



The Free Will Defense and the Problem of Heavenly Freedom

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Abstract

According to the logical problem of evil, the co-existence of evil and the theistic God who is considered to be omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent is impossible. The fact that our world contains evils invalidates the existence of the theistic God. A libertarian theistic response to this problem, the free will defense, holds that if God actually has or could have a sufficient reason to actualize a world containing evils, the problem fails. This good reason, according to the defense, might be significant freedom, the freedom to choose between moral good and evil. Yujin Nagasawa, Graham Oppy, and Nick Trakakis, however, approach this debate from a different angle and argue that the traditional theistic view of heaven is a problem for this theistic response when we ask whether there is freedom in heaven. They contend that if the inhabitants of heaven do not have significant freedom, free will cannot be a great good that gives God a good reason to create a world containing evils. Thus, the free will defense fails. In this paper, I claim that this is mistaken. I argue that even though the inhabitants of heaven are not free in the most robust sense (i.e. they are no longer capable of sinning), this does not show that significant freedom is not a great good that justifies God's creating a world containing evils.

Keywords: Free Will Defense, Freedom, Heaven, Good, Evil.

Özgür İrade Savunusu ve Cennet'te Özgür İrade Sorunu

Öz

Mantıksal kötülük problemine göre, mutlak bilgi, mutlak kudret ve mutlak iyilik sahibi bir teistik Tanrı'nın varlığı ile kötülüğün varlığının bir arada olması mantıksal olarak imkânsızdır. Evrenimizde kötülük var olduğuna göre, teistik bir Tanrı'nın olmadığı sonucuna varabiliriz. Bu probleme liberteryen teistik bir cevap olan Özgür İrade Savunusu, Tanrı kötülüğün var olduğu bir evren/dünya yaratmak için iyi bir nedene sahipse, kötülük probleminin başarısız olacağını savunmaktadır. Ahlaki iyilik ile kötülük arasında seçimi sağlayan liberteryen özgür iradenin de bu iyi neden olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Yujin Nagasawa, Graham Oppy ve Nick Trakakis bu tartışmaya farklı bir zaviyeden yaklaşım cennette özgür iradenin olup olmadığı sorununun özgür irade

savunusuna geleneksel teistik cennet anlayışıyla bir arada ele alındığında bir problem teşkil edeceğini öne sürmektedirler. Cennet ehli, ahlaki iyilik ile kötülük arasında seçim yapmasını sağlayabilecek bir liberteryen özgür iradeye sahip değilse, özgür irade Tanrı'ya kötülüğü de barındıran bir dünya yaratmasına iyi bir gerekçe sunacak kadar değerli bir şey olamaz gibi görünmektedir. Bu da bizi Özgür İrade Savunusu'nun başarısız olduğu sonucuna götürmektedir. Bu makalede bu çıkarımın hatalı olduğunu, cennet ehlinin ahlaki iyilik ile kötülük arasında seçim yapma özgürlüğüne sahip olmasa da bunun liberteryen özgürlüğün yeterince iyi ve değerli bir şey olmadığını kanıtlayamayacağını savunacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özgür İrade Savunusu, Özgürlük, Cennet, İyilik, Kötülük.

Introduction

According to traditional theism, God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent. The logical problem of evil holds that the existence of evil in the world is logically incompatible with the existence of the theistic God. For if God were omniscient, he would know how to prevent the existence of evil. If he were omnipotent, he would have the power to prevent its existence. And if he were omnibenevolent, he would always prefer a better option with respect to actualizing worlds such as preferring to actualize a world containing no evil instead of preferring our world in which evil exists. It seems then that the fact that there exists evil in the world makes the existence of the theistic God logically impossible. As a libertarian theistic response to the logical problem of evil, the free will defense holds that if it is possible that God has a good reason for allowing the existence of evil, the logical problem of evil fails. The good reason, according to this account, is the goodness (or the value) of free will. If moral goodness requires significantly free moral creatures who choose between morally right and wrong actions, then that provides an omnibenevolent being with a sufficient reason to create free beings and thus to permit evil.¹ Since it is logically impossible for God to give free will to rational agents but also determine them in a way that they can never do evil, God could not have created a world that contains free beings without allowing the possibility of the existence of moral evils.

