



God and Evil: My Answer for Michael Savage

Torture, pain, beheadings, the murder of children.... If God exists and is all good, how could He allow such suffering and evil? This is a common question, and a lament often an impediment to faith. It also was addressed recently on the *Savage Nation* radio show, where host Michael Savage — exhibiting his versatility and talk virility — will sometimes broach that certain thing we're supposed to discuss even less than politics. His answer to the question was contained in his [newsletter](#) and is:

I actually believe that God has no effect on a moment-by-moment basis or a person-by-person basis. If I did, then I'd have to stop believing in God.

If I were to believe that God controlled everything on earth, then I'd have to believe that God is evil.

I believe God is not omnipotent. He is omnipresent.

That's what saved me from atheism.

It certainly is good to have an answer that saves one from atheism, but is the above *the* answer?

God undoubtedly doesn't micromanage our lives, controlling matters on a moment-by-moment basis; this reality is called His "permitting will" in theological circles, as opposed to His "ordaining will." But why is God, as some might say, so "permissive" (He isn't, really)? There is an answer, but before addressing it let's examine the matter of God's omnipotence.

God is known as the "Creator" because the belief is that He created the whole Universe, the heavens and the Earth and all living creatures — out of nothing. He is the first cause. In this case, however, it would seem fanciful to suppose that He could create life but not control that life. After forging the wonders called the Universe and its denizens, controlling man would seem small potatoes.

To suggest otherwise is to say that God is not really "God" — by definition all-powerful and perfect — but a different kind of being entirely. For He then either created something He couldn't control (which certainly can be a fault of man) or didn't create it at all. If the latter, though, where does that leave us? We can't say something else created the Universe, for that entity would then be above what would merely be but a cosmic middleman, and it would be God (the "Immovable Mover," as Aristotle said). The only other possibility is that we believe in something and call it "God" even though it would just be some spirit being formed as a cosmic accident via some evolutionary process wholly unknown to us. But this would just bring us back to atheism and its inherent relativism and meaninglessness — with the twist that, for sure, we're not the most powerful cosmic accidents in the Universe.

This is why philosophers have long explained God's tolerance of evil by way of "free will." Yes, I know it sounds clichéd now to some, but my explanation won't be. So why is free will so important that God would allow profound evil in its name?

Imagine you could have a computer chip implanted in your child's brain that would control his behavior



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(something perhaps possible in the foreseeable future). No more terrible twos or toddler tantrums, no disobedience, no crying, no frowns, no shirking of responsibility — just a perfectly agreeable Stepford Child. Would you implant away?

This would defeat the purpose of having a child. Sure, we want our kids to mature into moral beings, but that is impossible if you're merely a *controlled* being. For being moral involves making moral *choices*, and this cannot happen if you have no choice. The chipped child would have been dehumanized, reduced to automaton status via the negation of his free will. You might as well just purchase a cute robot and be done with it.

Think about what is being said here, however: You're willing to tolerate sinful acts in your child — and the possibility of truly horrible behavior — in the name of his being fully human.

God is no different with respect to us, His children. He could completely control us with the snap of divine fingers, but we are then reduced to mere organic robots; we are not then His children, but His things. Note, when it's said we're created in God's image, this does not refer to our physical being but that, like God, we have *intellect and free will*. Remove either quality and we're mere animals.

(Speaking of which, it's hard to imagine even a pet owner chipping his dog; we'd likely feel that this would eliminate his "dogness" and wouldn't want to use perverted science to accomplish what training should.)

Then there is the matter of love, which is represented in action: Loving attitudes beget loving acts. When someone serves us — whether it's a spouse bringing home the bacon or serving it, or a child doing chores — we're by far most pleased if it's done in a spirit of love because the person wants to make us happy (yes, much to expect in a child!). It doesn't touch us in the same way if the work is performed out of a mere sense of obligation; worse still is if the person is acting as a slave, compelled to labor against his will. Most of us wouldn't even want to be served under those circumstances.

God is no different. He wants us to serve Him as a representation of our love (not because He needs our love and service, but because we need to love and serve Him), and trumping our free will would defeat that purpose. It would reduce us to not just slaves, but those organic robots.

Some may now say that this is all well and good, but aren't there limits to free will's abuse? When people are being burned alive and children massacred, don't you draw a line? The answer is that God is far more logical and consistent than we are.

We talk about "freedom of speech" but then set limits on what can be said; we trumpet "freedom of religion" but then draw lines at certain practices (e.g., human sacrifice). I'm not implying that such lines aren't sometimes necessary, mind you, only pointing out that once they're drawn, it follows that we aren't actually allowing true "freedom of religion." But God means what He says and says what He means. Free will is just that: *free* will. It's absolute. Besides, He makes the rules, but their application and enforcement are our business — in this world.

This brings us to the last point: worldliness. Too often we analyze faith-based propositions while coupling them with atheistic corollaries. We may wonder, for example, how a just and loving God could allow the deaths of large numbers of children in free will's name. But He doesn't.

He gave the children life, and upon leaving this fold they pass on to eternal life.

I know, this sounds like a handy rationalization to modernistic ears. But we are discussing matters within the context of the Judeo-Christian worldview, no? In other words, people could question the data



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— that God and the afterlife are real, etc. — but that is a different question. The logic when operating within this data set, however, is unassailable. To wit: What is this temporal life as compared to eternity? It's as a grain of sand in a desert or a drop of water in an ocean. It's eternity that matters. And if slaughtered children pass on to a far, far better place, God has done them no disservice.

I don't want to seem unfeeling; I react to worldly horrors much as does everyone else. And it's understandable: This world is all we know firsthand. The hell we so often create on it we see and hear, as it accosts our senses; we feel it. Heaven is generally just something we try to apprehend intellectually. And the heart has seductions the mind cannot match.

There is something we can do, however. Even if we don't feel certain truths on an emotional level, we can choose to believe them. That is a proper exercise of free will — one that lends much happiness and meaning to the life God gave us.

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