

Issues of Good and Evil

Knowledge Organizer

1. Key People

Milarepa	Learned black magic in order to take violent revenge on those who had harmed him. He later felt remorse and followed a path to enlightenment.
Angulimala	"Finger necklace" became a mass murderer in order to "pay" for his education, but the Buddha's use of metta led to his reformation.
Saint Augustine	A Christian philosopher who said that we are all born sinners and Earth is sinful due to the Original Sin- that's not God's doing
John Hick	A Christian philosopher who said that by overcoming evil we can be more like God.
Mara	To some, an evil demon who tempted Siddhartha. To others, a representation of our ego, the true source of evil.

4. Concepts

Living a Good Life	equality 	relationships 
		morality 

2. You need to know...

- Some people's morality (ideas of right and wrong) is **absolute** (it never changes; some things are always wrong or right). For others, it is **relative** (right or wrong depends on the situation or consequences).
- Aims of punishment: **justice**, **retribution** (revenge), **deterrence** and **reformation**
- Many Buddhists say that we are **responsible** for evil and only we can do something about it
- Many Buddhists believe that our **intentions** determine whether an act is skilful or unskilful (right or wrong). Evil acts arise from **selfishness** or **greed**. Good acts arise when we think about others and **consequences**.
- The **Howard League for Penal Reform** is a charity campaigning for a better society through **changing** the prison system
- The **Prison Reform Trust** is a charity campaigning for better **treatment** of prisoners and victims
- The **Angulimala Society** provides Buddhist chaplains to prisons; they **support prisoners** in overcoming emotional and mental problems
- A **theodicy** is an explanation for the presence of a loving, fair God in a world where evil exists
- Some Christians say as a result of the **Original Sin** or **Fall** from God's favour, evil is in the world and all humans need God's **forgiveness**
- Other Christians say that we **couldn't** be truly "good" if evil and suffering didn't exist, but we need God's help to avoid **sin** and become **better** beings
- The idea of "the sanctity of life" leads many Christians to support the **death penalty**. Others to oppose it

5. Contexts

Many ideas about dealing with crime in the UK stem from Bible teachings. Most non-religious people support the justice system, so what can we learn about shared beliefs and values?

The two prison reform organizations we study have clear views on how criminals should be treated. How does this fit within a "human rights" culture? What about victims of crime?

3. Key vocabulary

good	That which is considered morally right, beneficial and to our advantage.
evil	That which is considered extremely immoral, wicked and wrong
forgiveness	To grant pardon for a wrongdoing; to give up resentment and the desire seek revenge against a wrongdoer
free will	The ability to make choices voluntarily and independently. The belief that nothing is pre-determined.
justice	Fairness; where everyone has equal provisions and opportunity
morality	Principles and standards determining which actions are right or wrong.
punishment	A penalty given to someone for a crime or wrong they have done
sin	Deliberate immoral action, breaking a religious or moral law.
suffering	Pain or distress caused by injury, illness or loss. Suffering can be physical, emotional/ psychological or spiritual.