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It has been edited for clarity.

**An Answer to the Question:
"Why does God allow 'stuck' spirits?"**

by Newton Green

This very sensible question seems to me to be bound up with matters of consciousness and free-will. As a confirmed 'dualist' in my approach to all things visible and invisible, I can tentatively offer what is more a line-of-thought than a suggested definitive answer, but one which I hope may be useful in considering this aspect of post mortem existence.

Let me start by quoting Epictetus (whom, I have discovered, was a freedman Stoic philosopher who lived c AD 55 — 135). "Under our control are: conception, choice, desire, and aversion. If you think only what is your own to be your own, you will blame no-one, nor is there any harm that can touch you." We may be said, therefore, to conceive that we have free-will and can make choices. The quality and morality of our choices is accordingly dependent upon our desires and aversions, which are in turn informed by what Prof. Dawkins has handily summarised for us as our 'Selfish Genes'. Thus we can live entirely according to these, or mitigate the effects of the choices they offer to our huge and ingenious brains, and curb their urgings by religion and/or philosophy. In a Christian context such

restraint can be reduced to 'Love God' (i.e. humbly admit that we are not the superlative pebbles upon the cosmic beach) and 'Love our neighbours as ourselves' (i.e. at least do nothing to them that we would not like them to do to us). This bald summary is heresy, but economical of space.

So we live as creatures of Body (material brain), Mind (controlling Brain, as per Epictetus), and Spirit (directly in touch with the Divine). Our mortal lives over, we are left as fully-conscious Mind and Spirit. We seek out, or are guided into, the Light Tunnel, and from there on the literature - a whole mass of recorded, deduced, and inferred experience - makes sense of our condition in (timeless) Eternity, for those who have read it. However, some of us, it seems, either do not find the Light Tunnel, or do not wish - our freewill to the fore - to enter it. I suggest, therefore, that it is at least possible that personal mental/psychic choice may play a part in this 'failure' to do the psi-expected things.

What is Eternity like? We are spoiled for choice if we find and consult the literature. A glut of Religious texts apart, there are the writings of: Bede, Fontana, the Fenwicks, Parnia, van Lommel, Sartori, Eben Alexander, and others, to take us at least to a tantalising glimpse over the threshold. Organised religion nowadays seems to prefer to be as vague as possible upon the

subject, which occasionally leads me, as an Anglican Lay Reader, to be approached by people who have had enough of 'churchiness' but are certainly of a spiritual outlook who ask "What *really* happens when we die?" This is something I view as a fundamental question about a highly personal business.

I accordingly speak of the unconditional support and love reported as experienced in the transition between the temporal and Eternal states and, strictly by way of illustration, ask enquirers to imagine themselves arriving in a sort of huge indoor arena, in the midst of which blazes one incredibly bright light bulb - God. The wonder and love of God are instantly perceived as all that is worth desiring, and I opine that the enquirer discovers that he/she also has acquired a personal glow of light, although much dimmer than God. Around the arena will be seen a variety of brighter or dimmer lights, all psyches/souls, and all turning towards God in, and by, Divine Love. On the outer limits of this arena, however, some lights glow very dimly indeed, and will remain so until they have adjusted their 'attitudes' in spirit more towards God, and made progress towards him and, so, become brighter. There is a spiritual development required, in other words, and it involves changing the Earthly outlook of material 'Selfish Genes' into an Eternal Mind-set. Indeed, upon arrival in the arena, one is instantly aware that one is far from perfect, has much re-orientation to achieve, but has the willing and loving help of all other lights, plus God, to do so. The lights at the outer-limits, however, of their own free-will have done little on Earth to approach the Divine, and accordingly have the most re-orientation to do. Being also possessed of the mind's free-will, however, some may apparently prefer to maintain themselves in the

attitude of their Selfish Genes, a mental posture which is unbearable since they are well aware of God, but choose to resist reorientation. Their fury, self-preoccupation, and frustration at their own states are their personal 'hells' (cf. I Corinthians, 1530).

