



Essay title:

Religious ideas do not allow for free will.

Against the statement

- Religious texts can be interpreted to support free will
- Pelagius - example of Mormonism
- Pelagius - an omnipotent God would not punish all human beings through no direct fault of their own
- Arminius - Methodist Church's doctrine on salvation is almost entirely based on Arminian principles - John Wesley taught that a person is free to accept or reject salvation and taught that the Holy Spirit only guides a Christian to their salvation
- Free will supports the idea that God is omnibenevolent as God allows human beings to choose and not act as programmed robots
- Characteristic of God as omnibenevolent (all-loving) and could not condemn all to hell
- Bertrand Russell's argument that a God which predestines is an unjust God

In support of the statement

- Religious texts can be used to argue against free will
- Predestination - Augustine's 'Doctrine of Original Sin' - Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's 'Doctrine of Original Sin' and denounced the opposing view of Pelagius
- Predestination - Calvin's 'Doctrine of Election' - supported by the Synod of Dort
- Free will limits God's omnipotence and implies that a person can decide whether or not for God to give them salvation
- To allow someone control over their own destiny makes them God-like
- Choice is only apparent within the overall framework of God's plan



Quotations

- (Christianity and Judaism) Joshua 24:15: 'But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve....'
- (Christianity) John 8:36: 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed'
- (Islam) Qur'an 54:49: 'Allah then created man, and showed him the two ways, good and evil'
- (Buddhism) Kalama Sutta 'Now, Kalamas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves ... then you should enter & remain in them'
- (Christianity and Judaism) Job 14:5: 'A person's days are determined, you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed'
- (Christianity) Romans 8:29–30: 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those justified, he also glorified'
- (Islam) Qur'an 76:30: 'And you do not will except that Allah wills....'
- (Buddhism) Dhammapada 1:1 'All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind, 'dukkha' follows him just as the wheel follows the hoof print of the ox that draws the cart'
- (Mormonism) Book of Mormon: '... because they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good and evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon ...'
- (Arminius) 'man is not an automaton in the hands of God'
- (Russell) 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral'
- (Pelagius) 'we (human beings) may not seem to be forced to do evil through a fault in our nature'