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EXCELLENT STUDENTS' ESSAYS

Jan Huss' Evil God or "Good God!!!???"

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The nature of the universe and the gods has been debated since before written history (I like to think so, anyway). Many argue that god is a good, perfect and just god, others argue against. While I may grace you with my crazy opinions later in the essay, I shall begin by analyzing Jan Huss' conception of god, and the holes I see in his logic if he is to call god good.

I take after David Hume, W.T. Stace, and William James in viewing the universe as knowable and predictable to the senses and the intellect if both are used correctly. While some philosophers argue that nothing is knowable, and there is no necessary relationship between cause and effect, I will say that I don't necessarily disagree. I do however find this opinion to be impractical and useless in daily life, and won't address that anymore here, because I am concerning myself mainly with my understanding of Huss' reality, who believed more like Hume, although Hume came much later. Philosophy is purposeful only if it adds meaning to life; practical in either motivating your actions or in securing piece of mind.

We will start by assuming (as Huss did) that there is an order to the universe. If nothing more, that order is god's order. This order is observable and even measurable in our day to day lives through mathematics and observation. As St. Augustine said "Nothing that happens is out of accordance with nature, there are only things that are

out of our understanding of the accordance with nature." Let's start by defining some elements of the natural world.

Example 1: In a perfectly controlled setting, two atoms are hurtling toward each other. There are obviously an infinite number of possible outcomes to the collision. The atoms could bounce off in one particular direction, or in another. They could fuse together. They could cancel each other out as particles of matter, and form pure energy in the case of matter and anti-matter. One could argue, "You can never know what they are going to do; the eventual outcome". Let me answer by providing another example.

Example 2: In my highschool physics class, we did an experiment where we would roll balls down a ramp, and measure where they would land on the floor below. By altering the weight of the ball, the length of the ramp, and other variables, we were able to devise an equation to predict where the ball would land in other circumstances. As David Hume said, "All certainty arises from the comparison of ideas, and from the discovery of such relations as are unalterable, so long as the ideas continue the same. These relations are resemblance, proportions in quantity and number, degrees of any quality, and contrariety."

I'm not wanting to turn this into a philosophical discussion on mathematics, so I will steer us from here. Just as if you rewind a video tape and replay it, every time we rolled the same ball down the same ramp, and with all the other variables being the same, the outcome would be exactly the same. In reality, the ball would never quite land in the same place, but there was always a reason for it, even if it be the minutest change in air viscosity. What I most want to say, is that reality proves itself to be predictable and measurable. Things that human kind could not explain before, can now be explained according to measurements and calculations. Let's go back to the atoms. In a world of an infinite number of different happenings (not really possibilities), it is, for sure, difficult to predict the future. If, in one trial, the atoms bounce off each other in one direction, and, in another trial, they bounce off of each other in another direction, the circumstances must have been different. If everything observable was exactly the same, then the difference must be accounted for in other unmeasurable areas: The neutrons, protons... or even the quarks must have had different charges or rates of rotation or orbits. If you know everything about the atoms down to the smallest detail, then predictions accurate to the smallest detail can be accurately made.

Now let's take the conception of god, for instance, as omniscient. As French astronomer LaPlace agrees: If you assume god knows everything about his created world in this moment, down to the smallest detail, (The bible and Huss assures us he does) then god (he, it) knows the exact outcome of all of us humans. It's equally

reasonable that a god, even if having no memory, would know exactly where we had come from, just like atoms.

Example 3: I call this one the good child/bad child scenario. Let's assume two children are born in parallel universes. One is put into a good Christian home where he grows up playing ball with his dad. Like all dysfunctional American families, he has occasional confrontations, but he grows up to accept the word of god, and god accepts him into heaven. Another child, we'll call him the bad child, grows up in the ghetto, in the worst of circumstances. He is abandoned by his father as a baby, his mother puts him into foster care. The unruly child goes from foster home to foster home through his early years. He learns not to trust people through the occasional beating. When he arrives in a Christian home, he hears the word of god, but because of his untrusting nature, he rejects it. Having rejected god's word, he is then sent (or sends himself) to hell. "There are some children who grow up in circumstances similar to that of the bad child, and they grow up to accept the word of god..." But something must have been different. The exact same child, in the exact same circumstances would have made the exact same decisions (free choices, you may call them), and ended up in hell, just the same. "But human beings are not just atoms..." No, that is quite correct. We are atoms, genetic code, formed personalities with a collection of experiences. Please, add something else to the list if you would like. Does god not know about all of these things down to the infinitesimally small detail, like all of his creations? Did he not create our souls, etc.? If one child in the ghetto goes to heaven, and another child in the ghetto goes to hell, then something, be it the soul, the genetics, the experience... and the choices resulting from those, must have been different.

All of this then brings us to the question: Is it fair? As Huss would say, "Everything in god's kingdom is just and fair". If one (an innocent soul, I'll presume) child ends up going to heaven, and another ends up going to hell (a fate worse than death, "fire and brimstone" for all eternity), is it fair or just? God, as the bible and Huss testify, is omnipotent as well. Why, knowing a soul/child is going to end up going to hell, does he choose to let it be born into a body when he has the foreknowledge and the simple power to stop it? Why does god champion this cause... will it... be the "causa prima"... the "necessitas antecedens"? Why does he allow any pain and suffering in the world if he has the power to stop it? I'll stop my line of questioning there. I don't want to delve too much into the problem of good and evil (although that's really what this essay is.. but we'll pretend it's not for the time being). I also won't bother with the problem of free will versus determinism (although that's really what this essay is, too).

Even if the souls that failed the test that god has created, were simply annihilated or given a second chance, I might have some understanding of Huss' good god. Even the positive idea that all souls learn on their visit to Earth, holds little logic

to me. What good is knowledge and experience if a soul is only to spend the rest of eternity in constant torture (or haunting and torturing as hell's minions sometimes do)? "But Huss believed in a 'causae secundae'; an evil will independent of god's, that is to blame. What of that?" I will say that Huss was illogical, very clearly, on this account. I don't think this needs much more explanation. Is god omniscient or isn't he? Was he not the "causa prima" of Lucifer's existence? Does he not have the omnipotence to stop this will that is against his?

To bring some closure to this debate, let's turn to another philosophical great, Immanuel Kant, who I think possesses a hair's more wisdom and logic. If we measure god by mortal standards, he, for sure, would violate Kant's idea of morality (The Categorical Imperative). How would Huss argue his way out of this one?