

PUNISHMENTS ARE ABOUT THE PERSON NOT THEIR FREE WILL

Answering the worry, "If we say everybody is programmed and has no free will we cannot really punish!"

Free will implies you own your actions as in how you are their creator. If there is no free will then you still own but not in that way. Punishment becomes redefined as showing the person you will not abet their bad behaviour and is not about paying them back. It has to be humane.

PUNISHMENT - REWARD IN REVERSE

Rewarding a person is made to be more about their free will than it actually is. Luck makes you the best runner or the best hero and your so-called choice has little to do with it. So the person who denies free will is only going a little further than one who affirms it. Rewards can go on.

What about punishment? To reward a person for a past act is not as bad as punishing a person for a past act because a reward is a nice thing. Because it is nice, it does not really matter that much if it is immoral on account of the act being unchangeable and irreversible. But it is evil to punish a person for a past act for they cannot change it. They are being hurt for what cannot be helped anymore. What makes this more evil is that the present matters more than the past. If the person is still not sorry for what he did then this makes no difference. To punish him would be like punishing a person who has evil will in having approved of the evil another has done that he has had nothing to do with but we don't punish for what you will but what you will when you do something bad. So free-willists cannot believe in reward or punishment anyway and might as well become determinists.

When sin and evildoing are insanity it follows that if free will justifies rewards it is by no means possible that it could justify punishment for you can't punish madness. That is barbarism not punishment. So anybody that wants to believe in free will has to hold that there is no justification for punishment and that it is all about rewards in which case they might as well join our side.

Only a God could punish for only God could know what a person's intentions were the precise moment he did wrong or the precise degree of responsibility. What was believed before or after bears no relevance and your memory changes and your imagination takes root. Other people will be less sure than you about sizing you up. There is a lot of emotion involved in a crime that ensures that what was inside you will be more difficult to uncover. So, the free-willists cannot punish anybody. They are in the same situation as the determinists. Punishment is an act of hate and revenge when performed by them because true punishment is just for letting people know that they cannot be rewarded for a crime by getting off and therefore a necessary evil. Don't think that we should believe in a punishing God to put our minds at ease about the need for people to be punished for he has rendered it so easy to get off that one might as well believe in nothing. Also, belief in God like that will lead to carelessness and lack of interest when catching criminals for he will punish himself anyway if we fail to.

But the fact that all who do wrong and cannot help what they did in the past would force God to forgive without repentance and hence to punish nobody. This shows how vicious and insidious the Christian doctrines of divine judgment and eternal punishment and original sin are.

Determinists don't forgive evil people for to forgive you must judge them as evil and guilty. Determinists teach that though there are people who do evil these people are not evil in themselves. The doctrine of free will prohibits forgiveness as much as determinism does for it fails to justify rewards and punishments.

FREE WILL AND THE BACK OF THE QUEUE

With regard to people who have caught AIDS through promiscuous behaviour or drug abuse or those who developed a smoking habit and got lung cancer, it is widely believed by free willists that these should be relegated to the end of hospital waiting lists because they caused their own illnesses. If you believe in free will this is absolutely true. But since we don't and we recognise that all deserve sympathy for the past they have created even if they have none for themselves and are unrepentant for they are helpless victims of the past we can and should have sympathy. We should indulge the instinct we have that they should not be dumped into the back of a waiting list. But if we believe in free will we cannot say that for free will is about reward and punishment and praise and condemnation. Praise is evil if you believe in free will because it is patting another on the back for the suffering they have underwent to do something. What is wrong with that is that since each moment of consciousness when in pain is a waste in the sense that you do not know if you will have a future or have

had a past but still you are suffering and you are more sure of the suffering than the past or present. If you deny free will you can say that the forces of determinism in us cause the pain for a good reason but that is not to condone it for things should be better. Better to condemn pain than to condone.

FREE WILL IS ANTI-FREEDOM!

