

# The problem of evil

God is almighty, god is kind. God is brilliant light and goodness, as well as fair and righteous. He condemns no-one and loves everyone. He brings peace to those who have faith, and brings them to Heaven when their time has come. If God really is all-loving and such a wonderful being, then why does evil exist? Why does cruelty flourish in the originally good world which God created? Those with faith are murdered, tortured for their loyalty to God. Destructible weapons are created to wipe millions of people off the surface of earth (and they have been used too), and battles have been fought for the silliest of reasons.

According to the bible, evil spurred from the sin Eve committed in Eden when she opposed God and took a bite from the forbidden fruit. The textbook says evil does not origin from humans themselves, it says evil is an independent conscious power which *lures* us to commit evil deeds. This is reflected when Eve is tempted by the snake, a symbol of evil, to commit sin by eating the forbidden fruit. The Christians believe Jesus won over evil as he died and rose from death, but, according to the text book, that evil still has power over humans and the battle which God fights to free us from evil still isn't over yet. That is why evil still exists, because God hasn't the power to free humankind yet. Though it is quite contradicting as God supposedly is 'almighty' and 'all-powerful'. I'm sure you see my frustration as Christendom keeps contradicting itself. It is my belief that the Christians see Jesus Christ as the salvation to this problem of evil, because they believe he will come back to earth again at Doomsday and that it will be the day the battle will be won, that evil and sin will be punished and cease to exist and God's paradise will once again flourish.

This is certainly just one of many theories as the topic; 'the problem of evil' is widely discussed by philosophers and commoners as well as theologians, but I think the most convicting ones are more philosophical than Christian.

Another theory I came across some time ago when I read a novel called *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown (author of the best-selling *Davinci Code*) is the theory of *original sin*. This *original sin* states that all humans are born with sin because our ancestors, Eve and Adam, sinned in the garden of Eden. And because evil is a punishment for sin (this punishment could be everything from non-human deeds such as earthquakes and storms, to more human evils such as torture), we cannot expect otherwise. This original sin falls heavily on women especially because Eve was the

one who was tempted first and made Adam sin too. It is only through salvation that you will be purified from your sin and then teoretically escape evil. How this salvation will occur I do not know, but I have heard stories of women who have been shamelessly murdered to repent their *original sin*. This again contradicts the 'all-loving' God. Certainly God must still love us even though our ancestors failed him? Must even the most innocent at heart, the children for instant, pay for what their foolish parents did? Again, Ruben Ravatsås from [www.omvendt.org](http://www.omvendt.org), a devoted Norwegian Christian explains this by a combination of original sin and Jesus Christ and the prophecy of Doomsday. He says indirectly that all humans have to pay for the original sin and that we must wait for Doomsday to get salvation. I find this utterly ridiculous, for it would be like punishing an innocent german child for having a nazi grandfather. Just like how Norwegians used to be horrible to so-called 'tyskerunger', a child of a local woman and an unknown german nazi soldier, after the WWII.

The novel also takes up a more central theory which is commonly accepted by most; the *human will*. This is also the theory which I myself support, simply because it is convicting and logical. This does not however make me a more religious person, because this can also be explained without the presence of God. But because the novel explains this from a Christian view, I will too.

Because we have a will of our own, God lets us make our own choices. If God were to prevent every choice he considered bad, it would be tyrannical and we wouldn't have that precious free will of ours. I find the muslim *sharia* laws to be an excellent example of this. Their priests try to prevent every sinful action committed by the people, and thus it results in the deaths of more human lives for more silly reasons than we could ever approve of. God gives us the tools to which we can build our world; he gives us earth, water, morals and knowledge, but lets us decide for ourselves how we would like to use the tools we have been given. Some of us will be successfull, others will fall for the temptation of evil and fail. *Camerlengo Ventresca* from the novel especially stresses this point when he verbally attacks the technological world. He explains that humankind has misused the tools we have been given whenever we pursue scientific researches, because we often enough fall outside moral boundaries and cause ill (explained by how some people will be tempted by evil and use it for evil intentions). See the nuclear sciences.

This theory combined with *learning about goodness by experiencing pain* (evil and pain contrasts light and goodness to such an extent that you will be able to

appreciate goodness and thus turn good, therefore evil has to exist), makes for a rather complex but logical explanation. A dialogue from the novel portrays this excellently;

**“Lieutenant Chatrand:** Well... if God Loves us, and He can protect us, He would have to. It seems He is either omnipotent and uncaring, or benevolent and powerless to help.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** Do you have children?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** No, signore.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** Imagine you had an eight-year-old son... would you love him?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** Of course.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** Would you let him skateboard?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** Yeah, I guess. Sure I'd let him skateboard, but I'd tell him to be careful.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** So as this child's father, you would give him some basic, good advice and then let him go off and make his own mistakes?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** I wouldn't run behind him and mollycoddle him if that's what you mean.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** But what if he fell and skinned his knee?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** He would learn to be more careful.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** So although you have the power to interfere and prevent your child's pain, you would choose to show you love by letting him learn his own lessons?

**Lieutenant Chatrand:** Of course. Pain is part of growing up. It's how we learn.

**Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca:** Exactly.”

Although the scale which humankind experiences pain is a lot larger, the same irony still applies.

The human free will is what causes pain, evil and suffering. We make our own choices, whether it be for the good or bad, and the consequences of those choices will come back to either please or haunt us and perhaps the rest of mankind. God does not necessarily have to be a part of this, although God will fit perfectly in too if you are religious and choose to see it so. *The Problem of Evil* can be explained both religiously or non-religiously. It is your choice to make to believe in either.

I rest my case.

## Sources

- Angels and Demons – a thriller novel by Dan Brown
- <http://www.omvendt.org/article.php?id=7> - a personal website dedicated to Christian belief