**Determinism**

**Introduction:** In this topic you will study 4 aspects/sections of determinism:

**Section 1:** Religious Determinism/Predestination

**Section 2**: Hard Determinism from Philosophy, Science and Psychology

**Section 3:** Soft Determinism

**Section 4**: Implications of Hard and Soft Determinism

**Section 1: Religious Determinism/Predestination**

**Section 1a: Background**

* Definition of Determinism: the philosophical idea the humanity has absolutely no free will, sometimes referred to as Hard Determinism.
* In religious theology, determinism is often referred to as ‘predestination’ i.e. predestination is the concept of religious hard determinism.

**Section 1b: Religious Determinism/Predestination - St. Augustine**

**Background**

* Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD) wrote the ‘Doctrine of Original Sin’ – which at the time became the Catholic Churches official theology on predestination.

**Doctrine of Original Sin**

* Though the Doctrine of Original sin is one theory it is easier to understand it in two parts

**Part 1: Why Humanity is predestined**

* The Doctrine of Original Sin is based on the original sin of Adam and Eve hence the name Doctrine of Original Sin) i.e. their sin of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, despite express instructions, from God, not to do so.

**Concupiscence**

* Augustine’s Doctrine of Original Sin starts by arguing that the outcome of ‘original sin’ is that sin became a major defect of the human character.
* It was one of the outcomes of committing the original sin, which tainted Adam’s and Eve’s original perfect nature. Augustine called this defect ‘concupiscence ’.
* Definition of Concupiscence: a Latin term that means ‘longing’ and is associated with human senses e.g. when a longing for earthly desires e.g.- food, sex etc., conflicts with spiritual desires.
* Concupiscence is therefore in opposition to having the desire to know and love God i.e. concupiscence , in itself, is not a sin but it inhibits a moral agent’s ability to choose Godly goodness and resist the temptation of earthly pleasures.
* This defect of concupiscence , according to Augustine, is passed on from Adam and Eve to every person born into this world: for two reasons:
* Firstly, all humanity is related to Adam and Eve. Therefore, Augustine argued that all of humanity inherited Adam's sin, thus, Adam’s guilt is humanities.
* Secondly, all humanity is born from sexual intercourse, which is itself a result of concupiscence and thus all humanity inherits concupiscence.

**Massa Peccati**

* The result of the above, according to Augustine, is that all humanity is born ‘massa peccati’.
* Definition of massa peccati: Latin term meaning a lump or mass of sin.What Augustine means is that humanity is born ‘massa peccati’ because concupiscence will result in all humanity also been tempted by materialism, at the expense of God living. Augustine illustrated massa peccati by stating humanity is **“so hopelessly corrupted that we are absolutely incapable of doing anything good by our own forces.”**
* Therefore, for Augustine, humanity’s ability to freely choose is lost to sin, moral agents are predestined to sin.

**Liberum Arbitrium**

* However, despite the above Augustine still argues humanity is born with free will – this is our original essential nature. Therefore, our original essential human nature is ‘Liberum arbitrium’.
* Definition of Liberum Arbitrium: Latin phrase meaning humanity can make a free choice between following a materialistic life and a godly life.
* However, concupiscence acts as secondary human nature which overrides our essential human nature of Liberum arbitrium. As Augustine argues humanity's free will **“has been utterly wasted by sin.”**
* Therefore, according to Augustine, humanity cannot make free will decisions because the dominant concupiscence pre-determines all moral agents to sin.

**Part 2: God’s response to humanities predestination**

* However, Augustine’s Doctrine of Original Sin is not without hope for humanity.
* Augustine argued that through God’s grace (God’s eternal love and mercy) some people are released of their sinful secondary nature, of concupiscence , and are therefore will not remain in a desperate state of sin.

**Who is chosen?**

* By God’s grace only a few people are chosen to be freed of the effects of concupiscence
* No person can ask for it or do anything to deserve it. Grace, at least as humanity can understand it, is given randomly to a small fixed number of people. Therefore, only God knows why certain people are chosen and not others.

