

Free Will Belief does not Justify Reward/Punishment

"Punishment makes more sense if you can attribute a deed to a preference, inclination, or attitude (a stable will) within the perpetrator than if you figure the perpetrator could have acted differently – and might act differently next time" Joachim I Krueger Ph.D.

Free will means that you own your action so much that if you could go back in time you may do it or do something else. You are free to go either way.

What doctrine is the greatest blessing to humanity? The doctrine of free will or determinism? Determinism is the doctrine that we are not free but programmed by forces in our minds to do what we do and that we only imagine we have a real choice. The forces are our forces which is why they make us feel free when we do what they want. This feeling is used as a reason to think we had the power to do differently what we did. But it is not a reason at all. Thinking you have free will because you feel free is a mistake.

Free supposes that I can be for myself or another person - altruistic. It presupposes that I can sin or become evil. Owning my choice in a moral sense demands that you presuppose those things.

Everything we do we think is right. Even when we do evil it is because we have come to temporarily believe that we ought to do it. If doing good just because it is good is the law then it is immoral to seek to reward a person by praise for doing good for they do not want it and should not want it. Their attitude is that virtue is its own reward. They are satisfied just by doing good and consider that to be the only real reward. So the reward then is insulting the person. It is not a reward at all. It invites people to do what they see as wrong. All it is, is a display of hypocrisy if it is practiced by people who say they believe in sacrifice and in free will. Christianity wants God to have all the credit for human goodness but still it praises people which means it is a manipulative faith. Jesus started this giving God all the credit in his parable of the Pharisee and the Publican where God was pleased with the publican who never once brought up his good points unlike the Pharisee who thanked God that he was such a virtuous man. You have to believe we are naturally selfish creatures to gain anything from giving or receiving rewards which means they are not really rewards for you need free will to get them. But the truth is we care about the reward and the honour that comes with it and not our alleged free will.

We always do what we want to do under the circumstances and sacrifice/selflessness/altruism is a lie. Even if I give my life to save a drowning child I did it in response to feelings that demanded that I do it and I had to satisfy them. You cannot believe that we have free will to do what gratifies us. That is not free will for the person who refuses to murder and this is for gratification is not really any different from the person who murders for gratification. I mean their actions were different but their motives were the same, self-centred. Don't object that we can change our desires for when driven for gratification for that does not change the will for gratification but it only changes the form that gratification will take. The will is still after the one thing, gratification, so it cannot will anything else. If you see the will as being the same as a magnet that is attracted to safety pins and nails - whichever is seen as handiest - you recognise how impossible it is for free will that is defined as choosing different kinds of gratification to be free will for it is still after the same thing just like the magnet likes pins and nails for they have iron in them and is only after the iron. We only do things because we think they will make us happy. Often we are wrong. In all the moral systems, it is recognised that mistaken beliefs we really hadn't the chance to correct, diminish or eradicate responsibility which is another proof that free will is no use even for those who wish to believe in responsibility for why believe in it when it is so reduced? Even when we choose something and are proven right to think that it makes us happy we are not any different at all for we could still have been wrong. When responsibility is so weak what is the use of visiting retribution on anybody when you don't know how much of it they really deserve?

Denying free will does not make the word should obsolete because even if we are machines the word should still applies. We say a printer should print a letter neatly.

A person should do what they want to do for there is no need for anybody running anybody's life and there should be as little external compulsion as possible.

People only do evil because they are unhappy or think they will be. Determinism, the denial of free will makes them more understanding of others and themselves so they can press the right buttons in people to make society a better place. To be happy we should rejoice in people and not in material things and in simple things. It is not true that we can't live a good life without belief in free will. Nobody can prove it anyway, it is blind faith, and still we are okay.

Determinism does say that what will happen will happen. But the determinist cannot say that they should do evil for they

will do it anyway for they can just as easily say they should do good for they will do good anyway.

We can only do what we feel or think is good, so evil is a sickness that commands our concern and compassion as much as any other sickness does. Evil is not a sign of strength but of weakness. Evil is not a sign of cleverness but of foolishness.

WE DON'T NEED FREE WILL FOR REWARD/PUNISHMENT

Even if we are free we are only rewarded for things we got through chance so we can deny free will and still give out rewards. We are rewarded for success not merit which is why you cannot take a gold medal off an Olympic medallist who doesn't have the right attitude to deserve what she or he gets.

What is the point of believing in free will for the sake of rewards and punishment when nearly all of the time you cannot punish all the wrongs done to you? Most people get away with their evil so you may as well disbelieve in free will. If you can't punish you can't reward either but go through the motions which people are happy enough with. Then the reward is something you have to give, not a real compliment. There is no point in believing in a harmful doctrine like free will just for the sake of a few people getting punished. Those that are punished get off lightly with murderers rarely serving a life sentence anyway. We can cope with this so we can cope without the doctrine of free will.

We could live without rewards and praise being rational activities for they will happen anyway for people like doing them and getting them. So it is nonsense to think we need free will to make them plausible especially when even free will fails to do that.

If we are to honour free will then we cannot really reward. So we must only punish then. Free will implies that we deserve only punishment so if you want to believe in rewards it is not going to help you do it with consistency and rationality. Free will can only appeal to those who want others to suffer punitively. Punishment means paying a person evil for doing evil of their own free will. It is important that we be conscious of this. Deniers of free will use pain to discipline criminals but this is not the same as punishment - what it is, is therapy.

Free will implies that extreme cruelty is fine. How does this fit in with my claim that it cannot justify rewards for if it cannot justify them it cannot justify punishment either for punishment is merely a reward in reverse? The answer is that the purpose of the free will doctrine is to defend responsibility and though it fails to do that that is what it is for and in so far as it does that it advocates cruel justice.

It is evil to believe in free will because we can live without believing in it and it rouses hatred and grudges and condemnation and revenge so it is an unnecessary evil and should not be believed even if we could be free. Why condemn hate when you sow the seeds for it by teaching that free will is real? It is evil for anybody to tell me I have free will when I am most sure of my own existence for I have no experience that proves I have free will.

The law of the land and any other law is for public order and not for rewarding or punishing. It is using stick and carrot for public order it is not using stick and carrot for their own sake. 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.

You cannot reward choices just because they seem to be good choices for you can't see what a person is really after. The motive behind the choice has to determine if what they did should be rewarded or not. For example, when you reward the winner of a race you are rewarding the outward actions of the person and not the motives for you don't know them and if they are bad and driven by smug superiority you are not going to be told that. This is not real rewarding for real rewarding is giving back good for doing good with a kind heart. The less you see if a person's motive is good the less any reward is intended to be a reward for it depends on the extent of your knowledge of the person's goodness. And we may ponder if it is right to reward somebody for winning a race and not reward somebody who tried harder and failed?

The only reason we revere rewards and punishments, paying people back for what they have freely done, is because of the 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?