

Theodicy? Its a fancy word for making excuses for God's lack of compassion for suffering and evil

The notion that God lets evil happen for the sake of getting good results from tolerating it is criticised for these reasons,

If what matters most is the consequences being good or then we or even God should murder the peddler to get his money to feed starving orphans. It does not fit the concept of a principled trustworthy God.

It is not right to call the terrible things that happen evidence for God. Delusion turns everything into evidence that it is right. There has to be some evil that would disprove the love of God for you.

Even if these points are wrong, the fact remains that nearly everybody is turning God into something that is about consequences. That is a reflection on them. It is hypocritical to say you are principled and upright while you delegate Machiavellian consequentialist antics to God as if you want him to be sullied by it not you. You are passing the parcel so you are worse than him.

St Augustine the prime Christian thinker in his Enchiridion 11 goes: "Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil."

Part of every person thinks that if there is a God then evil and suffering may show his lack of compassion or that he is selective with mercy. This is important for there is a difference between making excuses for perceived divine brutality and making excuses for a God that really is brutal. The two can co-exist - they are not mutually exclusive. Both speak of the kind of person you are but in similar but yet different ways. There is no God and the fact that all human and divine answers to why evil is let to happen are harmful for belief and harmful to decency proves that we should not want there to be.

Anyway let us look into it.

Can a God of love and justice who makes all things allow terrible seemingly random evils to strike the innocent? Evils include things that encourage you to hurt others and killer diseases. The problems of evil and suffering are inexcusable if something lets them happen. So how can we say there is an all-good God behind it all?

Reasons why God may let evil happen will be refuted one by one. A suggested answer is called a theodicy. We will look at all the answers and discern why they are excuses not answers.

Two answers are basic.

One is that we have free will and God is right to give us free will and it is all our responsibility not his if we do harm and do wrong. Without free will we would be machines unable to love. God could make us machines when we are about to probably do evil and that would leave us really freely loving the rest of the time! The argument goes to far - fully machine all the time or fully free all the time.

The other is that evil describes an abuse of good not a thing so God does not create evil as such.

The free will defence needs this theodicy because if God makes all things from nothing then if we create evil then it is his power we are using to do it so God still ends up creating evil. So it assumes there is nothing there which is why it can keep God out of it and impart no blame to him. Evil is just a good that fails to be there.

The replies are that nobody thinks of free will as being complete control of your will. All science agrees that there is a framework that limits what we choose. A choice is only a choice up to a point. There is not enough there to justify all the suffering and evil there is.

The second answer is irrelevant for if God gave us free will to choose love of our own violation then the evil will comes from him for we alone can't create it so he is abusing his own will by prompting us to sin. Somebody has to create temptation. It really is a thing.

The idea that Satan has godlike power and fell from God and he is to blame for evil and actually makes evil diseases is totally plausible if there is a God but nobody wants to accuse him. No evil is weaponised as an excuse for condemning human beings!

Here are the other proposed answers.

“God cannot do endless miracles to protect us from serious harm and temptation. Life cannot function.” Is the way it is any better? No. Letting somebody burn to death in an accident is not preferable to putting a force field around that person.

“We need training and discipline and suffering is useful for that.” Those who need it most don’t get it. How do you know anybody is disciplined? If they say they are they are smug and would say that anyway.

“We cannot get the chance to be good and compassionate and fair unless people do wrong.” So it is good for others to go wrong so I can act good? Who do I think I am?

“Without suffering we cannot know what happiness is.” God does. Don’t aborted babies who supposedly knew no pain go to Heaven according to some to be happy forever?

“God is right to hurt us as long as he makes it up to us later.” That is how abusers think. It is very dismissive of the suffering of others and what right have you to comment on their suffering like that?

“God allows suffering for a greater material good. Plagues, for example, urge science to cure diseases. Famine leads to people taking better care in the future.” That is mercenary. It puts you on the level of the person waiting for their parents to die so they can inherit all the money.

“Suffering and our weakness in the face of temptation are God’s way of getting back at us for sinning. They are punishment.” It is odd how religion says that God cannot tease you to sin when he can do other things for a good enough reason. It sounds like a lie. Your best hope is to make out it is a punishment. God is trying to trip us up. Once you suggest that something even if it is not punishment might be that is a very serious thing even though you call it a possibility. Saying kind Aunt Mabel might have slain your murdered dad is slandering her no matter how small you say this possibility is.

“God allows evil and suffering to warn us about the horrors and ugliness of sin. They tell us what will happen if we will continue to sin and give bad example.” So we should crucify people to show that crime does not pay?

“God lets us sin and suffer to teach us the lesson that we cannot do without him and to teach us what love is. God wants us to love him alone and others just for him so that is the only lesson that suffering can be meant to teach us”. The more you sin the more you suffer for the more you have to learn. This is untrue for sinners are often better off than anybody else. Suffering would not last long if it were for making us realise things for God has the power to influence our thoughts.

“Evil does not exist – it is an illusion. When an all-powerful God of love exists evil cannot exist”.

Compassion then is a greater evil than suffering for we should simply see that evil is false.

Compassion is suffering with the sufferer and based on rapport so it is trying to inflict the illusion on yourself and by extension to others for you are not an island. The doctrine that God does not make evil for evil is just an absence of a good that should be there but is not calls evil an illusion too in its own way and blames the victims for their suffering for they don't see that evil is in some way not real and is good.

“There is no limit to the level of goodness that we can obtain. For example, if we suffer a countless million centuries to save some person from eternal torment we can suffer more and more than that and more than that and so on and on forever. We will always be imperfect for God alone is infinitely or fully perfect. God cannot stop us from sinning or suffering for it is logically impossible for him to make us literally perfect. Better some evil than no evil.”

If my dog is in the peak of his health and safe, how can I say that I am doing something as good or better for him if I injure him in some way?

This theodicy will not be inspirational to people who wish to do good but to people who wish to do evil.

“Evil is good when God does it. When God hurts an innocent child for nothing it is good. God’s goodness is infinite so his goodness is different to what correct reason sees as goodness. Praised be the Lord!”

The suggestion that if none of the reasons work then evil is a mystery is a cop-out. It is evil. It is really just using this excuse that cruelty is love when God is cruel and covering it up.

This is what religion has got to believe if it wants to believe in God in spite of the injustice he has thrust upon the world and lets happen. A process of elimination shows that the religionists do not really believe their own excuses for divine evil. It shows what they are really getting at whether they realise it or not. They won’t want to learn. It is contrarianism on acid.

What we think of evil says something about us. Maybe God is not the problem so much after all?

Is turning to God when evil happens giving into a fantasy that is engineered to bring comfort? Is that the only real motive behind theodicy? It does not follow from theodicy being an attempt at logic that anybody cares about it for that reason. If we could see into the hearts of the religious and see that it is just a scam to give cheap comfort instead of doing the hard work to comfort responsibly then that would be an empirical and evidence-based and unassailable argument not to believe in the love of God. The doctrine would be abused yes but when its abused to that extent and that much it is because in some way there is something evil in the doctrine. Though we can pick it out what if we could not? Then there would be something evil in the doctrine even if we cannot discern clearly or for sure what it is.