However, in their article "Salvation In Heaven?", Yujin Nagasawa, Graham Oppy, and Nick Trakakis approach this debate from a different angle and argue that the traditional theistic view of heaven is a problem for this theistic response to the logical problem of evil when we ask whether there is freedom in heaven.² On the one hand, they reason, if there is no libertarian freedom in heaven (a place in which there are incommensurably greater goods than earthly goods), free will cannot be a great good that gives God a good reason

¹ Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, 166–167.

² Yujin Nagasawa, et al., "Salvation In Heaven?."

to create a world containing evils.³ The free will defense then fails. On the other hand, if the inhabitants of heaven have libertarian freedom that requires the ability of choosing between morally good and bad actions, the traditional theistic account of heaven which assumes impossibility of the existence of evils in heaven is wrong. Thus, since the libertarian theist finds herself in a dilemma, she can either endorse the free will defense or the theistic account of heaven but not both. I argue that the theist can avoid the given dilemma and can still plausibly hold both accounts if she shows first that a world containing both earthly stage (with significantly free creatures who can choose between morally good and bad actions) and heavenly stage (with free creatures who can choose only between morally good actions) might be more valuable than its alternatives (such as creating a world with only a heavenly stage) and second, the significant freedom is a great good even if it is not realized in the heavenly stage.⁴

1. The Problem

In his book *God, Freedom and Evil*,⁵ Alvin Plantinga offers the free will defense against the logical problem of evil and claims that free will is a sufficient reason for God to permit the existence of evils.⁶ Plantinga also claims that a world that contains both the stage of earth (that includes free creatures producing all moral goods and evils) and the stage of heaven “is more valuable, all else being equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all.”⁷ Therefore, God could have a good reason to create a world containing evils in the stage of earth because free will makes such a world more valuable than a world that does not contain freedom at all.

It seems then that since the existence of free creatures makes a world more valuable than a world containing no freedom, it can be said that

³ One might think that while the traditional theistic view of heaven entails some serious problems for libertarian freedom which is incompatible with theological determinism, it does not do so for compatibilist account of freedom which is compatible with theological determinism. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept the latter and deny the former in order to show that the inhabitant of heaven can be free even if she is determined by either God or the circumstances in heaven to do only good actions. Since the discussion between libertarian and compatibilist accounts of freedom is beyond the scope of this paper, I shall deny compatibilist account of freedom without providing an argument. I shall however note that unlike the compatibilist account of freedom, the advantage of the libertarian account of freedom is that it is a more plausible account in explaining why God does not prevent the existence of all earthly evils. The libertarian free will defense, then, is a critical tool that the theist should not easily give up.

⁴ In this paper, I will claim that we need the first argument only if it is true that an omnibenevolent God must always choose the best option he has.

⁵ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*.

⁶ Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, 30.

⁷ Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, 166. Also see Plantinga’s view on whether there will be free will in heaven: “Will There Be Free Will in Heaven?,” YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWsDZzTIWhw> (28.02.2023).

freedom is a great good (let us call this the good of freedom). There also seems to be another aspect of the good of freedom: no earthly good but the good of freedom can bring about moral goods and evils produced freely.⁸ The libertarian theist, thus, might claim that God has a good reason to create a world containing the good of freedom that produces all moral goods even if it produces moral evils too. Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis, however, argue that the libertarian theists face a problem with respect to the question whether there is libertarian (significant) freedom in heaven. Their argument from heavenly freedom is as follows:

1. Necessarily, there is no evil in Heaven (Premise, justified by appeal to the orthodox conception of Heaven.)⁹
2. If there is morally significant freedom in Heaven, then it is not the case that, necessarily, there is no evil in Heaven. (Premise, justified by appeal to the libertarian conception of freedom.)
3. (Therefore) There is no morally significant freedom in Heaven. (From 1, 2)
4. Heaven is a domain in which the greatest goods are realized. (Premise, justified by appeal to the orthodox conception of Heaven.)
5. (Therefore) The greatest goods can be realised in a domain in which there is no morally significant freedom. (From 3, 4.)
6. (Therefore) A perfect being can just choose to make a domain that contains the greatest good and no evil. (From 5, appealing to the omnipotence of a perfect being.)
7. A world that contains the greatest goods and no evil is non-arbitrarily better than any world that contains the greatest goods, incomparably lesser goods, and the amounts and kinds of evils that are found in our universe. (Premise.)
8. If a perfect being chooses between options, and one option is non-arbitrarily better than the other options, then the perfect being chooses that option. (Premise)
9. (Therefore) It is not the case that a perfect being made our universe. (From 6, 7, 8)¹⁰

⁸ In the last section, I will add that it is also a great good because only the good of freedom in the stage of earth can make possible some great goods in heaven.

