

For which sectors of
society and culture
are



For centuries, various philosophical thinkers strove to either prove or disprove God's existence by developing rational arguments, and as you may 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 quite concerned with proving God, but more of justifying why there is evil in the world.

Most thinkers find the latter type of theodicy more problematic and worthy to investigate, especially in terms of a monotheistic God, because they cannot justify evil's existence when God is supposed to be the source of ultimate morality and might. However, a monotheistic God is considered quite attractive to have a relationship with because he is in control, has a plan for your life, loves you, and wants the best for you and humanity.

Sociologically, theodicy is an explanation of an anomic phenomenon, or the meaningful order a culture or a society imposes on reality, in terms of religious legitimations. For instance, humans fear chaos, and all sorts of different cultures impose their nomos into that chaos. So, when chaos happens, every culture's theodicy will then try explaining why it happened and how the nomos is still valid and intact.

In fact, this type of theodicy is one of the biggest drivers of secularization, which is the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. In other words, religion is just one aspect of life with no dominance or control over other aspects of life such as art, science, philosophy, and politics. As societies become more secular, individuals gain more freedom in choosing what religion they want to adopt, which becomes more of an authentic

decision rather than the endless pressures of society forcing you into one “correct” mindset while everything else becomes “forbidden” or “incorrect”. For example, in a pre-secular society, you had to prove yourself to the religion, but today, in this secular society, religion desperately sells itself by carefully proving it to you while driven by the fear of rejection since they understand that you now have 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 powerless towards, but religious authorities ought not control the supposedly “free” individuals of society and instead allow them to express themselves as freely as possible in order to make society a better place. How is restricting someone’s thoughts and beliefs within the norms of society any different from enslaving their physicality in a filthy dungeon? Not quite. God is the only Being, thus, he is completely existent, and therefore stable, unchangeable, and immutable.

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

When your free will or love turns toward change and non-being it is going to inevitably make you unhappy and suffer because love makes you vulnerable to whatever it is that you love since your 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 Being and will give you eternal happiness, which is what you were originally created for. However, this does not necessarily suggest that we should detach ourselves from the things we love. Instead, we should love people, but only in the right perspective, meaning you should love people but only for the sake of God and their eternal self in God.

For anything to exist, it must have some goodness in it, because it comes from God who is the ultimate good. Evil itself is not a substance that exists. Instead, it is a deviation from Being, or loving 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's perspective. Instead, the higher harmony of God's perspective and the notion of historical progress, which is that everything happens for a reason, says that evil 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 having the right perspective of why such evil is happening, then you will come to the place where you see it happening for the best and therefore will cause less pain and suffering than if you had the wrong perspective. Some thinkers viewed God as being mystical and unknowing while others thought he was anthropomorphic, or an infinite version of the highest values which human beings cherish and desire to acquire.

The mystical character and ambiguity of God does not negate believing in his existence 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 what we struggle to ascertain; it is beyond what our limited mental

capability can ever comprehend. God is not anthropomorphic and we ought to always respectfully preserve his holy difference from human beings. However, it would be quite advantageous to assume that God is anthropomorphic when learning about religion because 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 highest values, religion also serves as an "opiate", or legitimation for suffering. Religion whispers "false hopes" and infinite forgetfulness against the evilness of 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 religion makes because it legitimizes the evil that exists in the world and makes us feel better about it by minimizing pain.

Is this really how we should live? We should set the comfort blanket aside in order to not feel better and embrace the pain, and this is when you become the most powerful and aware version of yourself because you will start actually understanding the cruel reality of this 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, ulterior motives, or other concerns that might make us fit phenomena into certain paradigms or view them in a particular predetermined fashion. Afterwards, the phenomena will purely appear as they "give" themselves to us, or in their own "givenness". In addition, intuition is what is given to consciousness by the phenomenon and intention is what consciousness imposes upon the phenomenon. This led to the development of a well-known formulation of phenomenological analyses known as "saturated

phenomenon". A saturated phenomenon is one rich intuition and defy concepts or explanation such that our consciousness becomes overwhelmed or "blinded" by the excess of givenness and struggles to receive these experiences. Several examples of saturated phenomenon that we encounter in life include seduction by the fragrance of a perfume, returning to contemplate an astonishing piece of art over and over again, and being swept away by the magnificent performance of a concerto. Analogously, this concept can help to illustrate how an experience of a divine phenomenon, or a limit-experience, is simply the same as a saturated phenomenon except it would be even far more intense in all respects and would be even more impossible to put into words or concepts.

The holiness of God is so overwhelming that it cannot 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 the rationality of "faith". The rationality of faith is superior to and goes beyond worldly philosophical and scientific rationality and reason. Faith is the primordial adhesion and the ultimate concern that has the utter strength to transform your "beliefs" into actual reality. By having faith, one could possibly see beyond the realm of reality and then he will be able to feel the presence of a mystical God. Not seeing does not prove that there is nothing to see, it can simply suggest that there is indeed something to see, but that in order to see it, it is necessary to learn to see otherwise.

Only faith makes you see what your eyes cannot visualize. Everybody is concerned with the ultimate truth and where one could find it. It is very

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typical to find people looking for it in different places. For many years, there has been an unnecessary tension between science and religion and in proving which is more "true" and less of an "illusion". Some thinkers argued that the anthropomorphic god makes us live in the realm of illusion that unconsciously withdraws us from truth and reality. However, they thought religion was the truth because it is the only thing that gives life a meaning and purpose.

