

John hick essay



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The idea of an omnipotent and loving God has drawn different opinions from various individuals, both believers and non believers. This difference in opinion brought out by the contrasting views presented in "The Problem of Evil." B. C Johnson poses the problem and suggests the possible solution in his argument, "Why Doesn't God Intervene to Prevent Evil?" This elicits a response from John Hicks, where he argues, and "There is a Reason Why God Allows Evil." This paper will analyze and evaluate these two positions.

According to B. C Johnson in "The Problem of Evil," he suggests that if God perfectly loves, then he should abolish all forms of evil. Furthermore, if God is omnipotent, then he should be able to do away with all evil. However, despite these facts, evils still exists. Therefore, this suggests that God is neither all loving nor is he omnipotent. The analogy used for emphasis is of a bystander who makes a conscious decision not to rescue a small child from a burning building. It is natural that such a person is evil. However, God also does not rescue the child. The goodness of God is, therefore, questioned as he also does not do a thing to save the child just like the bystander (Feinberg, and R. Shafer-Landau, 2005).

From these arguments, there are three possibilities that can be concluded about the nature of God. Firstly, it is highly likely that God is all evil than all good. Secondly, that there is a less likelihood of God being evil than he is all good and finally that there is an equal likelihood of God being all good as he is all evil. An acceptance of the first scenario would be admitting the unlikelihood of God being all good. Second scenario presented cannot be true. This is because there is equal justification for the "all good" nature of God as there is for his "all evil" nature. The third scenario gives no

comprehensible reason for God to allow evil. Consequently, it is inevitable to conclude that there is likelihood that God is not all good. Therefore, the problem of evil triumphs over traditional theism. There are several reasons the John Hick presents to explain why evil exists in the world. They can be classified into two; moral evil, which comprises human behavior and natural evil which comprises hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural calamities. The explanation of moral evil relies on the unexplainable nature of human freedom. Hick states that it is not possible to provide the full explanation of the causes that results in a person's free act. If it were possible, then the act cannot be considered as an act of free will. Therefore, the source of moral evil will never be clearly discerned since it lies concealed in the unexplainable realm of human freedom. Explanations are given for why God allows such evil. To begin with, they claim that God is not omnipotent and, therefore, not strong enough to prevent evil from occurring. From this perspective, this is not a God to believe. It is paradoxical that humans have free will that is outside God's control. Secondly, it is possible for God to have created people without free will or altogether with only the will and freedom to do right (Adams and Adams, 1990).

A contradicting perspective is given by John Hick in, " There is a reason why God allows evil." From the three points clear in the " Problem from Evil," in which it is recognized that; God is omnipotent, all good and that evil exists. However, Hick notes that these three cannot exist simultaneously.

Theodicy refers is the attempt of salvaging God from the problems that arise as a result of evil. Negative theodicy considers all evil that has happened and makes an effort to justify their occurrence. It does this by transferring the

blame of the evil to some other source, but away from God. The problem of evil is mostly argued against by the free will defense. Two main explanations of the human state use free will to explain the existence of evil in the world. The first perspective was proposed by Augustine. This explanation depicts humans as being born perfectly in a perfectly modeled world. Additionally, it considers that the creator is a perfect creator. Negative theodicy relies on this perspective. It states that the existence of evil in the world is exclusively due to the choices made by man and human's free will. Negative theodicy suggests that it is human's poor choices that result in evil and, therefore, all evil is entirely of human origin and not God's. However, this theory falls short in accounting for natural evil that result from environmental disaster that is outside man's control and power (Colson and Pearcey, 2001).

John Hick proposed the second argument which states that humanity did not deviate from perfection; however, they were created in an imperfect state. Despite their imperfection, they were created with the tools and the ability to transform and become perfect. John Hick explains that evil is only a challenge that is used to change and individual from the imperfect creature to a fully developed agent of morality. Hick supposes that evil is necessary to present humans with challenges. These challenges enable humans to realize their imperfection. Hick is unwilling to give up God's omnipotence or his omnibenevolence. He supposes that the bible contains situations that depict disaster, as well as evil situations. Therefore, Christianity as a religion does not occur in a perfect world. Therefore, evil is a fundamental part of religion that cannot be wished away.

Between these two perspectives, John Hicks argument provides better insight into why evil exists. Humans are not perfect; however, they are presented with freedom of choice. Due to this imperfection combined with free will, humans are prone to commit evil acts. However, there is a chance for redemption for humans who commit evil acts. Just as a person commits and evil act so do they have the likelihood to do something good. This is in comparison to Johnson's argument that places the blame on God.

In conclusion, John Hicks presents the stronger of the two arguments. This is because it is realistic and more practical. His argument is well depicted in society as compared to Johnson's assertions that pit God against man in an endeavor to make God appear more evil than good. Additionally, by accepting free will as part of human nature, it is contradictory to claim the possibility of God creating man with a given mind set to do only good.