⁹ Quran, for example, holds that there is no rancor (7/al-A'rāf:43), fear or grieve (7/ al-A'rāf:49), death or suffering (44/ad-Dukhān:56), or idle talk (19/Maryam:62) in heaven. Since God will also remove any temptation to desire or do something bad in the hearts of the inhabitants of heaven (7/al-A'rāf:43), the heavenly stage we are considering here is different from the one in which Adam and Eve dwelled.

¹⁰ Nagasawa et al., "Salvation In Heaven?," 101-102.

They note that several responses might be provided: one might reject either Premise 1 (by not endorsing the orthodox conception of Heaven), or Premise 2 (by appealing to the compatibilist conception of freedom),¹¹ or Premise 4 (again by not endorsing the orthodox conception of Heaven).¹²

Since I accept both Premise 1 and Premise 2,¹³ I will not raise any objection to those premises. I will however claim that since premises 4, 7, and 8 are false, the conclusion of the argument that a perfect being has not made our universe is false too. Let's call the objection to Premise 4 "the Greatest Goods Objection" and the objection to the premises 7 and 8 "the Better Choice Objection". Let's start with the latter one.

2. The Better Choice Objection

Suppose, as Plantinga and most contemporary libertarian theists maintain, that there is no best world but instead infinitely many surpassable worlds. Suppose also that God wants to actualize one of the following worlds: W_h , W_{eh} , and W_e . W_h is a possible world containing only heaven: a place in which there are states of affairs that are great goods but no free creatures producing moral goods and evils. W_{eh} has two stages, namely earth and heaven. In this world, the stage of heaven is not the same heaven as in the first possible world because it additively contains some people who have deserved to be there and have freely-chosen friendships with God.¹⁴ Lastly, W_e is a possible world containing nothing but earthly stage: a place in which there are some states of affairs that are goods and free creatures producing moral goods and evils. It is clear that since, unlike W_e , both W_h and W_{eh} contain heavenly goods, they surpass W_e . So, there seems to be a good reason for God to actualize either W_h or W_{eh} instead of W_e . According to the argument from heavenly freedom, since W_h is better than W_{eh} , a perfect being would prefer to actualize the former but not the latter. But since we have found

¹¹ James F. Sennett has attempted to show that though the inhabitants of heaven do not have significant freedom in a libertarian sense, they can still enjoy it in a compatibilist sense while not being able to sin provided that the actions of the inhabitants are determined by their characters. See: James F. Sennett, "Is There Freedom in Heaven?" For an extended and libertarian version of this view, see: Timothy Pawl and Kevin Timpe "Incompatibilism, Sin, and Free Will in Heaven."

¹² Nagasawa et al., "Salvation In Heaven?," 98.

¹³ I shall note here that though I think that there is no significant freedom in the heavenly stage, I believe that the inhabitants of heaven will still enjoy a more limited but a better kind of libertarian freedom: being the source of their actions and being able to choose between only morally, rationally, or aesthetically good and beautiful (but not morally wrong or bad) alternatives.

¹⁴ In this paper, by following Richard Swinburne's argument from God's friendship, I will claim that freely-chosen friendship with some evil is better than non-freely-chosen friendship without evil. He says, "The principal occupation of heaven is the enjoyment of the friendship of God. This has been traditionally described as the "Beatific Vision" of God. Aquinas stresses that this "vision" is an act of ours, not merely something that happens to us." Richard Swinburne, "A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell," 41.

ourselves either in W_{eh} (assuming the theistic view that we are in W_{eh}) or in W_e , our universe was not created by a perfect being.

