

RE - Good and Evil - Crime and Punishment

1

Key words

Meta – ethics	Explores the meaning and use of ethical language
Relative Morality	You would agree that different courses of action might be needed in different situations.
Absolute Morality	Faith that there is a right course of action to take in a moral dilemma. Which is true in all situations regardless of culture, religious tradition, time or age.
Absolute stance and theory	Means there are set rules and guidance for people to follow

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Crime and punishment

Causes of crime- Criminal behaviour fits into one , or more that one of the categories:

Caused by a person's free choice

Caused by a person's environment

Seems like the only option

Develops through being associated with other criminals

The aims of punishment

- **Deterrence- punishment should put people off committing crime**
- **Protection- punishment protects society**
- **Reformation- punishment should reform the criminal**
- **Retribution- punishment should make the criminal pay**
- **Reparation – punishment should compensate the victims**
- **Vindication- the punishment makes sure the law is respected**

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What makes an act wrong

Defining good or wrong is directly linked to faith

- Good and evil is linked to :
- The teaching s of Christ
- The teaching of the church
- The will of God
- The natural law and order
- When making a decision people should consider : conscience, faith , scripture and cultural laws.

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Catholic Christianity and Crime

Teaches that sin is part of human nature- Adam and Eve. Many believe that the Bible teaches the difference between right and wrong- Following God's will leads people to the right path.

Follow the ten commandments

Catholic response to crime

Many are concerned about the welfare of prisoners – campaign for prison reform or vote for political parties that reflect their views on justice.

Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats that people who help those in prison will go to heaven .

Prison Chaplains

Paulist Prison Ministries- work with the prisoners helping them to rehabilitate . They play an important role offering support , counselling and hope to those inside and their families.

Prison reforms

The aim is to create a fair and human justice system that punishes, but also helps with reform.

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Judaism and Crime

Many believe that behaviour in life will be judged by God after death. There are strict rules to follow and to go against them is a crime against God.

Follows the rules of the Torah and the 10 commandments. Repentance (teshuva) and forgiveness is important within communities.

Jews follow the rules of the Noahide Code:

- Believe and trust in God
- Respect the sanctity of life
- Respect the rights and property of others
- Respect family values
- Respect and praise God
- Respect animal rights
- Responsibility for society

How criminals should be treated- Jews believe that they should have their human rights respected, but understand that society needs to be protected fro dangerous people. Many campaign for prison reform and they believe that prisoners can be reformed so the justice system should reflect his.

Prison Chaplains – people from the religious community who provide a pastoral role for Jewish prisoners.

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The Death Penalty

Today the church doesn't agree with the DP as it goes again the commandment not to kill. Also, Catholics believe that life is a gift from God, therefore God alone has the power to take life.

Catholic arguments in favour of the DP:

It helps maintain order

The Bible sets down the DP for some crimes

Aquinas argued that peace in society was more important than reforming a sinner

Protection of the whole society is more important than the individual

Catholic arguments against the DP:

Its never justified

Jesus came to earth to reform sinners

Sanctity of life

Jewish arguments in favour of the DP

Used as a last resort for people who are unlikely to reform and are a threat to society.

The Torah says the DP should be used if they take the life of another.

The Talmud says the DP is allowed

Jewish arguments against the DP

The Torah and Tenakh are out dated

It goes against the commandment thou shall not kill

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Moral Decision making

Natural Moral Law

Is an absolutist theory developed by Thomas Aquinas which uses the natural order of the world as its basis. It is based on the belief that there is a natural order to the world and that natural order has been designed by God.

Aquinas maintained that the natural moral law is:

- Accessible to all
- Universal
- Unchanging
- For all time
- Relevant
- Given by god
- **The catholic church supports the natural law approach because it affirms that God is the creator .**

Conscience

Can be described as the voice of God within each individual . Conscience has to be listened to alongside reason to make a decision. Conscience must be educated, through prayer, study of scripture and experience.

Virtues

The church teaches that there are 7 virtues made up from 4 cardinal virtues :prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance And 3 theological virtues: faith , hope and charity

Sin

Is defined as going against the will of God

RE - Good, Evil and Suffering

4 Augustine's Soul-deciding Theodicy

Augustine believed that

- all humans were created perfect and they were given free will. However, people use that free will to turn away from God and choose to sin.
- God foretold that his fall would happen so sent his son Jesus so that humanity may be reconciled with God.
- Augustine theodicy takes responsibility away from God
- His document on faith, hope and love (Enchiridion) states that the definition of evil is the 'privation of good' (evil doesn't exist in the same way as good).
- This doctrine allows God to exist as an omnibenevolent being as God is not responsible for creating evil.

2 The existence of evil and suffering in the world

Questions raised :

- What does the presence of evil and suffering say about God's love, power and purpose?
- Is there a purpose to suffering?
- Is suffering the price people pay for free will ?
- How do different religions respond to suffering and evil?
- How do individuals respond to evil?

3 Original Evil

Many Catholics believe that evil is the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. God punished them for their actions and the punishment was to endure suffering in life. This is known as **THE FALL**.

Some Catholics believe that all people inherited the tendency to sin from Adam and Eve. This belief is called **ORIGINAL SIN**. According to this belief, all humans are born with a tendency towards evil and the ability to cause suffering.

