

Did God Create Evil?: Robin Collins

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Transcript - Long

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Robin, you would almost convince me that the enormity of evil does not disprove the existence of God.

Robin Collins:

Right.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Where I go to next after I hear all the arguments is that it seems to me that in fact for all these wonderful purposes God created evil.

Robin Collins:

I would put it differently. God created a world which—structured in such a way that evil is almost bound to occur. Evil in the form of suffering and moral evil.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Isn't that a cop out? I mean why don't you just come out and say God created evil?

Robin Collins:

Well, the reason it's not a cop out is let's think back to the conditions of free will. Let's suppose you actually gave somebody the free choice to do either good or evil. And you, suppose we could create Androids in the future and so we create an Android with true free choice and that Android goes around as you see in a lot of science fiction movies, goes around, and decides to use her free will badly and goes and destroys a bunch of stuff. Would you say the maker of the Android created the evil? I don't think so. You'd say the maker created the Android, neither good nor bad, and then it mis-used it's free will.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Well, but wait a minute. But I as the creator of that Android are not omniscient. I can't see the future and I don't know what's gonna happen. But if I know that I've created beings that have this potential for evil and I know that because I'm omniscient, I know what's gonna happen in the future, I know they will create evil or if they have the potential for evil and I have billions of creations I know some of them are gonna create evil. So, I know statistically, probabilistically, if not omnisciently that evil, is gonna occur and I've created it and to say that I haven't created it is...

Robin Collins:

Well, you've created the conditions and you're certain it's ...like if you created...

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

I created the conditions and I'm certain it's gonna happen so...

Robin Collins:

Analogy would heed your...

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Just say...

Robin Collins:

If you...

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Just say God created evil.

Robin Collins:

Well, I, I, the problem I have with that is it makes God look like God's evil.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

I didn't say that because you're giving arguments why evil are important in these theodicies which justify evil, free will, making souls, making eternal connections. All of that I can almost buy into. But then I go to the next step and I say evil is part of God's plan.

Robin Collins:

Yes. The occurrence of evil is part of, at least, part of God's plan that evil will occur. I would agree with that. That God foresaw in some way or another that either evil would occur or was very likely to occur. Depends on what you think of God's knowledge of the future.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Very likely to occur but when you have billions of opportunities statistically...

Robin Collins:

Opportunities, it's bound to occur.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Statistically, it has to occur.

Robin Collins:

So, the analogy would be like if I decided to create a million or a billion free willed Androids. We could just put them on an assembly line and then I would create all these Androids and I knew some of them were gonna turn—use their choice badly.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

You don't know which ones.

Robin Collins:

I know which one. I wouldn't say in that case I created the evil. I would say I created the conditions that would inevitably lead to the evil. Maybe you find that a philosopher's way out.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

A distinction without a difference.

Robin Collins:

Right.