I think there are two flaws with this line of reasoning. The first flaw is to hold that God must always choose the best option he has. And the second flaw is to claim that W_h is better than W_{eh} . Let's start with the former one. Notice that Premise 8 assumes William Rowe's Principle B: "If an omniscient being creates a world when there is a better world it could have created, then it is possible that there exists a being morally better than it."¹⁵ Rowe's principle, I think, rests on what Dean Zimmerman calls "the expression principle": the value of one's choice necessarily expresses the goodness of one's character.¹⁶ Rowe's principle and thus Premise 8 assume that if an omnibenevolent God has two options namely A and B, God must always choose A provided that A is better than B. I agree with Zimmerman that the expression principle is false. If God, as the theist maintains, has a robust agency, the rational and moral reasons for an action in the divine case cannot play any causal role in producing actions or decisions. God's merely having *more* reasons to actualize a world cannot necessarily show that he *must* actualize that world; it can only give more inclinations. For, even though substances have causal powers and liabilities through their properties, an agent's causal activity is not reducible to properties but to its substance which is the holder of properties. The attributes of a rational agent (i.e. a rational substance) then cannot ultimately cause the agent to do a certain action, provided that she has control over her action. Therefore, since God, as a being who has a robust control over his actions, is not determined by his properties, we have no reason to suppose that he must be a value maximizer.¹⁷ For example, God's having good enough reasons (such as the fact that any world necessarily has a defect) to refrain from creating anything at all (and thus actualizing the bare world)¹⁸ is sufficient to show that it is logically possible for God to satisfy by refraining to actualize our world, given his nature.¹⁹ If God has some considerations to choose an inferior

¹⁵ William L. Rowe, *Can God Be Free?*, 91. I shall note here that what Rowe attempts to show with Principle B is that since our world has a defect such as containing evils, it cannot be created by an omnibenevolent God who is supposed to create the best of all possible worlds.

¹⁶ Dean Zimmerman, "Ever Better Situations and the Failure of Expression Principles," 409.

¹⁷ For the attribute omnibenevolence does not cause him to always choose a morally valuable action.

¹⁸ If God decides not to create anything at all, there is still an actual world that can be called the bare world. The bare world contains God, numbers, and the like but nothing created.

¹⁹ There is a distinction between world-actualization and creation. For, as Klaas J. Kraay notes, "creation occurs when God causes it to be the case that some spatiotemporal entity is actual, but not every instance of world-actualization need involve this." Klaas J. Kraay, "Creation, Actualization and God's choice among Possible Worlds," 856. For a detailed discussion on the distinction between creation and actualization, see: Alvin Plantinga, "Which Worlds Could God have Created?"; and Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*.

world (such as aesthetical reasons), his choosing so does not necessarily threaten his omnibenevolence. Therefore, we seem to have a good reason to reject Premise 8.

But, for the sake of argument, assume that Rowe's principle and thus Premise 8 are true.²⁰ Assume also that God cannot have any consideration that can ground his choosing an inferior world. These assumptions seem to require that a perfect being did not create our world provided that Premise 7 is true. I will argue that this is mistaken. For the proponents of the free will defense like myself, since W_{eh} is better than W_h , Premise 7 is false despite the given assumptions. So, even if God's omnibenevolence requires him to choose always a better option, it is false that he did not create our world. For, if Premise 7 is false and W_{eh} is better than W_h , we have the following premise instead of Premise 7:

7*. A world that contains the greatest goods, incomparably lesser goods, and the amounts and kinds of evils that are found in our universe is better than any world that contains the greatest goods and no evil.

And then,

8. If a perfect being chooses between options, and one option is non-arbitrarily better than the other options, then the perfect being chooses that option. (Premise)

9*. (Therefore) It is possible that a perfect being made our universe. (From 6, 7*, 8)

Notice that since W_h is a possible world that contains only heaven, there exist no moral good produced by significantly free creatures. Further, there cannot be any creature who has deserved to be there or who has freely-chosen friendship with God. In this world, there are only states of affairs that are great goods. However, unlike W_h , W_{eh} is a world in which there are not only all heavenly goods of W_h , but also creatures who have deserved to be there and who have freely-chosen friendship with God built in the earthly stage. Moreover, there are both moral and non-moral earthly goods. So, it seems that W_{eh} has more goods than W_h .

