

Which is stronger - good or evil?

PROBABILITY

Is good stronger than evil? Is evil stronger than good?

Christians answer that even if the universe becomes evil to the hilt, good is stronger for good is God. God is infinitely good.

They say we must praise that state of affairs should it happen. It may never happen but that is not the point. The principle is the point.

So if we leave God out of it, will we find that good is stronger than evil or that evil is the stronger?

Many say that evil is just good used in the wrong way.

Believers in God say that.

So do many atheists.

If evil is misplaced good then it seems that good is stronger than evil for the evil itself is not all bad. But that view is wrong. The universe could be full of misplaced good while proper good does not exist.

If evil is warped good that does not mean that good is stronger than evil. Warped good might be stronger than good even if there is real good and warped good in the universe.

To argue that evil being defective good means that good is stronger is itself evil and risking false hope. It risks refusing to admit what a defective good is and treating as a real one. It is an evil argument.

THE SCALES

The problem of good is different to the problem of evil.

The problem of good assumes that unless there is a good God then there can be no good. If you deny that God exists then you have the problem of how you are going to believe that good really exists.

The problem of evil is how a world of sin and suffering can fit the idea of an all-loving and all-good God.

The question is which one counts if it has to be one or the other? If good is what matters then it is more important to show it is real than to worry about evil fitting the existence of a good God.

To say God exists is to say that if he exists there is a problem of evil. In other words, an answer to the question of how a good God can let evil and suffering happen is possible. The believers say that if he does not exist then we have the problem of good. Some of the believers put a symmetry on the questions. They think the scales balance. The problem of evil and the problem of good balance the scales.

While it would be okay for the problem of good to tip the scales, religion cannot let the problem of evil tip the scales. That would mean that the problem of good does not prove God by itself. It would mean that the best way to prove God is to answer the problem of evil. It would be like refusing to see how good your wife is until you get an explanation for why she sometimes seems to do bad things. It would be judgemental and suspicious.

So the problem of good needs to tip the scales to verify that good is stronger than evil.

WHAT IF THE SCALES BALANCE?

Hypothetically if the scales balance then we fail to verify that good is stronger than evil. We end up having to assume or guess. That is not much good and is a sign of complete uncertainty.

We can assume one of the following:-

1 that the problem of good is compatible with the thought that the problem of evil does not refute God.

2 we can assume that they are incompatible. If we assume that then we assume that there is no God.

3 we can assume that the problem of good does not help with the problem of evil because they are unrelated and separate issues. In that case we can assume that we cannot solve the puzzle and so we should suspend judgement on whether or not God exists. In that case there no reason believe in God at all. We might as well just guess he exists or that he does not.

We have three options and two of them, 2 and 3, counsel us not to believe in God. If each option is valid then the odds in favour of God are poor.

3 is controversial. It is said that there cannot be good unless there is evil or vice versa therefore the two problems cannot be unrelated.

But that argument has nothing to do with God. Good would exist even if there were no God.

Suppose good cannot exist unless there is a God. Evil happens. God is responsible then for evil. If there is no God then evil just is and that is all there is to say about it. If we are responsible, that is nothing compared to God being responsible for it and evil would still happen even if we never intentionally did evil. You need total proof before you can say there is a being who is infinitely and ultimately responsible. You need proof for this even more than you would need proof that Kate was responsible for neglecting her baby's health.

DO THE SCALES ACTUALLY TIP?

The scales that hold the problem of good and the problem of evil do not balance them.

When we try to balance them, we end up claiming we have the right to assume that evil and good are agreeable. That is as bad as assuming that somebody being tortured is getting a favour. So the scales, because of that implication, are in favour of the thought that evil is stronger than good.

Another way, it is making the problem of good equal to the problem of evil or vice versa. This denies that God will ever triumph over evil. It certainly takes away the attraction of believing in God.

If the problem of good is equal to the problem of evil then how do we know if we should be saying, "Evil does not disprove the existence of a good God" or "Good does not disprove the existence of an evil God" or both?

WHY THE PROBLEM OF EVIL TIPS THE SCALES

The scales are tipped by the problem of evil because there is no problem of good. Without God, good would still exist for if there is nothing and no God even, it is good that there are no people around to suffer. So you don't need God to explain good. There is no problem of good. To say there is, is to evilly say, "I will not recognise good even if it exists unless there is a God who I think tells me what good is."

HYPOTHETICAL GOOD AND EVIL ON THE SCALES

If there is nothing, good still exists. It is good that there is nobody about to suffer.

If there is nothing evil still exists. It is evil that happy people don't exist.

Does this hypothetical good and evil balance the scales?

This hypothetical good and evil matters more than actual good or evil for good or evil cannot happen unless they are possible which means hypothetical.

Hypothetical and actual good/evil get the same treatment on the scales.

FREEDOM

If God holds all things in existence then there is no possibility of freedom from God. Even when you sin you sin because he enables you to. We cannot have the kind of freedom we want. All we have is the degradation of a freedom that is

implemented by God and controlled by him. The freedom is degrading for the same reason that if you enslave yourself to a kind slave master you are still a degraded slave. Freedom is at the root of the problem of good and proves that the answer to the problem of good is not God. In fact there is no problem of good. Good would exist regardless of whether God lives or not.

REAL EVIL

An interesting argument against the problem of good and the problem of evil being unrelated is that evil is seen as distorted good and not as the opposite of good. But some evils like total depression are not good in any form and are comprised of bad energy. If they are good in some way to God they are not to us.

FINALLY

If good is stronger than evil then how much stronger?

The scales tip in favour of there being a problem of evil because there is no problem of good. They make evil a bigger problem than good. So good is unlikely to be compatible with evil. This implies that God's existence is unlikely. The belief you have in God is asking you to say God is right to let so much evil and suffering happen though it is unlikely that this is right. That is not a very compassionate attitude.

Religion argues that if there is no God then there is no moral law. They say there is no reason then why it could be wrong to roast a baby for fun. But moral law is only a small part of good. If there are no moral agents, it is still good when the kitten escapes from the mad dog. To ask, "Is the kitten escaping just good or is it good because some god or law or moral law says so", shows no understanding of what good is. It is just good so you don't need to ask the question or to worry about god or laws. And you must not. Religions ask, "Is it morally right for a man to stay true to his wife when it may make him terribly unhappy for the rest of his life and he knows it?" They say it is which divorces morality from happiness and thus show this is about rules not people. That is not morality.

If evil is the stronger then religion and faith in God are just symptoms of denying that. They sell false hope and lies.