

Does God's nature include both good and evil?

If God is all that exists, and if nothing exists outside of the presence and consent of God, does that mean that God's nature includes both good and evil?

In my view, yes, it does. It is troubling that my definition of God includes both good and evil aspects. The alternative is a separate omnipotent spiritual entity who created the circumstances in which both good and evil thrive, apparently without lifting a finger to alleviate suffering and evil on earth, at least not any time soon.

Both alternatives are troubling to me. However, under both scenarios, suffering and evil must serve a "good" purpose, if God is good and if God is omnipotent. No matter how you define "God," the problem of evil remains, unless you regard both aspects of God's nature to be necessary in order to achieve or demonstrate a "higher good." I believe, as the Bible attests, that God's "dominant" characteristic is Love. In order to reveal and enhance that aspect of His nature, God's love needs to be contrasted with suffering and evil. Otherwise, love could not be love, at least not as the Bible defines love. "Agape" (self-sacrificing) love cannot possibly exist in a world devoid of suffering and evil. How can sacrifice be possible in a world where sacrifice is not needed? For the love of God to be adequately defined and appreciated, people must first find themselves in circumstances where that love is most needed. If evil is one aspect of God's nature, then I would assume that it serves the purpose of revealing and enhancing the dominant characteristic of His nature, which is love.

As odd as this might seem on the surface, good and evil are two sides of a single coin.

Take the story of the prodigal son in the Bible. In this story the father symbolizes God, and the far country, where the son experiences suffering resulting from wrong choices (sin), symbolizes a negative situation the son must experience before being able to fully appreciate the love and forgiveness of his father. The son who did not "do evil" and leave home, was not able to fully understand and appreciate his father's love and forgiveness.

If you disagree, please take time to think really hard about this. Why is it that you personally appreciate God's love for you? List the reasons. Do some of those reasons result from the suffering and evil you have experienced? Do some of those reasons result from various sins and bad choices you have made in life?