One might, however, object that since W_h contains no evil at all while in W_{eh} , there exist moral evils produced by free creatures, there is a good reason for God to choose the former instead of the latter. Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis, for example, argue that the earthly goods (states of affairs that are goods, the good of freedom, and moral goods produced by libertarian

²⁰ We are here not assuming the truth of Rowe's principle in a general sense that can threaten the possibility of any divine rational choice on infinitely many surpassable worlds but instead are assuming it in a particular sense with respect to three divine creative choices: actualize either W_{eh} , W_h , or W_e .

freedom) are considered incommensurably lesser goods by comparison with the goods of heaven. Furthermore, the amount of earthly evils is comparable to (if not more than) the amount of earthly goods. Therefore, there is a good reason for God to prefer W_h over W_{eh} .²¹

The proponents of the free will defense, I think, might plausibly respond that if it is logically possible that the amount of earthly goods outweighs the amount of moral and natural evils in the stage of the earth (the earthly evils), it is false that W_h is better than W_{eh} .²² It is also possible that earthly evils outweigh earthly goods. Nevertheless, if the proponents of the free will defense against the logical problem of evil like Plantinga only need to prove that if it is *possible* that earthly goods outweigh earthly evils, then the free will defense against the logical problem of evil does not fail. They only need to claim that it is *possibly true* that earthly goods outweigh earthly evils because they are trying to show what can be a *possible reason* for God to create a world containing evils.²³ So, it is *possible* that W_h has x number of heavenly goods and W_{eh} has x number of heavenly goods, y number of the earthly goods, and z number of the earthly evils that are outweighed by y number of the earthly goods. In both alternatives, x number of heavenly goods are greater than y number of earthly goods because heaven is supposed to have greater goods than earth. This means that though W_{eh} contains earthly evils, it is still better than the first one: $[x+(y-z)] > x$.²⁴ So, premise 7* is true but not premise 7.

Thus, in W_{eh} , earthly goods can outweigh earthly evils if free creatures use their free will to do moral goods more often than moral evils. Therefore, freedom can be considered a great good if the stage of earth turns out well.

²¹ Nagasawa et al., "Salvation In Heaven?," 114.

²² We might consider this comparison in both qualitative and quantitative sense.

²³ On the other hand, I think the free will theodiscists need to show that it is *really true* that the earthly goods outweigh the earthly evils since they, unlike the proponent of the free will defense, try to show what is *the real reason* (rather than possible reason) for God to create a world containing evils but not a world containing no evil at all. However, it seems that the free will theodiscist can prove the claim that the earthly goods really outweigh the earthly evils only by having knowledge of all parts of the earthly stage. I think such an attempt is impossible because of our limited epistemic abilities. If this is a problem for the free will theodiscist with regard to the problems posed by the theistic view of heaven, I think it is a problem for Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis too. Therefore, they cannot criticize the free will defense by referring to such a problem. Moreover, the free will theodiscist might claim that even if the earthly evils outweigh earthly goods, God still has a good reason to create a world containing both stages of earth and heaven. If the good of freedom can make possible a supreme value which is an incommensurably greater good than both earthly and heavenly goods, then earthly evils will be outweighed by that supreme value.

²⁴ I shall note that I do not claim that W_{eh} is "the best of all possible worlds". As Stephen T. Davis has pointed out, it is easy to imagine worlds better than the actual world but "what the free-will defender must insist upon is, first, that the amount of evil that in the end will exist will be outweighed by the good that will exist, and, second, that this favorable balance of good over evil was obtainable by God in no other way." Stephen T. Davis, "Free Will and Evil," 76.

For, it seems to provide a good reason for God to allow even the existence of evils. However, as I have already pointed out, the proponents of the free will defense, unlike the proponent of the free will theodicy, only need to prove that it is *possible* that the stage of earth will turn out well. In the next section, I will claim that the libertarian theist can plausibly hold that since W_h lacks some goods produced by free choices that the heavenly stage in W_{eh} contains, the heavenly stage of W_{eh} is better than W_h . This provides another reason to contend that freedom is a great good even if it is not realized in the heavenly stage.

