

How Can A Good God Allow Suffering?

Introduction

Pain and suffering isn't just a barrier to belief in God, it's often used as evidence to disprove the existence of God!

Objection #1: if God is all loving and powerful, he would not allow pain and suffering!

Just because I can't see a reason for something doesn't mean there's no reason for it!
(Gen.37-45)

If there are some good reason that we can see for pain and suffering in our lives, isn't it possible for God to have good reasons for ALL pain and suffering?

Objection #2: the existence of pain and suffering proves that God does not exist!

"the world is a cruel and unfair place, therefore God must not exist"

But if you're an atheist with a naturalistic evolutionary view of the world that believes in natural selection why would you be upset with cruelty and unfairness? ... It's survival of the fittest at work built on the death, destruction and violence on the weak!

The problem of pain and suffering might instead be an argument for the existence of a good God!

'There must be an absolute good by which evil can be distinguished from good ... pain would be no problem, unless, side by side with our daily experience of this painful world, we had received what we think a good assurance that ultimate reality is righteous and loving.' - C.S.Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

Atheist and naturalist Richard Dawkins' answer to pain and suffering - *'We live in a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replications, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice [what you see is what you get – there's no reason for it]. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing, but blind, pitiless indifference. Our DNA knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.'*

Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias, *'If DNA neither knows or cares, what is it that prompts our knowing and our caring? ... Not one proponent of evolutionary ethics has explained how an impersonal, amoral first cause through a nonmoral process has produced a moral basis of life, while at the same time denying any objective moral basis for good and evil. Does it not seem odd that of all the permutations and combinations that a random universe might afford we should end up with the notions of the true, the good, and the beautiful?'*

Conclusion

- i) If there are some reasons for pain and suffering known to us, it's plausible that God has good reasons for all pain and suffering that are not always known to us.
- ii) Christianity attempts to give a plausible explanation to pain and suffering
- iii) Our longing for what is right and how things 'ought' to be in the face of pain and suffering supports the idea of a good world gone wrong caused by our rejection of a good God
- iv) Christianity says God cares enough about our pain and suffering to suffer for us and with us to save us from suffering forever