**The Elect**

* Augustine called those chosen people ‘the elect’. Those not chosen were called the ‘reprobates’.
* According to, early Augustine, God could forsee which individuals would receive grace before any of them were even born.
* God chooses to extend his irresistible saving grace to some, the ‘elect’ who are predestined to eternal life , whilst the ‘retrobates’ remain in their sin are punished wth hell due to their own choices and deeds.
* To be part of the “elect” one must have accepted the saving power of Christ through baptism.
* Human free will as a result of the Fall is only free to sin. Only those who have been bestowed with God’s grace, the Elect will be able to demonstrate this by resisting sin.
* Augustine failed to give a reason as to why some would be saved and others not.
* However he claims his teachings were built on scripture e.g. Romans 8:29-30
* There is debate by some scholars over whether Augustine’s theory or predestination should be referred to as double predestination, meaning he actively choose the “retrobates”. Other disagree saying God does not want humans to sin and abhors our sinning.
* Augustine claimed that sinners can make no claim to the grace of God, it is God’s decision entirely on who he bestows his grace on.

**Section 1c: John Calvin’s Predestination Theory**

**Background**

* Several centuries later, John Calvin (1509-1564) presented his predestination theology.
* Calvin, was one of the leading figures in the reformation (check out the ‘reformation’ on the internet). His predestination theory is known as the ‘Doctrine of Election’.

**Doctrine of Election**

**Sinful Nature**

* Calvin, like Augustine, argued that all humanity is totally sinful. Moreover, like Augustine, Calvin blamed ‘the fall’ of Adam and Eve for this.
* Calvin believed that the result of ‘the fall’ is that humanity cannot respond in at all to the message of God held in the pages of the Bible i.e. humanity cannot choose to obey the commands of God because we are completely slaves to the temptation of sin.
* Calvin does not necessarily mean people are always carrying out sinful acts, however, in terms of salvation (following God’s commands to achieve heaven post-mortem) the whole of the human race, is without hope. Due to ‘the fall; the temptation to sin is too great.

**Hope for some**

* However, this does not mean that Calvin believed that all humanity was predestined to damnation (an eternity in hell). He believed that some people would receive salvation (an eternity in heaven) from God.
* Therefore, Calvin’s theory is ultimately based on the idea that it is God alone who determines who will be saved and who will not.

**The elect and the reprobates**

* Therefore, Calvin believed that God made among people two predestined groups: the elect and the reprobates.

**THE ELECT (a.k.a. The Saints):**

* If a person belongs to the elect then they have been chosen by God to have their sins forgiven, through the atonement of Jesus Christ (Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, allows the sins of the elect to be passed to Him)
* The elect have done nothing to deserve this good fortunate; it is a mystery (from a human perspective) why some are chosen by God and others are not.
* Calvin did argue it was possible for the elect to guess their status as an elect. The is because they can feel the **“the calling of God**.” i.e.they have an inward certainty that God has chosen them for salvation.
* Moreover, Calvin believed the elect would generally show traits of been elect. This is because they would partly reflect their Godly status. For example, they would be hard-working, honest etc., some believed because of these traits it would mean they would become wealthy (but they would do good works with their wealth).
* Importantly, Calvin did state that the elect could still be sinful. However, God predestines them to have faith in the atonement of Jesus. Therefore, when they sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness, and therefore their sins will be passed to Jesus and they will remain sinless (and thus at death achieve salvation).

**THE REPROBATES (a.k.a. the Damned):**

* The reprobates are also (from a human perspective, at least) chosen randomly by God. Calvin believed that the reprobates were more likely to show traits of why they will go to hell post-mortem.
* For Calvin, such traits include laziness and addiction to sinful such as: alcoholism, gambling etc. Therefore, at the end of their lives the sin on their hearts would automatically condemn them to hell; there was nothing they could have done about it in their lifetime.
* The reprobates could still have done morally worthy actions during their lifetimes but, according to Calvin, they would have been unable to resist sin at various points in their lives.
* However, the reprobates will be predestined not to have faith in Christ’s atoning nature, therefore their sins will remain on their hearts. Therefore, the reprobates remain in sin and these sins will condemn to hell post-mortem.