3. The Greatest Goods Objection

As noted above, since I consider both Premise 1 and Premise 2 true, I agree that the inhabitants of heaven do not have significant freedom that requires ability to choose between morally right and wrong. So, Premise 3 is also true. I, however, think that appealing to the theistic conception of heaven does not have any implication to hold Premise 4. Why then does the proponent of the problem of heavenly freedom consider Premise 4 true? What they take as the orthodox theistic view of heaven is as follows:

...Heaven is a place in which there is no evil, and Heaven is also a place that overflows with good. On the one hand, there are neither natural evils nor moral evils in Heaven. On the other hand, there are goods in Heaven that are very much greater—‘incomparably’, ‘infinitely greater’—than the goods that are available during life on Earth.²⁵

This account of heaven, they reason, entails that Heaven is a stage in which the greatest goods are realized. Recall that the libertarian theist contends the view that significant freedom is a great good that gives God a justified reason to create a world containing moral evils. According to the proponent of the argument from heavenly freedom, if the libertarian theist were right about the good of freedom and if the above account of heaven is true, then significant freedom should have been among the greatest goods that are realized in Heaven. But since the existence of significant freedom is not realized in Heaven, it cannot be one of the greatest goods. The good of freedom then is not great enough that can justify God’s permitting the existence of evil on Earth.²⁶

I think though it is true that the theistic account of heaven holds that the goods in the heavenly stage are much greater than the goods in the earthly stage, it is false that this account entails that all the greatest goods are realized in the heavenly stage. Notice that if the libertarian theist does not

²⁵ Nagasawa et al., “Salvation In Heaven?,” 97.

²⁶ Nagasawa et al., “Salvation In Heaven?,” 114.

endorse the view that our world is the best of all possible worlds, she needs to hold neither that the goods in our world (either in the earthly stage or in the heavenly stage) are the greatest goods nor that all types/kinds of goods are realized in our world. If we are to hold that there are infinitely many surpassable worlds, then since for any world, there is a better world, it seems that even if the theist contends that the goods in the heavenly stage are much greater than the goods in the earthly stage, she does not claim that all the greatest goods are realized either in the earthly stage or the heavenly stage. Since the total value of any world is surpassable, the total value of the heavenly stage or of the earthly stage is surpassable as well.

One might object that what Premise 4 implies is that all types/kinds of greatest goods are realized in Heaven but not that they are realized in a maximal sense. I think this is clearly mistaken. The theist might plausibly reject this account of heaven which entails the idea that an earthly good can be a great good if and only if it has continuity in both stages. I think, however, there is no good reason to suppose that every important and great earthly good must be a continued good. An earthly good can be important and great if it is a main component or a *sine qua non* of a valuable world. And it does not matter whether it is continued or not in both stages.²⁷

For example, NASA's space shuttle system is made up of three main components: two solid rocket boosters, an external tank, and an orbiter. Even though two solid rocket boosters and the external tank are the main components of the space shuttle system and no mission can succeed without them, they are jettisoned from the orbiter after the first eight minutes of flight. Here I think it does not seem to make sense claiming that the solid rocket boosters and the external tank are not important for the success of the mission. It is clear that if they are not jettisoned, it is not possible (at least with regard to recent scientific facilities) for the orbiter to achieve its mission. So, their importance does not depend on whether they are continued or jettisoned; instead, their importance depends on whether they are essential for the succession of the mission.

For the same reason, the importance and greatness of the good of freedom do not rely on whether the good of freedom is continued in every stage of a

²⁷ One might, for instance, argue that forgiving a person who harms you is a great good in the stage of earth but since no one can do evil in heaven, this good just as the good of freedom will not be one of the heavenly goods. So, since there can be many earthly non-continued great goods like the good of freedom, freedom is not a particularly non-continued great good that gives God a good reason to create a world containing evils. Forgiving or seeking justice in a general sense can be considered non-continued great good but what unique about the good of freedom is that it is a necessary condition of moral goods and responsibility. Further, it does not only have a moral value but also has a great non-moral value such as aesthetical value.

world.²⁸ Rather, it relies on whether it can make a possible world more valuable than others with respect to some divine considerations. If the good of freedom makes W_{eh} more preferable than W_h for God to create, then this fact is enough for it to be a great good.²⁹ Therefore, the good of freedom does not need to be a continued good in order to be a great good. So, the absence of significant freedom in heaven does not affect its importance and greatness.

