

## A THEODICY IS ABOUT JUSTIFYING GOD - NOT HELPING PEOPLE

### THE FEELING "I MUST EXCUSE GOD" IS PUT FIRST

How can an all-good God let evil happen and let innocent people suffer horribly? He has the power to stop it.

Religion answers that the general principle is that suffering must be a part of life. If we did not suffer we would not be alive.

It does not believe that at all. It says God does not suffer and he is alive. It says we will be free from suffering in Heaven. If life requires that you face pain, it does not follow that life requires that you may face suffering. Suffering is needless and useless.

Also, it argues that God is the one being who truly deserves and must receive all our love and we must offer all to him 100% including our motives. So why is it telling us suffering is a part of life that we have to accept if we cannot do anything about it? Why is it pretending this answer is about us and not God? If God alone matters then it follows that he matters and if we are no longer alive or happy who cares?

Religious people would not hesitate to regard a supernatural being such a fairy godmother as evil or repulsive if she let people suffer though she could wave a magic wand and help. It seems that the only exception is if the supernatural being is thought to know all things, that is if it is an infinite eternal God. But what if the being does not know all things but only goes by the best information it has? Why judge a being that is doing its best with the knowledge it has got? The notion that God is to get special treatment because he knows it all is bizarre. The amount of knowledge is irrelevant. The Christians simply look for ways that God is different from other magical beings and argue that these differences matter. They do not want to put God in the same league as those beings and want to hide the fact that their religion is superstition.

God is seen as an all-good and all-powerful authority or king. The king thing is what it is really about. But what if God is seen as an all-good and all-powerful fairy godmother or witch? What if she gives advice and support but never laws and penalties for breaking them? The notion that the king idea fits the notion of God as friend makes no sense. The Church has redefined the meaning of friend. The notion of God then is not truly about goodness and thus the believers have no right to search for reasons why he would be right to let evil happen especially when that evil is suffered by others instead of them.

Religion might excuse its attitude that suffering should be allowed to happen by God by saying that if you regard suffering as futile and wasteful that this attitude to suffering only enhances our fear of it and risks making us go too far to avoid it. It says people who see a purpose in suffering may be more willing to go to famine countries for example and risk their health and lives for others. That would be a humanitarian motive. But surely it is better to go and help and hope for the best rather than to do it because you think some God is going to make sure it will be for the best? What kind of person would refuse to help if there is no God to bring good out of the evil? They would take a chance and help anyway.

Even if you are a believer, the fact that certain actions do give the best a reasonable chance to come about would matter more than any theory that God will bring the evil out of good. It should matter. What if you see that some actions have helpful results and then decide to argue that though this is natural it is the way God set it up? If there was a choice between believing things usually can improve and believing that God set it up so that things usually can improve what do you choose? There is stronger faith in the belief that things can get better on their own without any divine input or involvement. And the faith is based on observation.

Is it not better to have such faith in goodness that you do not need faith in a magical God to advance that goodness?

And that faith is based on clear observation. It is not irrational at all.

And unless you have faith that the good often will just happen you cannot develop belief that God is behind it in the first place. It could be that for some believers if they took time to think would realise that faith in good happening naturally is 99% of their faith and the other 1% is faith in God. If so, they need to see that they could be victims of religious manipulation in which they over estimate the importance of God to them.

And this faith is probably often confused with faith in God.

We can feel there is a purpose without following any particular religion or believing in a God. And God by definition wants others helped or hindered for his sake and nothing else. If we believe there is a purpose then we cannot have a humanitarian motive. Even atheists can feel that their future will be good - it is just the way we are. We only need this vague sense instead of trying to complicate it with God and religion.

The best way to remain motivated and willing to help others even to the extent of greatly risking your health and life is to try and see the big picture. Try and see how many can benefit from and be inspired by your actions. If you see yourself as helping only a few, your motivation will not be very strong. Do not see just how many will be directly helped but think of the indirect benefits too. Perhaps the leper you treat will be able to find a wife and raise a nice family. Think also of the opportunities you are making - you give those opportunities to others even if they do not have them. What matters is that you gave.