Such an outline broadly encompasses any acquaintance with the literature that seekers may already have, and seems to help enquirers by making a sort of basic sense of all kinds of heaven, hell-fire and folklore ideas generally in the market place. It seems to reassure the drifting and anxious.

Might a 'stuck' psyche/soul be aware only of the tattier end of the market place, I wonder? It has, I believe, its full free-will intact. Is it fearful, and resisting moving on at all costs? Equally, has Earthly life been so satisfying to it that the individual is happy enough to haunt? I know of ghosts which are perceived as haunting quite complacently, and which are accepted as part of the household; and why not? They may move on and find the Light Tunnel at any time they choose, presumably. Quietly companionable prayer sessions might help in such cases if there is any doubt. We can offer help. We reckon we know what to do. Certainly some of us are expert in such matters and can offer particular spiritually compassionate suggestions if this seems needed.

Do we, in fact, have any right to pitch in with yells, bells and smells willy-nilly? So long as the 'presence' is not upsetting people in the here-and-now, why not let it alone? A careful and sensitive assessment in cases of 'stuck' souls is always required, I think. The literature suggests that there is plenty of help coming from Eternity, too. We are not alone in our concern for 'stuck' souls. They have, I suggest, a perfectly free choice in relation to their post mortem status.

If we apply Body, Mind, and Spirit to Creation as a whole, we can also offer an explanation of God's 'permitting' suffering.

If we follow the insight of Epictetus and allow *Homo Sapiens* to 'own' only what is his own, we may reflect that we are also created in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1.26). Accordingly, we share these with God. In about 1960 there was a bit of a media-scandal when the then Bishop of Woolwich suggested that God was only benign by his own choice, and was, accordingly, also capable of evil. This is the stuff of theology. In practical terms it is the (arguable) free-will of mankind which is important, in that it allows a choice of action/conduct to which moral awareness of its outcomes may be applied, and for which the initiator of the action/conduct is responsible. (This is currently a concept unpopular with the 'compensation culture' and no-win = no-fee lawyers.)

By contrast, the non-morally-aware parts of God's Creation, *i.e.*, most of it, are reliant upon its 'built-in blueprints', which extend throughout its material construction from 'quarks' upwards. Once some piece of matter has settled into its defined pattern, as an element, it may mutate but not change or disappear from the scene ...pre Quantum Theory, at least! All life is equipped with its Selfish Genes. These seek what is best for their bearers' survival and breeding prospects. This applies to plant-life, too. Thus there is a `selfish' element of conflict and predation in their realising their potential, which is observed in viruses and germs just as much as lions seeking their prey. The results can be aesthetically appalling, but are morally innocent. And God is under no obligation materially to molly-coddle *Homo Sapiens*.

In the same way, the built-in blueprints of elements and compounds allow only 'so much' stress or abuse before their atomic structures give way and `break' the whole. Accordingly, a tree overstressed by air moving as a hurricane, but in accordance with its built-in blueprints and the natural laws of meteorology, may break, fall, and kill someone in its vicinity. But we cannot blame God for this accident, Creation being morally neutral. This applies to the load-strain upon ice, the chemical composition of rocks on climbable mountains, the properties of water in relation to swimmers, and much else. We seem to be required to evaluate risk and form our choices of action, rather than rail at God when hurt by the consequences of perfectly natural events.

However, now and then God may apparently inspire someone to act on a 'hunch' and change an established routine of behaviour, or simply take cover, before an event occurs which might otherwise have caused him harm. This is perceived as a miracle, although no direct indication of God's intervention in it is traceable. Possibly our unconscious minds/psyches are 'in touch' with Creation at a 'psychic' level which we simply take for granted and fail to notice — or heed intellectually — in the normal course of life, but which may grab the attention of our (material) brains/Selfish Genes when we are heading into danger. This is largely conjecture, at present, in the case of *Homo Sapiens*, if not in other forms of life where the 'extra' level of awareness has a more immediate life-preserving function. If this line of thought is roughly correct, it still a part of God's Creation which we have 'lost' the habit of using/trusting. God cannot be held accountable for our 'failure', evolutionary or cultural.