Others suggested that science is based on inductive reasoning of phenomenon, or what appears to us, which is quite different from what it really is, or the noumenon, and it only remains supported until something proves otherwise. However, they thought that science was the truth because it yields certainty that allows us to eradicate all evil if only we organize our minds "correctly" to do so. In fact, both religion and science truths should lead us to the same conclusion, if only we carefully and correctly put the pieces of the puzzle together. There are two types of truth including 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, but rather they "manifest" or reveal. Biblical discourse enables us to envision ourselves differently, imagine another way of being, and even challenge us to ethical and just behaviors in order to transform the world. This is indeed about truth, but it is a truth that confronts and challenges us to make it real instead of a truth that can be verified as corresponding to a particular state of affairs. In other words, religion is not simply a matter of faith, but also a way of life that

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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 make religion less or even not true at all. We should instead come to realize that science works in tandem with religion, thus, if science is true, then religion must also be true and vice versa. Very often, those who cling to science and deny religion are in fact fearful of thinking about what is beyond their rationale or what they can determine with certainty because they have no way of either proving or even denying it.

When you trust science, you are indirectly admitting that God is true and valid because if your mind wasn't designed in such a way, you would not be able to understand science in the first place. In other words, when we understand things correctly and with high levels of certainty, we are thinking like God. On the contrary, when we understand things incorrectly, it is not because our minds are incapable of understanding, but because we have veered off of the proper way of thinking, which leads to doubt and uncertainty.

By veering away from the proper way of thinking, we start to think in terms of the scientific reduction method and reduce every aspect of the human being down to atoms and molecules such as Higgs boson particle, which makes everything that we experience in life meaningless and without any value. In fact, it is not incorrect to say that humans are made of matter, but it is extremely incorrect to believe that it is far more important than the most fulfilling truth of our lived experiences. For example, which one is more real, when somebody's heart stops beating because their cells are dead or the experience of somebody's death? Both are equally real. Phenomenology speaking, if we dehumanize ourselves by thinking we are nothing but matter

colliding, then how would we justify the deep sorrow and grief we experience over the dead? Which incident touches your emotions more and explains death better, the fact that cells are dead and no longer functioning? Or the experience of death and loss of someone you truly love and will not see again? Surely, the latter one. Similarly, a carpenter understands what a hammer really is and what it does much more than a philosopher trying to contemplate a hammer because the carpenter has an actual experience with the hammer, or a ready at hand, rather than the present at hand theoretical contemplation of a philosopher. In an attempt to describe the structure of human existence as we experience it, there are two primary types of existence depending on your state of mind, authentic and inauthentic. An inauthentic existence (unproductive existence) is a distractive and predominant state of mind where one continuously keeps doing what everybody does by practicing calculative thinking and avoiding meditative thinking of reality.

If one lives in this state of mind forever, they will never get anything done and can never be productive. On the other hand, an authentic existence (productive existence) is an essential but temporary state of mind that eliminates the wideness of the world and makes you feel pain such as anxiety and boredom. Although these moments are quite painful, they are extremely important because they force you to 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 thought processes that human beings exercise: calculative and meditative thinking. Calculative thinking is the problem solving of math and science, whereas meditative thinking is cultivating the

openness by pondering creative impulse of art and humanities. Today, societies are shifting from meditative to calculative thinking, which devalues meditative thinking and causes humans to lose their ability to ponder. In reality, optimal thinking is one where both types of thinking are employed on a daily basis, but also having more meditative 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 ever thought". To have the right perspective of life, one must have the freedom to love life in order to be able to understand its meaning. Phenomenologically speaking, this is quite accurate because the most meaningful things in one's life are those that one self truly loves. Love cannot exist without freedom, thus, we are free creatures with the ability to love life and give it meaning.

If you begin by analyzing the vast suffering and brutality of life and trying to define its meaning later on, one will never be able to accept it because they already have the wrong perspective by assuming that life is meaningless and without love. The answer of why there is evil in the world is not to be found in the metaphysical response to theodicy, or rational argumentations of justifying evil, but in ourselves. In fact, since the divine resides inside each one of us, the burden of evil is on us to be the change we want to see in the world. Our mission in life is to love and bless life and to get other people to do it with us and that is what will make us happy, but also vulnerable to suffering because love is non-being; dependence on the changeability of love is weakness. Unfortunately, we can never overcome the problem of evil. The <https://assignbuster.com/for-which-sectors-of-society-and-culture-are/>

purpose of religion was never to answer why evil exists and to explain it away, but to help people manage and cope with suffering and loss, combat evil, grieve with others for their suffering, find joy in life even when things go south, and to live a superior life bound to a purpose. In order to feel love and happiness, we shall contemplate and appreciate the glory of the world around us and observe God in every aspect of it. In other words, we should direct our attention towards the saturated phenomenon of life surrounding us in order to be able to see it and thus see God everywhere.

A moment of meditative contemplation is a moment of "paradise", where one feels forgiven, joyous, and content. John Chrysostom says, "but what do I care about heaven when I myself have become heaven". In this case, Chrysostom is saying that if one becomes the embodiment of 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 be saved and thus becomes "alive".

Instead of us trying to get to heaven, we should bring heaven down to earth and embrace our own reality and live, not in the past or future, but in the "now", or the life before death. In fact, one could be denied access to heaven and live in hell instead by not being able to find love in anything, and thus cannot find meaning in anything either. In conclusion, we should become loving people only for the sake of goodness itself, and not to "buy the ticket to the next life". In everyday, we should discipline ourselves to combat the natural "default" setting that only makes us the center of the universe and all that matters and everybody else is just "in our way". Not until we become more open and understanding to people and their

perspectives and realize that everybody is fighting a battle that we know nothing about. Do we begin to understand ourselves and find meaning in others. By cultivating a different perspective, life not only becomes less miserable, but also opens you up and makes you more vulnerable.

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