



Why Does Evil and Suffering Exist in Our World?

KS4 RELIGIOUS STUDIES

PHILOSOPHY

ETHICS

Ages 13-16



4 min read

One of Religion's Biggest Questions

Imagine having a friend who is both incredibly kind and super powerful. You'd expect them to stop bad things happening to people they care about, right? This is exactly the question that has puzzled people for thousands of years: if **God is all-good and all-powerful**, why does **evil** and **suffering** exist in the world?

This puzzle is called **the problem of evil**, and it's one of the most important questions in **theology** (the study of God and religion). People of all faiths, and even people who don't believe in God, have wrestled with this question.

Different Religious Answers

Religious leaders and thinkers have come up with several explanations. Some say that **God gives humans free will** — the ability to make our own choices — and that means some people choose to do bad things. If God stopped everyone from making wrong choices, we wouldn't really have freedom at all.

Think of it like a parent who lets their teenager learn to cook. Sometimes they might burn the food or hurt themselves. But the parent doesn't take away their freedom to try, because learning and growing matters more than avoiding every mistake.

Others believe that **suffering helps us grow stronger** and teaches us important lessons. Going through difficulties can make us more compassionate and help us understand what really matters in life. Some also point out that when we see others suffering, it gives us the chance to be kind and helpful.

The Mystery Remains

Many religious people say that **God's reasons are beyond human understanding**. They believe that just because we can't see why bad things happen doesn't mean there isn't a reason — we're just not able to understand it fully, like a small child might not understand why a doctor needs to give them medicine that tastes bad.

Think of it like a little child wondering why their parents make them go to bed early. The child can't see the bigger picture — that sleep is healthy and necessary.

Other people find this question so difficult that it makes them doubt whether God exists at all, or they believe in a God who is loving but not all-powerful. There's no single answer that everyone agrees on, and that's okay — it's a question that makes us think deeply about fairness, belief, and what really matters.