

Problem with evil existence of god

[Religion](#), [God](#)



Today the news is filled with coverage on various natural catastrophes and other related causalities that people face daily. Anyone can look into their lives or even their neighbors and see the presence of misfortune that surrounds our world. This problem has brought up the issue of God's existence in religious philosophical discussions. For centuries, many have tried to dismiss the existence of God on the basis of the existence of evil. Let's consider where God has been placed in people's lives throughout our history.

For the Greeks and Romans gods were thought to personify wisdom, war, and other actions that human beings took (Spitzer 5). As knowledge continued to progress god was thought to live in heaven, beyond the realm of the planets. He was believed to have created life thousands of years ago. Soon as human knowledge progressed even further we've learned about the Big Bang, DNA, and evolution (Spitzer 14). It seems that the more humans know, the further back God gets pushed. Often, it appears as if humans use God as a placeholder for the unknown, but as we learn more, he gets redefined.

Philosophers question whether or not there can be a wholly good God that would create such a world where evil exists. This pursuit is known as the problem of evil. " According to the ' problem of evil', the extent of evils in the world seems to conflict with the existence of an omniscient, omnibenevolent, and omnipotent God. Theodicy is a study where theists are able to get together and make their arguments disclosing information on the compatibility between God and evil. This seems to be one of the most perplexing problems theists have to face.

In today's world, there are many differing opinions as to whether a God exists or not. This obviously has been an issue of great controversy because many people worship different gods or no god at all. I will define theodicy; discuss the conflict between an omniscient God and the existence of evil, and touch on free will and how it plays into natural and moral evil. Theodicy is the branch of theology that defends God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil (dictionary. com). Theodicy is a term that comes from the Greek words *theos* meaning God and *dike* meaning righteous. The basic form of theodicy involves these assumptions that God is all good and powerful therefore he is all knowing and that the universe was made by God and does it exist in a contingent relationship to God. Also the assumption of the existence of evil and why. (Mackie 150) This suggests that if God is all good and powerful he would choose to eliminate such evils. In the case of God being all good but not all powerful he may be unable to intervene in the evils of this world.

Or if God was just all powerful and not all good one must assume he has a malicious side to him to allow all this evil. Assuming that God is all these things both powerful and good if the universe doesn't exist in a contingent relationship to God then he has little to do with the evil. With this being said still leaves the question " why does evil exist"? The basic approaches to theodicy can be said to take three forms: logical/deductive, evidential/inductive, and existential. The logical problem of evil is a deductive one.

If God is said to be all good, all powerful, and all knowing why should evil exist. Is it rational to believe in the existence of God? This is Mackie's formulation of the problem God exists, is all good, all knowing, and all powerful. Such a being has no limits to its ability. A good being will always eliminate all the evil that it can. Evil exists, so God must not (Theodicy Overview). You can agree with the first two statements, but one might argue the third statement by making the point that a good being will always eliminate all the evil that it can unless it has good reason to allow that evil.

Therefore, a modified version of Mackie's argument looks like this: " If God exists, then there is no evil, unless there is a reason that would justify Him in permitting it. Evil exists. There is no reason that would justify God to permit evil. So, God does not exist (Theodicy Overview). " The intention behind this argument is to show that God is justified in permitting evil. The evidential problem of evil admits that God and the existence of evil are logically compatible, the concept of good and bad are known to go together. Considering the amount or various kinds of evil in the world conclude as evidence against the existence of God. This approach argues that because of the large amounts of evil in the world and the existence of unjustified evil the belief in God is not plausible.

We assume that God would refuse to allow such evils to exist that fail in appearance to have any good purpose. Here are examples of these objections. " It seems that God could have eliminated more evil in the world and still accomplished the divine purposes (Matson 145). " " Is such a God who does things this way worthy of worship, and therefore, plausible (Matson

145)? With little evidence it's hard to prove or disprove if something exists. Dealing with a being such as God we may not always be able to understand his reasoning for allowing such evils and will not always see his greater purpose for his divine moral teachings. The existential approach often referred to as the religious approach to the problem of evil is the concept of why the suffering is happening to a certain individual and why at this time or place in this individual's life. Theodicy is now seen as practical more concerned with providing answers for those who suffer in specific circumstances.

It is often that the existential approach turns from asking why God would allow such evils to happen to instead how one can go to God in search for him to help relieve them of their problems and find ways to make suffering and evil more tolerable. The focus is on how believers should respond to God during their tribulations for example turning to faith, testimony, and worship. This is an overview on theodicy and introduces some of the main concepts that sets its foundation. Now the conflict between an omniscient God and the existence of evil seems to get very complicated.

God is referred to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent simultaneously. If God is omnipotent this means he has power over anything and everything. If God is omniscient this means he is aware of all things that occur and if he is omnibenevolent this means he is wholly good. It would seem rational to believe that an omnibenevolent God would be of nature to relieve suffering wherever it is happening (Swinburne 67). An omniscient God would know when people are suffering, how they are suffering, and how

that suffering may be relieved. An omnipotent God has the power to alleviate those who are suffering from their sufferings.