Free will is an excuse for forcing moral beliefs on other people. What people consider to be moral differs drastically from century to century. For example, in the middle ages you were considered to be a freak or evil if you didn't agree with burning witches or today if you agree with forcing gays not to practice even though the suicide rate among abused gays who feel they cannot endure society's disapproval is very high. Today, many follow a destructive belief in God. This consideration of how fashions change makes it possible for a criminal to argue that he did not intend to do evil but believed it was good and then be entitled to leniency or his freedom. Of course everybody says you always believe that the evil you do is good but the difference is that you agree on some level that the act is bad but this guy thoroughly believes it is good. To punish the criminal then would be unjust and it would not reform when for he will see it for the revenge it really is. It is the same as punishing somebody for being of below-average intelligence.

FREE WILL AND PUNISHMENT

Free will believers teach that we must punish the guilty. Nobody knows how guilty a person really is or what kind of pressures and disorders led them to commit anti-social acts. All agree that there is something wrong with a person who does evil but they cannot say for sure how guilty this makes them because it could be that since the disorder is forced on us it might force us without us even realising it. Even free will cannot justify the legalised revenge that is one of its attractions.

The law of the land and any other law is for public order and not for rewarding or punishing. That's all and that is how it should be. People believe in free will because they want to believe in rewards and punishing but this is a mistake. It is better to see a bad person as sick rather than as somebody who is wilfully evil when we can and we always can. Always! It is less harsh and that is why God and free will go hand in hand so belief in God is bad news.

The only real reason people want to believe in free will is to justify rewards and punishments – and the latter more than anything else. They want to believe that no other force but the person doing the act is the cause of the act for these reasons. First of all, rewards are not given because you have done well. That is only the excuse for them. They are given because people gain selfish delight from your achievements just like you do. So we can retain rewards and deny free will for they only for gratifying the selfishness that we cannot help. As for punishment, keeping the criminal away from society for a while and using the infliction of suffering to cure the criminal are what matters not getting our own back. You only need to believe in free will if you want to believe in revenge. When we can do without belief in free will we should for it forces many people to hate and condemn. At least if we denied free will we could honestly say that if any denier behaves that way that they did it in spite of their knowledge of the non-existence of free will. Rewarding and punishing are not important. What is important is giving people reasons not to do wrong for whether we have free will or not we do everything we do for a reason so we can be trained to do things for the right reasons. Therefore we can forget about the dogma of free will and do it safely.

The only difference between a believer in choice and a non-believer is that the first will believe in reward and punishment which are founded upon the idea of deserving or earning while the latter will believe in neither. But in practice the believer does not reward and punish anyway so there is no difference. Rewards have to do with attaining goals but it is not the goal I care about but the desire to fulfil the goal. It is just the desire. So I cannot deserve the reward any more than a person who only helps his father to get his hands on the father's money deserves a reward. This is because I am responding to a desire and desires are just desires. To reward desire has this problem. To reward a desire is rewarding the results of the desire and to punish a desire is punishing the result of a desire. You don't reward an eye for seeing black and punish it for seeing white. The desire itself is neither good or bad. Our desires control us. When we go against a desire it is only because we have a stronger desire that wants us to enjoy the illusion that we can get away from desire and be free.

The law of the land will send you to jail if you commit murder even if you meant well – in which case you only thought you were doing right but this is not punishment for punishment is only for those who have wilfully done wrong and known it. It is possible to believe that murder is right just as it is possible to believe that nobody else exists but yourself. Legalised murder was believed and felt to be right not long ago - when people disagree so much on right and wrong then why not on murder as well? Criminals are made to suffer for a bad action but that is not the same thing as punishment. When even the choice doctrine cannot defend rewards and punishments why should we be afraid to deny the doctrine? We can still reward and control crime without the doctrine just like those who accept it do for these things influence behaviour and we want to help people become good.

We can deny the existence of choice and still give rewards and as for punishment. We practice much the same thing as believers in choice do except we do not look upon it as paying the criminal back for doing wrong. The reason is that even if

we do accept that there is such a thing as free choice we never reward the person's motives but the outward actions of the person so what difference does it make? None. We can carry on as we would if we did believe.

The only reason we reward and punish, paying people back for what they have freely done, is because of their effects. But we can behave as if we believe these things just for the sake of the effects. Believers in free will don't really believe in rewards and punishments for they say that evil is insanity for it is thinking what is not good is good so when it is only the effects they worry about why can't we do the same?