

The Omnipotence Paradox

When people see the devastation in Gaza, the question often arises: *If God is all-powerful, why does He allow this?* It is the ancient problem of evil, sharpened by images of children buried beneath rubble and families mourning losses too great to name. Philosophers once framed the problem abstractly: *Can God create a rock so heavy He cannot lift it?* In Gaza, the paradox is no longer academic. It is visceral. If God can end the killing, why does He not?

The Qur'an and the wider Abrahamic tradition offer a surprising answer: God does not act in ways that contradict His own revealed principles. His power is limitless, but His justice is principled. The Almighty is not a tyrant who bends morality to His will; rather, He wills only what is consistent with the justice and mercy He has declared. This is the **omnipotence paradox**: God's strength is shown not in breaking His own laws but in upholding them, even when doing so leaves human evil unchecked.

Divine Self-Limitation: The Cost of Consistency

The Qur'an declares:

Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he has slain all of humanity. And whoever saves one - it is as if he has saved all of humanity. - Al-Ma'idah 5:32

Jewish tradition echoes this in the doctrine of *pikuach nefesh* - the obligation to save life that overrides almost every other commandment. The Talmud deepens it in *Sanhedrin 90a*, where the preservation of life is bound up with the very foundation of divine justice. Both Islam's *sunnah* (divine custom) and Judaism's *brit* (covenant) describe a God who binds Himself to relational fidelity rather than acting with brute force.

To intervene catastrophically - to wipe out aggressors en masse - would unravel the very moral order God upholds. It would turn the Creator into the chaos He abhors. Instead, the Qur'an explains:

Were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. - Al-Hajj 22:40

God's preferred mode is not unilateral annihilation but mediated restraint - *checking some by means of others*. This is the paradox in action: omnipotence willingly bound by principle.

Christian tradition mirrors this principle of divine consistency. In Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked his followers:

Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. - Matthew 26:52

Power bound to principle, not raw vengeance.

The Consolation of Martyrdom: A Horizon Beyond the Horizon

Where humans see irretrievable loss, the Qur'an unveils a different horizon:

Do not think of those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, provided for, rejoicing in what Allah has given them of His bounty. - Ali 'Imran 3:169-171

This is not a platitude but an eschatological defiance. Those slain unjustly are not footnotes in history but principals in eternity. Their joy is a rebuke to their killers, their elevation a vindication of their suffering.

This belief has fueled resistance from the earliest Muslims persecuted in Mecca to the Palestinians' *sumud* (steadfastness) today. In Gaza, where millions are displaced and famine stalks the survivors, the conviction that martyrs are alive with their Lord is not escapism but survival. It transforms grief into endurance, rubble into altars of witness.

Yet the Qur'an's promise does not erase human pain. Families weep, mothers wail, fathers bury their children. The first response is grief, mourning, and rage - because love resists separation. But among the Palestinian people, that grief often transforms into something else: a recognition that their loved one has been spared further suffering in Gaza's ruins, an acceptance of God's will, and a patient hope of reunion in the hereafter.

Their faith reframes death not only as loss but also as deliverance - deliverance from earthly torment, and deliverance into God's mercy. This is why funerals in Gaza, though soaked in tears, also echo with cries of **Allahu Akbar**. It is both lament and affirmation: a people choosing to trust that the martyrs are not destroyed but honored, not absent but awaited.

This too is part of the paradox: while God refuses to break His law to stop murder, He also refuses to abandon its victims to nothingness.

God's Moral Purity: The Echo of Unatoned Blood

Another dimension of the paradox is divine purity. By refusing to intervene through killing, God leaves the guilt wholly on the perpetrators. Every bullet fired, every bomb dropped, every child starved - the stain belongs to them alone.

So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. - Al-Zalzalah 99:7-8

Today, Gaza's soil is blood-soaked, and the cry is not the voice of one brother but of hundreds of thousands. **The blood of 680,000 innocents cries to God from Gaza's ground — just as Abel's blood once cried from the soil to heaven.**

The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. What have you done? - Genesis 4:10

On Judgment Day, the body itself will become prosecutor, betraying its owner:

That Day, We will seal their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify to what they used to earn. - Yasin 36:65

And what awaits the guilty is torment without relief:

He will drink it in gulps but will hardly swallow it. Death will come to him from everywhere, yet he will not die; and before him will be a massive punishment. - Ibrahim 14:17

The Talmud leaves no doubt:

The wicked... have no share in the world to come. - Sanhedrin 90a

Across traditions, the verdict is unanimous: such wholesale slaughter is not merely sin to be cleansed in Gehinnom but **an abuse of God's name itself**. It violates *pikuach nefesh* - the command to prioritize saving life - and mocks the truth that humans are created *b'tselem elohim* - in the image of God. It is open defiance of His commandments and a sacrilege whose consequence is eternal exclusion.

The Condemnation of Silence: Bystanders as Co-Conspirators

But the paradox extends further still: God's refusal to break His own law means the world is tested, and the bystanders are exposed. Scripture condemns not only perpetrators but those who see and do nothing:

We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle - rather, more astray. It is they who are the heedless. - Al-A'raf 7:179

This is a thunderbolt against the "cattle" of history - the governments vetoing ceasefires, the media equivocating "both sides," the citizens scrolling past rubble. Neutrality in the face of massacre is complicity.

The Talmud says: *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* - "all Israel are responsible for one another." In spirit, this is universal: all humanity is bound together in responsibility. Silence is not neutrality; it is betrayal.

The Omnipotence Paradox in Gaza

Here the paradox sharpens: God is all-powerful, yet He binds Himself to His own moral law. He will not commit killing to stop killing. He will not commit injustice to halt injustice.

Instead, He allows human evil to expose itself - and in so doing, preserves His moral purity for the ultimate judgment.

For the martyrs, this means consolation: their blood is not lost but transformed into witness and honor. For the perpetrators, it means condemnation: their crimes cry out against them, their own bodies will testify, and their fate is eternal exclusion. For the bystanders, it means exposure: their silence is complicity, their neutrality damnation.

Conclusion

The omnipotence paradox is not an abstract riddle but a lived reality in Gaza. It shows us that God's power is not arbitrary but principled. He has chosen restraint, and in that restraint lies both consolation for the innocent and condemnation for the guilty.

For the perpetrators, their own bodies will testify against them, their torment unending, their crimes echoed by the soil itself. For the bystanders, silence itself is damnation. For the martyrs, there is life beyond death, joy beyond grief.

From Gaza's rubble rises not proof of divine absence but a double truth: that human cruelty is real, and that divine justice is inexorable. The question that remains is whether we, who still breathe, will recognize the paradox - and live by the law of life God has set: to save rather than to kill.