

# [For which sectors of society and culture are](https://assignbuster.com/for-which-sectors-of-society-and-culture-are/)

For centuries, various philosophical thinkers strove to eitherprove or disprove God’s existence by developing rational arguments, and as youmay imagine, it wasn’t easy to do so. Theologically, this question of theodicy, or the justification of God, is an attempt to prove God as being good, right, and valid and therefore existent. Philosophically, theodicy is not quiteconcerned with proving God, but more of justifying why there is evil in theworld.

Most thinkers find the latter type of theodicy more problematic andworthy to investigate, especially in terms of a monotheistic God, because theycannot justify evil’s existence when God is supposed to be the source ofultimate morality and might. However, a monotheistic God is considered quiteattractive to have a relationship with because he is in control, has a plan foryour life, loves you, and wants the best for you and humanity. Sociologically, theodicy is an explanation of an anomic phenomenon, or the meaningful order aculture or a society imposes on reality, in terms of religious legitimations. For instance, humans fear chaos, and all sorts of different cultures imposetheir nomos into that chaos. So, when chaos happens, every culture’s theodicywill then try explaining why it happened and how the nomos is still valid andintact.

In fact, this type of theodicy is one of the biggest drivers ofsecularization, which is the process by which sectors of society and cultureare removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. In otherwords, religion is just one aspect of life with no dominance or control overother aspects of life such as art, science, philosophy, and politics. Associeties become more secular, individuals gain more freedom in choosing whatreligion they want to adopt, which becomes more of an authentic decision ratherthan the endless pressures of society forcing you into one “ correct” mindsetwhile everything else becomes “ forbidden” or “ incorrect”. For example, in apre-secular society, you had to prove yourself to the religion, but today, inthis secular society, religion desperately sells itself by carefully proving itto you while driven by the fear of rejection since they understand that you nowhave more freedom of choice, which they not only fear, but also despise. In fact, it is quite inherent to despise what you cannot control and feel powerlesstowards, but religious authorities ought not control the supposedly “ free” individuals of society and instead allow them to express themselves as freelyas possible in order to make society a better place. How is restrictingsomeone’s thoughts and beliefs within the norms of society any different fromenslaving their physicality in a filthy dungeon? Not quite.            God is the only Being, thus, he iscompletely existent, and therefore stable, unchangeable, and immutable.

On thecontrary, all other things, living or non-living, are considered as non-beingand have characteristics of both existent and non-existent because they have anaspect of non-being, including instability, changeability, and mutability. Human beings were given freedom of choice, or free will, which they canexercise towards Being (God and goodness) or non-being (change and evilness). We should exercise our free will mostly towards Being and God because God’srules are there to guarantee your happiness.

When your free will or love turnstoward change and non-being it is going to inevitably make you unhappy andsuffer because love makes you vulnerable to whatever it is that you love sinceyour happiness is completely dependent upon the instability of it. As a result, we should mostly love God because he will never let us down since he is Beingand will give you eternal happiness, which is what you were originally createdfor. However, this does not necessarily suggest that we should detach ourselvesfrom the things we love. Instead, we should love people, but only in the rightperspective, meaning you should love people but only for the sake of God andtheir eternal self in God.

For anything to exist, it must have somegoodness in it, because it comes from God who is the ultimate good. Evil itselfis not a substance that exists. Instead, it is a deviation from Being, orloving God, to non-being, or loving other things which are not God. And so, what we see from our perspective as evil is not necessarily evil from God’sperspective. Instead, the higher harmony of God’s perspective and the notion ofhistorical progress, which is that everything happens for a reason, says thatevil things exist in order to educate the human race towards Being and light, and lead them to their ultimate state of happiness. In other words, by havingthe right perspective of why such evil is happening, then you will come to theplace where you see it happening for the best and therefore will cause lesspain and suffering than if you had the wrong perspective.            Some thinkers viewed God as being mysticaland unknowing while others thought he was anthropomorphic, or an infiniteversion of the highest values which human beings cherish and desire to acquire.

The mystical character and ambiguity of God does not negate believing in hisexistence and should not make you think that you might as well be an atheist. In fact, God’s existence is not utterly unknowable, but his own entity is whatwe struggle to ascertain; it is beyond what our limited mental capability canever comprehend. God is not anthropomorphic and we ought to always respectfullypreserve his holy difference from human beings. However, it would be quiteadvantageous to assume that God is anthropomorphic when learning about religionbecause it allows us to learn about people and what their highest values are. In addition to giving meaning to people’s lives and showing their highestvalues, religion also serves as an “ opiate”, or legitimation for suffering. Religion whispers “ false hopes” and infinite forgetfulness against the evilnessof the world as well as the cruel reality of those struggling in life, especially to the poor. We need to remove this comfort blanket that religionmakes because it legitimizes the evil that exists in the world and makes usfeel better about it by minimizing pain.

