



struggle and hardship that allow for us to strive to be more perfect, ideal, quintessential, and improved beings, so in the same motion we must shave off that evil can not be allowed by God if we are to struggle at all, because evil creates the bulk of what we struggle against, necessitated by free will and the morality to act against evil. Therefore, the necessity to test the mettle of man lies in the true observation that man can only improve himself if he is willing to struggle to do so.

Notions of struggle are seen elsewhere, from the Hellenistic era of philosophy in Greece to the modern day with fascist movements gaining traction. Seneca, a stoic philosopher opposing the nature of Epicureanism, explained that, "A gem can not be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials." Or Diogenes offering the necessity of enemies instead of friends to challenge man: "As a matter of self-preservation, a man needs good friends or ardent enemies, for the former instruct him and the latter take him to task." As well, let us consider the words of the christian Saint Philip Neri on God allowing temptation as part of obtaining virtue: "Do not grieve over temptations you suffer. When the Lord intends to bestow a particular virtue on us, He often permits us first to be tempted by the opposite vice. Therefore, look upon every temptation as an invitation to grown in a particular virtue and a promise by God that you will be successful, if only you stand fast." Or perhaps consider a more common one seen in online propaganda by Alexis Carrel: "Man cannot remake himself without suffering, for he is both the marble and the sculptor." In all of these quotes, it is clear that struggle is the premise of obtaining virtue. Struggle is a promise of betterment as long as the person stands fast. So the necessity of evil for God and His creation is to allow man to struggle in order for him to emulate heavenly virtues.

Many, if not most, of you reading this have been to a gym or done vigorous exercise for extended periods of time. How did your muscles feel the first time you worked out a new muscle group? Likely sore. But for the readers that work out frequently, why? Perhaps you just want to be healthy or gain strength as your muscles increase in size. In any case, you struggled as part of your exercise in order to improve yourself, striving for a more ideal and desirable form. Even the readers who do not work out frequently can acknowledge how this struggle leads to better results in physical strength. It is much the same with the attainment of mental fortitude. By broadening our experiences, we harden ourselves to our surroundings. When we gain experiences, we broaden our intuition to borrow from experience rather than devising a new solution. As well, we can use reason to our advantage to steel ourselves in the face of adversity, such as Stoicism teaching to focus on what is within a person's control. Puzzles exist to give the brain a problem to solve, while meditation allows us to emphasize planning and thinking instead of emotion. Challenging and reshaping the mind and body work in our favor to improve ourselves in line with a more perfected version of ourselves in God's image.

So, I have talked at length about self-improvement, but what of evil? How does evil tie into all of this? For every virtue, there is a corresponding vice. Evil exists conceptually and abstractly, so it can never truly be extinguished entirely, except where it is extant and attackable. But it is the presence of evil that we can attack and destroy that will create the necessary challenges to overcome. Wherefore war? To serve in armed conflict against our enemies, but often as well to protect those we love and care about at home. If the soldier views the ultimate good value as what he protects at home, anyone who would invade his home or threaten those he loves implicitly should be labeled as evil to draw

motivation from his loyalty and compassion, turning it into ammunition as hatred on the battlefield. Historical slaves were often not allowed to exercise physically for fear of mutiny against their masters. There is no excuse for us not to make an effort towards self-improvement, therefore, if we are autonomous and in control of ourselves. Thus, if we are aware of evil and capable of destroying it, it is the imperative duty of every morally good man to rebel against, attack, dismantle, etc., it. With great evils come great goods to counter them, seeking the destruction of such evils. As Diogenes put it, ardent enemies are required to put man to the test of his mettle. And as Edmund Burke succinctly stated, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

In conclusion, the existence of evil is necessary to be allowed by God if any man is to be or become good, so that man may bolster his strength, procure virtue, protect those he loves, destroy that which is wicked and evil, etc. While Epicurus' question appears to lead to an infallible tautology, he neglected the nature of struggle as a principle of life for individuals realizing the value of self-improvement.