the baby is suffering because of the sins that somebody has committed to ruin the world.

So when this premise is identified the argument becomes -

God is all good and all powerful. He can eradicate all evil right now.

He doesn't.

He lets evil happen because he wants us to be free and evil boils down to the abuse of free will.

Evil in this sense does not contradict the existence of God.

But this is actually a tautology. "God is right to let evil happen for evil is the abuse of free will so evil is not God's fault." Evil is redefined to make it seem to fit the existence of God. The believer seeks to link all evil to some phantom's abuse of free will. That means that if there is an evil that cannot be traced to it we are not able to see it. It means that we are to suppose that all evil is down to sin. But we are to suppose it. We cannot be sure. Thus the argument at best cannot show that there is a loving God but only that there might be. Evil is so terrible that you need more than to suppose it might agree with God's love. If you take evil seriously you will demand sufficient evidence that it fits. But there is none.

For believers, if there were no free agents but a universe of cats and dogs and rabbits and they were still suffering terribly, this suffering would hypothetically not disprove the goodness of God! This is really just pretending that divine evil is actually good and is to be condoned. It feels better to condone it than to be repelled by it.

We cannot take comfort in the free will defence because it seeks to excuse God letting the innocent suffer. It cannot do that for it blames us and that is vindictive. How can you have true compassion for the suffering of the innocent if that compassion is based on a doctrine about free will that seeks to hurt the human race by accusing it of being blameworthy for evil?

One consequence of the free will defence is the repudiation of innocent until proven guilty. The followers of God are hypocrites.

People say that ideas such as devotee centred spirituality or say child-centred education or client-centred counselling put us in a narrow self-absorbed prison and that God is the only way out and the only release. The idea is that if I make myself the supreme being in my life that despair and deceit and family breakdown and violence will be the consequences. The doctrine of original sin says that Adam chose sin and its consequences for us. And we ratify his choice by sinning ourselves. The idea is that we make bad choices and suffering and sickness and the leanings toward evil are the consequences. Bad choices supposedly lead to more bad choices.

What about the idea that it is not really sin that is to blame for most suffering and evil but the consequences of sin? If B follows A it does not mean that A really caused B. I could choose to abuse drink but it does not follow that God should make drink bad for me. He could have made livers that process alcohol without getting damaged. Thus the ruined liver is not a consequence of sin but a consequence of what God has done. If there is a God, the free will defence might only defend his letting us make evil choices but it has nothing at all to do with the terrible things that follow sin. The evils are not the product of the sin but the work of God. Yet the free will defence is used by those who want to blame us for sin and for the evils that follow it. In fact, the bad choice is only a small thing compared to what happens afterwards.

The person who blames suffering and evil ultimately on sin and not on God needs to be sharply challenged. Its a disgrace.

Just saying evil is down to the misuse of free will is flippant for it is more complex than that and nobody should say it unless they are at least able to write a short book laying out the case. Hardly anybody does and the Church takes advantage of that to strategically blame man not God. Even if man were to blame that slackness is a sign they don't want to be fair.