Is this really how we should live? Weshould set the comfort blanket aside in order to not feel better and embracethe pain, and this is when you become the most powerful and aware version ofyourself because you will start actually understanding the cruel reality ofthis world and face its evilness with strength and objectivity.            In order to visualize phenomena most authentically, we must first reduce all kinds of assumptions, preconceptions, ulteriormotives, or other concerns that might make us fit phenomena into certainparadigms or view them in a particular predetermined fashion. Afterwards, thephenomena will purely appear as they “ give” themselves to us, or in their own” givenness”. In addition, intuition is what is given to consciousness by thephenomenon and intention is what consciousness imposes upon the phenomenon. This led to the development of a well-known formulation of phenomenologicalanalyses known as “ saturated phenomenon”. A saturated phenomenon is one rich inintuition and defy concepts or explanation such that our consciousness becomesoverwhelmed or “ blinded” by the excess of givenness and struggles to receivethese experiences. Several examples of saturated phenomenon that we encounterin life include seduction by the fragrance of a perfume, returning tocontemplate an astonishing piece of art over and over again, and being sweptaway by the magnificent performance of a concerto. Analogously, this conceptcan help to illustrate how an experience of a divine phenomenon, or alimit-experience, is simply the same as a saturated phenomenon except it wouldbe even far more intense in all respects and would be even more impossible toput into words or concepts.

The holiness of God is so overwhelming that itcannot truly be experienced; it is so excessive that we cannot bear its impact. In fact, the experience requires a different sort of rationality to understand, one that is invisible and incomprehensible to “ normal” rationality; it is therationality of “ faith”. The rationality of faith is superior to and goes beyondworldly philosophical and scientific rationality and reason. Faith is theprimordial adhesion and the ultimate concern that has the utter strength totransform your “ beliefs” into actual reality. By having faith, one couldpossibly see beyond the realm of reality and then he will be able to feel thepresence of a mystical God. Not seeing does not prove that there is nothing tosee, it can simply suggest that there is indeed something to see, but that inorder to see it, it is necessary to learn to see otherwise.

Only faith makesyou see what your eyes cannot visualize.            Everybody is concerned with the ultimatetruth and where one could find it. It is very typical to find people lookingfor it in different places. For many years, there has been an unnecessarytension between science and religion and in proving which is more “ true” andless of an “ illusion”. Some thinkers argued that the anthropomorphic god makesus live in the realm of illusion that unconsciously withdraws us from truth andreality. However, they thought religion was the truth because it is the onlything that gives life a meaning and purpose.

Others suggested that science isbased on inductive reasoning of phenomenon, or what appears to us, which isquite different from what it really is, or the noumenon, and it only remainssupported until something proves otherwise. However, they thought that sciencewas the truth because it yields certainty that allows us to eradicate all evilif only we organize our minds “ correctly” to do so. In fact, both religion andscience truths should lead us to the same conclusion, if only we carefully andcorrectly put the pieces of the puzzle together. There are two types of truthsincluding truth as verification (certainty: science) and truth as manifestation(faithfulness: religion).

In other words, both religion and science are true, yet in different ways. Biblical texts do not wish to “ verify” or describe, butrather they “ manifest” or reveal. Biblical discourse enables us to envisionourselves differently, imagine another way of being, and even challenge us toethical and just behaviors in order to transform the world. This is indeedabout truth, but it is a truth that confronts and challenges us to make it realinstead of a truth that can be verified as corresponding to a particular stateof affairs. In other words, religion is not simply a matter of faith, but alsoa way of life that challenges us to consistently be ethical, practical, communicative, and moral in order to transform the world into a better place.            Proving science to be true does not makereligion less or even not true at all. We should instead come to realize thatscience works in tandem with religion, thus, if science is true, then religionmust also be true and vice versa. Very often, those who cling to science anddeny religion are in fact fearful of thinking about what is beyond theirrationale or what they can determine with certainty because they have no way ofeither proving or even denying it.

When you trust science, you are indirectlyadmitting that God is true and valid because if your mind wasn’t designed insuch a way, you would not be able to understand science in the first place. Inother words, when we understand things correctly and with high levels ofcertainty, we are thinking like God. On the contrary, when we understand thingsincorrectly, it is not because our minds are incapable of understanding, butbecause we have veered off of the proper way of thinking, which lead to doubtand uncertainty.

