

## **GOOD - A EUPHEMISM FOR NECESSARY EVIL, THE NECESSARY EVILS WE ALL CELEBRATE BUT SHOULDN'T**

### *What is a Necessary Evil and an Unnecessary Evil?*

The lesser of two evils principle (or lesser evil principle) is the principle that when given two bad choices, the one which is not as bad as the other should be chosen over the one that is the greater threat.

The "No Win" Situation is a common one. There are two outcomes. No matter what you choose, one will be as bad as the other. So you choose one. You couldn't win. A "No Win" is a Hobson's Choice. The Hobson's Choice is when you are given what seems to be a choice when actually only one option is offered! It is a take it or leave it situation.

The False Dilemma is a common problem. When you engage in black and white thinking, you are making the false dilemma. For example, if you say that all atheists are bad and Christians are good you are failing to remember that many atheists are good and many Christians are bad. Religion however is guilty of this false dilemma, "God as we know him is needed if you are to be a good person. So if you don't accept him then you are bad and harmful even if you do not know it." If morality then is a necessary evil, religion based morality is going a step further. It slides from necessary evil to evil that is not necessary and lies that it is.

### *The problem of "necessary" evil*

When people get accustomed to necessary evils, they can get a bit complacent and soon evils appear that are tolerated as necessary when they are in fact not necessary.

Even religion recognises the problem. Necessary evil is a necessary but potentially harmful subject. Religion however is full of "necessary" evils.

### *The principle itself is a necessary evil*

The concept of the necessary evil is itself a necessary evil in the sense that it means the better choice might only be 1% better than the alternative.

The other problem is that it makes it too easy to do the wrong thing on purpose for the good thing is only slightly better and nobody might notice. It opens the door to people making excuses for their choosing the worst evil.

"I didn't know I had other options."

"I was emotional and had to act though I couldn't think straight."

"It is up to each person to decide what the best evil is. Disagreement is unavoidable."

"Even if you think I meant to choose the wrong evil, you cannot prove it. You cannot judge for you cannot see into my heart."

You can say that even if what you did caused great harm that you thought it was the lesser of two evils meaning that nobody then can call you evil. Being called and defined as evil is the only thing that deters bad people from evil. The concept of necessary evil leads to bad people not being judged and if they are it makes them feel they have the right to be mad at their opponents.

The lesson from all this is that we need to keep the need to make a choice between two equal evils to a minimum. If religion for example can be done without it should be done without even if it seems harmless. It is still going over the line by needlessly creating a need for choosing between two evils.

### *All necessary evils are not equal*

Not all necessary evils are equal. One can be a less important necessary evil than another.

Here is a selection of the major necessary evils in life.

### *Knowledge*

Knowing is necessary for we need truth and it is up to us to embrace the truth and it is not truth's job to fit us.

The evil side of knowing is that it implies that any thing - and in practice anyone - that contradicts that knowledge is unacceptable. It would be nice if there were an exact match between what you want to believe and what you know.

Knowing takes away your freedom to believe anything different. That aspect of it is a necessary evil.

Facts are intolerant in the sense that they contradict, threaten and oppose errors and don't care about what you want to think. You cannot treat a person basing their work on facts the same as you would a person basing the same work on errors and guesses.

Knowledge is good one way and a necessary evil another. The goodness is the main thing.

### *Free Will*

Free will is the belief that we are responsible for our actions and we cause them be they bad or good. Free will is great if we do good but the risk of doing bad gives it two sides. Free will can look like a good but is in fact a necessary evil.

There is no free will to be totally good all the time. It cannot be done. Thus free will is really more a necessary evil than a great good. It is wrong to celebrate and glorify a necessary evil as a gift from God. You do not celebrate the gun as a necessary evil. What does that say about your attitude to those who use the gun and the people who die?

### *Responsibility*

Responsibility is recognising how you are involved when something good or bad or neutral happens. For example, if you knowingly vote a terrorist into power you share in the responsibility for the evil he or she will do.

Is this partial responsibility? It is in the sense that other people are involved too. But if you were on your own and you would still vote for him then you are as responsible as you would be if you were the only voter. The role of others does not diminish or lessen your full responsibility. In fact you are saying that you need them to get the strength for your true colours to show - thus you are happy that they corrupt themselves.

Imputing responsibility for evil to the agent is a necessary evil. Why? Because it admits the person has bad potential. Because it admits the person may need to suffer and should suffer for doing the wrong things. Even if a person is good, there is still a may. There is still a chance that they may deserve something bad for you don't know if their goodness is as genuine as it looks.

You are responsible for what evil another human does in this sense. You share a common nature. Thus what Hitler does is what you would be doing too if you had the same environment and traits.

### *Authority*

Authority is treating somebody and something as having the right to tell you to believe or do things you cannot understand.

Most people think that if an authority is about sincerely trying to represent what is true then it is a valid authority even if it is wrong. That is how they can regard the pope has having authority even as they suspect there is no way of telling which religion is true or if one has more truths than the others.

Most people today do not want to be subject to any authority. When they obey, they do it unwillingly. They know that doing good because you are told to is not the same as doing it because you understand why and that you should. Society cannot function without authority so it is at best a necessary evil.

If you understand as well as or better than the authority, then you should be your own authority. That would be when authority becomes an unnecessary evil. There is a sense in which bowing to authority is hypocrisy. You are the one deciding they are the authority so it is really your own authority you are following. This point shows that if your own authority is enough then other authorities are a bad thing. They are unnecessary evils.

The critics say that people's suspicious attitude to authority is bad for it is essentially a form of opposition to the authority of truth. They say that only those who accept the authority of the truth can be truly free. They must mean that obeying is

freedom in the sense that you are free from worse things happening if you don't obey. Without authority there would only be chaos and authority risks leading those under it astray or harming them. So it is a necessary evil. That makes this kind of freedom a necessary evil. You are not that free when you have to embrace it.

Many believe that freedoms with conditions are not freedoms at all. Quite right!

### *Conclusion*

Morality is not a good but a necessary evil. The same would be true of God if God is somehow the same as morality. The concept of the necessary evil is a fundamental one. We need to be beware of and object to evils that are presented as necessary when they are not. Religion is the perfect example of such an evil and dallying with it can only corrupt you. We cannot celebrate life without celebrating necessary evil. But that does not mean we should go too far. Religion is out.