So why does God allow evil to exist? Maybe God allows evil to exist because it is necessary for some greater good. For example, when a parent gives a child bad tasting medicine or has the child undergo painful surgery. From the child's perspective they would feel as if they were being punished for something or enduring a form of evil. When this isn't the case at all the parent is only looking out for the child's best interest (Swinburne 100). The child shows ignorance of the parent's reasoning for forcing him/her to undergo the temporary pain and so the child finds this treatment unjust when in actuality it isn't.

Perhaps we can use the metaphor of the child's perception of his parent's action to God and our perception of his creation of evil. " For we cannot deny that some good the child's mind cannot even conceive may justify the parents in permitting the child to suffer. And by analogy, won't the same be true of God in relation to us as his children (Theodicy Overview)? " This can conclude that we are sometimes unable to see the bigger picture of God's purpose when it comes to human suffering. God may be teaching us the secrets behind the moral code. Like what is just and in just.

We are being taught moral responsibilities and moral traits to help us reach a greater good that God possibly has in store for our lives. Some still argue that this isn't the case at all. There are still many evils that don't necessarily seem to produce any good or help in the counter-balance between good and evil. One incident that comes to mind is the Holocaust. It was a horrific period

of time in our history where genocide occurred. It is hard to believe that an all-powerful and all-knowing God would become powerless in preventing the nightmare in Auschwitz.

Also if God is omnibenevolent we would ponder on the question how can he let something so malice take place on innocent lives? Is it reasonable to believe that all evils can be explained to where they occur to result in a greater good and that we are somehow unable to always make sense of why such and such thing are happening? It is possible that a massacre shooting at a school resulting in the death of many young lives may serve to promote a greater good, but it doesn't seem likely. Now there is a distinction between the good parent and the good God.

In such cases where a child is undergoing pain which they are incapable of understanding the parent is there to reassure them of their love and give them useful insight on better understanding their situation and what it is their going through. There are numerous people who go through prolonged suffering who are consciously unaware of God's presence. Going back to the incidents that occurred in Auschwitz it is unlikely that the majority of prisoners felt God's love and reassurance. They most likely felt abandoned and un-loved.

Many would have to question where was God during this time and what type of parent does this make him. It appears that God acted like a negligent parent with a cold heart. With that being said we can make the assumption that God doesn't exist or the good-parent analogy fails. This argument that God allows evil to exist to show us the greater good seems to be implausible

due to the fact that such horrendous evils fail to show the greater good they are meant to produce. There are two basic forms of evil which are natural and moral.

Natural evil is when the world experiences suffering caused by disease, earthquakes, floods, crashes, and so on. Moral evil is when someone chooses to act ill-mannered based on human will. Now natural evil can't be prevented and is easily misunderstood to why God allows such natural disasters to occur. Where moral evil is based upon each individual and their code of ethics, how they differentiate right from wrong. Some argue that God punishes people based on their actions because we have the ability to choose what's good and what's bad.

This is where the free-will defense can cover moral evil, but it fails to cover natural evil. It is believed that God created man to possess free-will allowing him the freedom of choice. With the freedom of choice there becomes conflict when you have to make the decision between right and wrong. The fact that we have been taught to know what is right should benefit us when it comes to making the better decision, but that isn't always the case. Due to the various temptations we have in our society many of us continue to fall short of the moral code. If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good (Mackie 164)? " It is easy to assume that such a being as God would want his creation to be wholly good like him, but this isn't the case at all. Some argue that if God was to have created us to always freely choose good we wouldn't

be entirely entitled to freedom. If we were being forced to choose one way or the other we wouldn't be choosing freely.

Without the ability to choose what is wrong we would no longer have to worry about greed, lust, violence, and other evils because they would no longer be a choice of ours. “ We would be free from temptations and only have innocent inclinations, and so could not exemplify the moral value of resisting and overcoming temptations to do wrong (Mackie 165). ” In conclusion, I do believe in the rationality behind the existence of God. Just because there is a problem with evil and a disagreement to why God would allow such evils to exist I feel there is a greater purpose behind Gods plan.

The evils that are apparent in our society today teaches us the value of morals and the importance in having them. We are able to step outside ourselves and our heart goes out to those we see suffering from deprivation all around the world. The idea of God being omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent while there is an existence of evil seems to be problematic unless you can believe in the fact that it is possible we are incapable of comprehending all it is God is trying to teach us. For God to be unwilling to remove the devastation in this world there would have to be good reasoning behind all of this.

To believe in God you are exercising your ability to have faith in a higher power. You are choosing to believe in something that has yet to be proven into existence. Faith is known to be very important to God and it is through the trials and tribulations you turn your faith towards God in search of comfort and understanding. I do believe that during the hard times God waits

for us to turn to him and trust in him that he has the ability to mitigate all our problems. It is necessary to experience or witness evils in the world because it is a way for us to build our faith and come into a closer connection with God.

By God creating us having free-will this allows us to choose from what is good and what is evil. We are able to establish morals and learn the virtues of life. The great thing about this is that these lessons only come if we choose to learn them. It is our choice what we allow to dictate our lives. I believe if we are ever going to be able to see or comprehend what God's divine purpose is for allowing such evils to exist we need to become more like him. Abiding by the laws of God is an option, a choice that he has left up to us.