Religion claims that if there is a God, then suffering is his will. Some say it is not God's will. But it must be under the circumstances if there is a God. If he is good, then he sees no way out of letting the suffering happen. So in that sense it is not his will. When somebody suffers and you tell them it is God's will, why do you tell them that? Is it because it makes you feel better or them? Or both? It could be for the other person, for yourself or both. Telling somebody that to make yourself feel better would actually be cruel. When you really want rid of your suffering and despair the last thing you need is some faith-head trying to make you feel better by saying God is in control. Believers must experience how offensive that is but they keep on trying for they are irresponsible. How much do they really care?

If you fight evil and suffering and if you believe in God and his plan, you fight intending, "I mean to do my best but the evil that I can do nothing about has happened and is happening and I permit it. It is only the evil I can do something about that I must worry about. I am morally obligated to believe that God is right to let the evil that I cannot stop happen. I'd allow it myself if I had God's power and knowledge." If you say there is a God who makes viruses and sickness with which to torment little babies and you excuse this by saying it is a case of God using evil to make a greater good, then you are doing this to the babies by proxy. You must take responsibility for the evil or permitting of evil that you attribute to God - and you take it whether there is a God or not. If you believe in God and even if there is no God you are doing what you say he does and you are doing it by proxy. That is a very serious responsibility you are taking. It is in no way trivial. It is the ultimate responsibility. And the responsibility is increased by the fact that it is easy for you to think God is right to hurt babies or let them be hurt when you are not those babies. Nobody has the right to encourage you to believe in God without starting with all the reasons you should not believe and why it may be bad for you. You need to prove God before you can be asked to take the responsibility.

When religion attempts to justify God letting terrible things happen to the innocent, do not lose sight of the backdrop - the backdrop is the notion that we are all part of a divine plan. Why do many people want to believe in and follow a plan laid out by God through which they get a purpose in life? Why don't they make their own plan and get a sense of purpose from that? If the plan matters, then it doesn't matter who devises or authorises the plan! The plan matters not God even if God makes the plan. The stress on God implies that they want to draw others into their own plan that they attribute to God in order to hide its true origin. It is about controlling them in the name of God. The attempt to justify human suffering for the sake of an unnecessary interpretation of the plan and the wish to say it is a divine plan is pure selfishness of the worst kind. It is robbing people of their need to see that their own plan will do. Robbing them of that is undermining their right to independence and self-empowerment.

## GOD IS INTRINSICALLY AGAINST THE HUMANIST OUTLOOK

God is the absolute value by definition. He is the only being that really matters.

Thus the belief opposes anyone who thinks we should decide for ourselves what is best for us and not let God get involved.

Some say we cannot decide for ourselves and are bad at it so we need a God to tell us what to do. But even if we need such help, it, in itself, does not imply that God has communicated his will to man.

You can believe he may not have done so and still say that in principle if God is there and wants to be involved then we should respect that.

Believers in God claim the right to believe that God has spoken and that they are aware of what he has said. Humanists treat such claims as false. They may not believe they are all false but they treat them as false as a working hypothesis and to prevent people who wrongly imagine they have messages from God from getting power. Humanists keep religious assumptions out of public life.

The Humanist does not have the attitude: "Terrible suffering befalls people and often nothing can be done. I see it as

random and sad. I do not permit it. I do not say that if I could become God and stop it I would not." The believer has the attitude, "God as creator of all is ultimately responsible for all that happens. Therefore I permit him to let the suffering happen that I can do nothing about. It is for his plan." The atheist should take suffering so seriously that she or he refuses outright to even think about permitting such evil. To permit it is evil. A truly good God will not ask you to. Only he can know if what is permitted to happen is somehow for the best or will be one day. You need to KNOW NOT BELIEVE it is right to permit it.

There is the problem of evil. But there is the problem of how making evil a problem is an evil too! Calling it a problem waters it down.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude that saying suffering is indirectly or directly the will of God and that God lets it happen for a justifiable reason is unhelpful. And disgraceful! Even if some imagine it helps, they should be offended at how the person of faith told them it is God's will for that showed no respect in this sense: "I will tell x that her suffering is a gift from God even if it comes across that I don't really care or care if God really cares or if it makes her feel worse."