



(6) However, through the long **process** of evolution (like an artist taking time over his creation) God is slowly shaping this material by **persuasion** to express the Divine Will and become a reflection of His goodness, holiness and compassion.

(7) The problem of **Natural Evil** is therefore dissolved. God is not omnipotent. He is limited by the independent nature of the material with which he has to work and he is not therefore responsible for its nature or the limits this nature puts on what can be created.

AN EXPLANATION FOR MORAL EVIL

(1) The next key question that needs to be addressed is **Why didn't God create beings who were like God in every way, i.e. having God's capacity for intelligence, freedom and morality, and who at the same time (like God) never did anything wrong?**

(2) Well once again the answer is that he couldn't and that's because we are made out of the **chaotic stuff** that is in many ways independent of God

and which will only bend to His will by a process of persuasion, i.e. evolution. It was not therefore possible for God to boss it around and simply create a perfect being. Instead, God is limited to persuading this stuff to be more like Him by leading it (through evolution) towards complexity and so to the possibility of perfection.

(3) For example, God has created from this **stuff** simple items like electrons, atoms and molecules. These all have a certain independence from God. However, God has persuaded (through evolution) these simple items to develop into shapes that continually increase towards complexity, i.e. sand, water, rocks, mountains, plants, insects, reptiles, birds, animals and human beings.

(4) Human beings are currently the most complex item in this evolutionary process and God has steered evolution in this direction because complexity is a requirement of this **stuff** becoming perfect and that's because the complexity of our brains makes us uniquely aware of **goodness** (unlike any other item in the world, e.g. atoms,

rocks, animals) and gives us the capacity to enjoy the richness of its experience.

(5) The downside is that this complexity also leads to more independence from God and so gives us the capacity to dismiss His Will (in a way that other items in the world can't) and create for ourselves and others the most awful forms of suffering (like the Holocaust).

(6) However, in spite of this capacity for evil, God is now able to persuade this stuff (as expressed in the shape of human beings) to express goodness, enjoy the richness of its experience and struggle towards perfection.

(7) Now some would argue that a perfectly good God would never have started the process of evolution because it has created the most appalling suffering for the creatures that it has produced. However, the moral aim of God is not to avoid suffering but to produce good and because of the nature of the stuff with which God must work it is impossible to have goodness without suffering.

(8) This of course raises the question of whether

the good that will be produced in this process will ever justify the suffering that has happened in this world. David Griffin, a supporter of Process Theodicy, responds to this question in the following way:

I cannot imagine that I would ever conclude that the evils of life have been so great that it would have been better had life never emerged, or that the evils of human life, as horrendous as they have been (and quite possibly the worst still to come), are such that it would have been better had human life never been created (Stephen Davis, ed., *Encountering Evil*, T&T Clark, 1981, p.110).

(9) He supports this conclusion with one other conviction, that God shares all our suffering in the same sort of way as all human beings share the pains of the various bits of their bodies. So while every advance in God's creation towards more complexity has been a risk (because greater sufferings are made possible) this has never been a risk which God has urged us to run alone. It