By veering away from the proper way ofthinking, we start to think in terms of the scientific reduction method andreduce every aspect of the human being down to atoms and molecules such asHiggs boson particle, which makes everything that we experience in lifemeaningless and without any value. In fact, it is not incorrect to say thathumans are made of matter, but it is extremely incorrect to believe that it isfar more important than the most fulfilling truth of our lived experiences. Forexample, which one is more real, when somebody’s heart stops beating becausetheir cells are dead or the experience of somebody’s death? Both are equallyreal. Phenomenology speaking, if we dehumanize ourselves by thinking we arenothing but matter colliding, then how would we justify the deep sorrow andgrief we experience over the dead? Which incident touches your emotions moreand explains death better, the fact that cells are dead and no longerfunctioning? Or the experience of death and loss of someone you truly love andwill not see again? Surely, the latter one. Similarly, a carpenter understandswhat a hammer really is and what it does much more than a philosopher trying tocontemplate a hammer because the carpenter has an actual experience with thehammer, or a ready at hand, rather than the present at hand theoreticalcontemplation of a philosopher.            In an attempt to describe the structure ofhuman existence as we experience it, there are two primary types of existencedepending on your state of mind, authentic and inauthentic. An inauthenticexistence (unproductive existence) is a distractive and predominant state ofmind where one continuously keeps doing what everybody does by practicingcalculative thinking and avoiding meditative thinking of reality.

If one livesin this state of mind forever, they will never get anything done and can neverbe productive. On the other hand, an authentic existence (productive existence)is an essential but temporary state of mind that eliminates the wideness of theworld and makes you feel pain such as anxiety and boredom. Although thesemoments are quite painful, they are extremely important because they force youto think of the value of life, remind you of death, and bring you back to your” true” self or consciousness. Additionally, there are two types of thoughtprocesses that human beings exercise: calculative and meditative thinking. Calculative thinking is the problem solving of math and science, whereasmeditative thinking is cultivating the openness by pondering creative impulseof art and humanities. Today, societies are shifting from meditative tocalculative thinking, which devalues meditative thinking and causes humans tolose their ability to ponder. In reality, optimal thinking is one where bothtypes of thinking are employed on a daily basis, but also having moremeditative thinking is better as it induces creativity.

According to Einstein, creativity is far more important than science or calculative thinking. He says,” creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else has everthought”.            To have the right perspective of life, onemust have the freedom to love life in order to be able to understand itsmeaning. Phenomenologically speaking, this is quite accurate because the mostmeaningful things in one’s life are those that oneself truly loves. Love cannotexist without freedom, thus, we are free creatures with the ability to lovelife and give it meaning.

If you begin by analyzing the vast suffering andbrutality of life and trying to define its meaning later on, one will never beable to accept it because they already have the wrong perspective by assumingthat life is meaningless and without love. The answer of why there is evil inthe world is not to be found in the metaphysical response to theodicy, orrational argumentations of justifying evil, but in ourselves. In fact, sincethe divine resides inside each one of us, the burden of evil is on us to be thechange we want to see in the world. Our mission in life is to love and blesslife and to get other people to do it with us and that is what will make ushappy, but also vulnerable to suffering because love is non-being; dependenceon the changeability of love is weakness. Unfortunately, we can never overcomethe problem of evil. The purpose of religion was never to answer why evilexists and to explain it away, but to help people manage and cope withsuffering and loss, combat evil, grieve with others for their suffering, findjoy in life even when things go south, and to live a superior life bound to apurpose.            In order to feel love and happiness, weshall contemplate and appreciate the glory of the world around us and observeGod in every aspect of it. In other words, we should direct our attentiontowards the saturated phenomenon of life surrounding us in order to be able tosee it and thus see God everywhere.

A moment of meditative contemplation is amoment of “ paradise”, where one feels forgiven, joyous, and content. JohnChrysostom says, “ but what do I care about heaven when I myself have becomeheaven”. In this case, Chrysostom is saying that if one becomes the embodimentof love of one’s enemies, radical forgiveness of others, cancellation of debts, humility, and treating others how one wants to be treated then one will besaved and thus becomes “ alive”.

Instead of us trying to get to heaven, weshould bring heaven down to earth and embrace our own reality and live, not inthe past or future, but in the “ now”, or the life before death. In fact, onecould be denied access to heaven and live in hell instead by not being able tofind love in anything, and thus cannot find meaning in anything either.            In conclusion, we should become lovingpeople only for the sake of goodness itself, and not to “ buy the ticket to thenext life”. In everyday, we should discipline ourselves to combat the natural” default” setting that only makes us the center of the universe and all thatmatters and everybody else is just “ in our way”. Not until we become more openand understanding to people and their perspectives and realize that everybodyis fighting a battle that we know nothing about do we begin to understandourselves and find meaning in others. By cultivating a different perspective, life not only becomes less miserable, but also opens you up and makes you morevulnerable.

This vulnerability of love connects you to something far more realand makes your meaningless life quite meaningful. We should become love. Weshould become Gods.