

## The problem of evil.

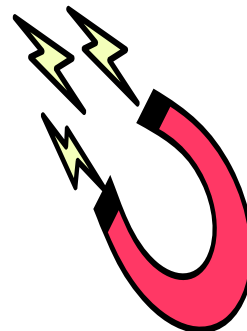
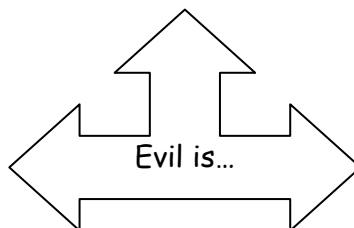
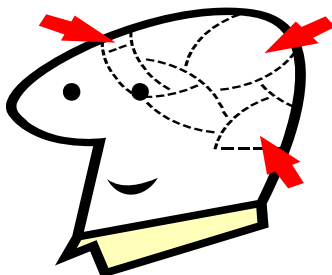
### What you need to know:

- Where does evil come from?
  - What is its nature - an impersonal force, a personal being or a psychological phenomenon?
  - What questions does the existence of evil raise about God's creation and power?
  - Religious responses to the problem of evil.
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### Where does evil come from?

Here are some different ideas about where evil comes from and about what it is:

- It comes from God as He allowed mankind free will.
- It comes from human nature (mankind being greedy and selfish).
- It is an impersonal force that draws people into the wrong path.
- It is a personal being who tempts people to do wrong.
- It is psychological (a damaged mind).



Christians believe that evil came into the world as a result of Adam and Eve disobeying God. It occurs when people use their free will to disobey God. People want to be good but are tempted to do wrong. They need salvation (rescuing) from sin.

Questions raised about God's creation and power:

- Why did God create a world in which evil is possible?
- If God is all - powerful, why can God not prevent someone from doing evil? Since evil continues, God does not seem to be able to stop it (thus God cannot be all powerful).

Religious responses to the problem of evil:

- God gave us free will to choose good or evil.
- The fact that God made us (and not robots) shows God's love.
- God is powerful but chooses not to use that power; for example, God allowed Jesus to die on the cross.
- If God stopped evil then mankind would not have free will - mankind has a choice to make.

Practise questions:

1. Give two examples of suffering caused by nature.
2. Outline the teaching of one religious tradition about suffering.
3. Give two explanations for the origin of evil.
4. Explain why the existence of evil raises a problem for people who believe in God.