5 Philosophical Questions

Evil and suffering could make Christians question God's omnipotence, omnibenevolence or his omniscience. For example :

- If God was all-powerful, wouldn't he stop natural disasters?
- If God was all-loving, wouldn't he stop suffering?
- If God was all-knowing, wouldn't he know that people were going to do something evil and stop them ?

Catholic response to the questions.

- God has given free will . He has shown people how to obey the ten commandments and to follow Jesus' life and teaching . Its then up to us to decide whether or not to follow God's instructions.
- God has a plan for people's lives and we should trust and have faith in God's plan.
- God wants people to follow the example of Jesus and help those who are suffering.
- God must have a reason for allowing evil and suffering, but the reason is beyond human understanding.

Evil and suffering in this life is a preparation for Heaven. Evil and suffering give people a chance to become better people and they believe that God will reward them in heaven .

6 What does Judaism say about the origin of evil ?

Many Jews believe that evil originates from the first sin of Adam and Eve. The serpent tempted Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge against God's wishes. Evil then became part of them and they no longer needed external temptation to sin. Humans suffered because they were disobedient and so became separate from God.

Some Jews believe the Satan is not a separate being. (Satan is a tendency existing in every human which tempts them to do wrong).

Jews believe that they should accept both good and bad in their lives, as both are God-given and therefore have a purpose.

1 Good, Evil and Suffering

Good

Means different things to different people. What people consider to be good can depend on their values, beliefs and culture. Generally the word good means:

- Caring for others
- Helping others
- Showing compassion to others

Evil

Evil is the cause of human suffering. There are two types of evil:

Moral evil –the acts of humans which are considered to be morally wrong

Natural evil- natural disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis

The two types of evil can work together .

Religions differ in what they teach about the origins of evil:

- Some consider it to have been present in the world from the beginning as the work of evil forces.
- Some believe it is part of God's creation which may have a purpose that humans cannot understand.
- Some consider it to be the outcome of ignorance
- Most religions teach that moral evil should be opposed and attempts must be made to minimise that impact of natural evil .

Suffering

Suffering is the bearing or undergoing of pain or distress. Most people experience suffering.

- Religions attempt to explain suffering to help people cope and learn .
- Some say that God allows humans to make decisions for themselves and that suffering is caused by the choices people make.

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Catholic -Peace and Conflict

Causes of conflict

When a state or states act to:

- Attack or invade another state
- Resist attack or invasion
- Protect another state from attack
- Impose domination or political change on another state
- Challenge a treaty to essential national interests

Catholic teaching on war and peace

There is no clear answer in the Bible about whether war is permitted
There is emphasis on the importance of resolving conflict
Most believe that war should be avoided

What do Catholics say about Justice

Justice comes from God

How is the sanctity of life relevant to war

God gave life and each human is made in the image of God

Life is sacred and should be protected

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you-Matthew 5:44

There are times that the only way to defeat injustice or defend the sanctity of life is to declare war.

Other Catholics think only peaceful and non violent methods should be used.

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Forgiveness

Catholic

- The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (After the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant Peter asks Jesus how often he should forgive)
- Forgiveness is not a one-time action
- It's the duty of an individual to forgive
- The our Father Prayer – Jesus talks about forgiveness

Judaism

- Forgiveness is a duty
- Great emphasis placed on repentance- Jews actively make amends for their wrongs
- Yom Kipper – The day of atonement

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Judaism -war and Peace

Judaism teaches that war is sometimes necessary in self defence and in order to bring about peace.

Jewish view on Just War

Jewish teachings suggest that war to achieve justice or end oppression is acceptable.

Just war is a morally acceptable war which must be fought for justified reasons such as:

- Protection and self-defence
- Prevention of a greater evil
- Good versus evil
- Restoring law and order
- Where efforts have already been made to avoid war

There are two kinds of wars which can be fought:

Milchemet Mitzvah

A war commanded by God similar to a holy war (an obligatory war). The conditions of this war are that the enemy must have attacked first . Joshua and the Israelites fighting to return to the promise land.

Milchemet Reshut

An optional war which requires that permission of a Jewish authority. Peace must be offered before going to war and all other options failed. In addition, civilians can not be harmed and damage to buildings is limited.

Judaism shows concern for non-human considerations. Jews should not destroy fruit trees or other things needed for life.

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What is a just war

A war that is declared for right and noble reasons . It is a war that Catholics feel is necessary , when all other solutions have been tried .

Catholic view on the Just War Theory

- **Developed by Aquinas**
- **JUS AD BELLUM**
- A war must have just cause
- It must be declared and controlled by a proper authority
- It must be fought to promote good , with the aim of restoring peace
- It is a last resort
- Be fought with proportionality- with just enough force to achieve victory
- The good that is achieved must be greater than the evil

The Just War Doctrine give 4 conditions that must be fulfilled for war to be considered:

- The damage inflicted by the aggressor must be lasting, grave and certain
- All other means of putting it to an end are impractical or ineffective
- There must be serious prospects of success
- The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil being eliminated

Sometimes war is necessary . Pope Benedict XVI said that defending oneself and others is a duty. When wars are fought to protect people it is seen as an example of Jesus' teaching – 'Love your Neighbour as you love yourself'

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Pacifism

Catholics reject all violence and they do not believe that conflict should be dealt with by resorting to war. They believe that other methods should be used.

Early Christians interpreted Jesus' commandments to mean that they could not fight in wars or be violent. They also look at the fact that when the guards came to arrest Jesus he didn't fight back.

Conscientious Objectors

Someone who refuses to go to war because of religious or moral beliefs .

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