So far, I have claimed that the good of freedom can make the stage of earth a valuable stage, and thus makes W_{eh} a preferable world for God to create. Now, I shall argue that the good of freedom in W_{eh} can make its stage of heaven contain more great goods than the goods in W_h . First, it is clear that heaven W_h cannot contain creatures who deserve to be there by their free moral choices. So, the inhabitants of W_h would never be significantly free and thus would never deserve to be its occupants. God could create significantly free creatures in heaven only by allowing the possibility of evils. On the other hand, even if there is no freedom, the stage of heaven in W_{eh} can contain creatures who have deserved to be there by their free choices and actions produced in the stage of earth. It seems then plausible that the value of the existence of creatures in heaven who have deserved to be there is greater than the value of the existence of creatures in heaven who have never deserved to be there. Even though it is a good thing to be in heaven in any case for creatures (i.e. regardless of whether they deserve it or not), it is still the case that being somewhere or having something deservedly is better than the opposite. So, there is a good reason to take the existence of creatures who have deserved to be in heaven as a great good with regard to their libertarian free choices even if they are no longer significantly free in heaven.³⁰ If so, the existence of the good of freedom in the stage of earth can still have an important impact in heaven by causing the existence of a great good.

Second, the good of freedom in the stage of earth can make a supreme value possible, which is the good of eternal friendship with God in heaven. For example, in his "A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell", Richard Swinburne points out that:

If the world depends for its being on God, a personal ground of being, the fullest development of understanding will be growth in the understanding of the nature of God himself. Friendship is of great value

²⁸ I do not claim that there is a necessary connection between those two examples. It is clear that there could be some scientific developments by which an orbiter would not need other features at all. I use the case of the space shuttle system only as an (perhaps imperfect) analogy.

²⁹ As noted above, none of earthly goods can produce all moral goods except for the good of freedom. So, not everything among earthly goods can be a great good just because it contributes value to a world.

³⁰ This however should not imply that God's grace is not a necessary condition of entering heaven.

to a man when his friends are good people, who take an interest in him and are enjoyable company in virtue of their kindness and ability to keep him interested. Friendship with God would be of supreme value, for he is (by definition) perfectly good and, being (by definition) omnipotent and omniscient, will ever be able to hold our interest by showing us new facets of reality and above all his own nature.³¹

Swinburne argues that the principal occupation of heaven is not the enjoyment of some pleasures but the enjoyment of friendship of God. This vision is not something beyond our choices but rather is something we have acted upon.³² He also adds that it is compatible with the goodness of God to allow *a man to choose the sort of person he will be*.³³ So, it seems that libertarian freedom is an essential thing for the enjoyment of eternal friendship with God. Though there is no significant freedom in heaven, the freedom on earth makes possible the good of enjoying eternal friendship with God. Thus, it seems plausible to contend that eternal friendship with God in the heavenly stage requires libertarian freedom in the earthly stage.

Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis, however, object that even if we suppose that the good of entering into eternal friendship with God requires libertarian freedom, the continued friendship with God in heaven does not require it. If, they reason, continued friendship with God is possible without libertarian freedom in heaven, then God could create beings who have always had continued friendship with God and thus could prevent the existence of all moral evils. Therefore, God could choose to actualize W_h in which there are beings who have always had non-freely-chosen continued friendship with God and no evil. They add that “given freedom is merely a finite and extrinsic good, if a perfect being can choose between non-freely-chosen friendship without evil, and the freely-chosen friendship with evil, then it will choose the former.”³⁴

I have argued that freedom is not a small and extrinsic good but a great and intrinsic good. I have also attempted to show that although freedom is an earthly and non-continued good, this does not mean that it is not a great good. In section two, I claimed that if earthly goods outweigh earthly evils, then the existence of evils in the stage of the earth cannot make W_{eh} (a place in which there are not only heavenly goods but also earthly goods) less valuable than W_h (a place in which there are only heavenly goods). Now, I shall show that a perfect being would not choose non-freely-chosen

³¹ Swinburne, “A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell,” 41.

³² Swinburne, “A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell,” 41.

³³ Swinburne, “A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell,” 52.

³⁴ Nagasawa et al., “Salvation In Heaven?,” 115.

friendship without evil over freely-chosen friendship with evil. So, here, I only need to show that freely-chosen friendship with God plus evil is preferable to non-freely-chosen friendship without evil.

It is clear that a genuine friendship is a relationship between at least two persons who both are actively involved in building and enjoying that friendship. There is a bilateral, not unilateral, relationship between those friends. However, it seems that non-freely-chosen friendship cannot have a bilateral relationship because one side of the friendship has never been free to want to enjoy that friendship or to reject it. Creatures in heaven who have never been free are determined by God to have friendship with Him. There is no possibility for them to reject that friendship or want to have it. The reason might be that God gives them a certain nature that makes having bad inclinations or desires impossible. Or it might be that God creates heaven with an essence that makes its inhabitants unable to choose evil and thus reject a friendship with God. Whatever the reason is, it must be clear that those inhabitants don't have a freely-built-friendship with God. If it is much better and more plausible for friends to achieve their friendship voluntarily, a friendship with God requires a voluntarily bilateral relationship as well. Therefore, God does have a good reason to prefer a freely-chosen friendship over a non-freely-chosen "friendship" without evil. The former indeed comes with a certain amount of moral evil since it requires significant freedom in the earthly stage but as noted above, if I am right that it is possible that moral goods will outweigh moral evils, the theistic God might have a good reason to choose a freely-chosen friendship over a non-freely-chosen friendship.

Notice that significant freedom makes a bilateral genuine relationship between God and creatures possible not only in the earthly stage but also in the heavenly stage. In the case of freely-chosen friendship, free creatures can choose to have a friendship with God by their significant free choices on earth. God gives an opportunity to those creatures to build a friendship with God in the earthly stage and then enjoy it eternally in the heavenly stage. So, there is a good reason for God to manifest a principle stating that in order to have His eternal friendship in the heavenly stage, free creatures must deserve it by their free choices and actions on the earthly stage. Notice that unlike in W_{eh} , in W_h there is not eternally enjoyed freely-chosen friendship with God. Since the inhabitants of W_h are not significantly free, they cannot freely build and maintain a friendship with God. W_h then lacks a great supreme value of a freely-chosen friendship. God, thus, does create a better world (a place in which there is a supreme value that is a freely-chosen friendship between God and free creatures) by actualizing W_{eh} . So, even if we assume that an omnibenevolence God must always choose a better option,

he does choose a better world by creating W_{eh} that contains the good of freely-chosen friendship rather than creating W_h , a world that lacks the value of freely-chosen friendship.

Further, according to the theistic tradition, the notion of free choice is related not only to the notion of friendship with God but also (and I think more importantly) to the notion of faith in God. For example, Quran emphasizes its importance as follows: “Had your Lord so willed [O Prophet], all [people] on earth would have certainly believed, every single one of them! Would you then force people to become believers?”³⁵ This suggests that God could have created a world like W_h but instead preferred to create W_{eh} . His choice, then, has a certain implication: freely-chosen faith and friendship is more preferable than otherwise. God thus prefers a freely-chosen faith and friendship which, unlike non-freely chosen one, bring about a supreme value realized in the earthly stage and eternally in the heavenly stage. Notice that the theist considers the good of faith in God not only one of the greatest good but also greater than many greater goods of the heavenly stage. If, as the libertarian theist maintains, the faith in God necessarily requires significant freedom in the earthly stage and if freely-chosen faith is one of the greatest goods, the objection that significant freedom is not a great good unless it is realized in the heavenly stage fails.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have pointed out that unlike what Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis argue, the free will defense is compatible with the theistic account of heaven. I first claimed that their assumption that the theistic God must always choose the best option he has is false because it rests on the expression principle contending that the value of God’s choice with respect to actualization of a world necessarily expresses the goodness of his character. I argued that the expression principle is implausible. I then maintained that even if we suppose that the given assumption is true, their argument that since creating a world containing both earthly and heavenly goods is less valuable than a world containing only heavenly goods, a perfect being did not create our world is unsound. Second, I argued that though significant freedom that requires ability to choose between morally good and evil is not realized in the heavenly stage, it still can be considered a great good. I suggested that in order to be a great good, the good of freedom does not need to be a continued good realized in both the earthly stage and the heavenly stage. I then contended that even if significant freedom is not realized in the heavenly stage, it makes some great goods possible in that

³⁵ “The Clear Quran: 10/Yūnus: 99,” <https://quran.com/10?startingVerse=99> (28.02.2023).

stage such as the great goodness of freely-chosen eternal friendship with God. Therefore, I think the problems posed by Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis to the compatibility between the free will defense and the theistic account of heaven are not intractable.³⁶

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