**Synod of Dort**

* Several decades after Calvin’s death, the Synod of Dort (1619) occurred. The Synod of Dort was an international meeting organised by the ‘Dutch Reformed Church’ to settle the predestination and free will debate.
* Calvin’s supporters (known as Calvinists) summed up his ‘Doctrine of Election’ into five points (sometimes summoned up with the acronym T.U.L.I.P.):

1. **Total Depravity:** humans are totally corrupted by sin because of ‘the fall. They cannot choose good over evil.
2. **Unconditional Election**: God alone chooses the elect. Election is not based upon any good works of the moral agent during their lifetime.
3. **Limited Atonement**: Christ's death and atonement for human sins was for the elect only.
4. **Irresistible Grace**: the elect cannot resist the inward calling to believe ‘the gospels’ and therefore seek forgiveness of sin through Jesus’ atonement.
5. **Perseverance of the Elect**: the elect will remain in a state of irresistible grace until they reach salivation.

**Section 2: Hard Determinism from Philosophy, Science and Psychology**

**2a: Background to Hard Determinism:**

* As we have seen above ‘Hard Determinism’ is the belief that people have no free will at all.
* An analogy to illustrate the above is that a person’s life is like a tram running along fixed rails. Just as the tram has no choice but to run down the fixed tram lines, so a person has no choice but to follow pre-determined choices.
* For this section we will consider 3 further forms of Hard Determinism: Philosophical Determinism, Scientific Determinism and Psychological Determinism.

**2b. Philosophical Determinism: John Locke**

* We will consider philosophical determinism from John Locke (1632-1704).

**Past Causes**

* Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on the theory of past causes (a.k.a. Universal Causation) i.e. the belief, previously stated by Aquinas in his Cosmological Argument, that all actions and choices have a past cause.
* Therefore, Locke believed that all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes that cannot be escaped from.
* For example, the cause of my lateness to my class was that my mobile phone was not working so I did not know the time. The cause of my mobile phone not working was because I got it wet having a snowball fight with my children. The cause of the snowball fight was we were having fun whilst waiting for my friend to pick up my children, to go to their drama club, but he was late. The cause of my friend been late was a power cut in his street etc. Therefore, I was ultimately late for my RS class due to a set of past causes over which I had no control.
* Therefore, if the above is correct and expanded out to everyone, and every situation, we find ourselves in then we could draw the conclusion that the future must logically be as fixed and unchangeable as the past.
* This is because we can look back and see that a set of past causes is fixed (we cannot change them – my neighbour was late) but these fixed causes continue to run forward affecting everything we do now and in the future e.g. making me late to my class.
* Later American philosopher William James supported Locke’s theory. James argued: **“Any other future set of outcomes than the one fixed from eternity is impossible.”**

**Free will is an illusion**

* From his above theory Locke created the phrase: “**free will is just an illusion**”.
* This is because people who believe they have free will are deluding themselves. People think they have free will because they think they can pause to reflect before making a choice.
* However, Locke believed that all such thoughts were in fact just the result of ignorance of past causes. This is because, Locke believed, most people do not have the intelligence to see that there are no choices at all to be made.

**Analogy**

* Locke created his own analogy to illustrate the above theory.
* His analogy starts with a man who wakes up, in bed, in a room. The room, unknown to him, is locked from the outside. He chooses to stay in the room and have more rest, believing he has chosen freely to stay there.
* However, in reality he has no option but to stay in the room, it is only his ignorance of the locked door, that gave him an illusion of freedom.
* Just as it is the ignorance of causes that gives people the illusion of freedom.

**2c. Scientific Determinism (a.k.a. Biological Determinism)**

**Historical**

* Charles Darwin (1809-1882) evolution theory had a profound effect upon the concept of scientific determinism
* Part of his evolution theory was that every living organism must have a unique genetic formula. As humanity developed from the evolutionary process, therefore humanity must also have a unique genetic formula.

**DNA**

* The above theory was considerably developed by the scientific discovery of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA).
* DNA is the building blocks of all living creatures i.e. it is DNA that instructions a living organism on how to grow in to that particular organism.

**Implication of DNA**

* One of the implications of the above is that humanity is not free but is instead determined by their DNA (genetic formula). The deterministic effect of DNA can be seen in 3 ways:

1. **Physical Appearance**: DNA controls a person’s physical features e.g. the size of their nose, eye colour etc. Therefore, a person has no control of their physical appearance.
2. **Physical and Mental Capacity**: There is a clear link between faults in a person’s DNA and various physical and mental abilities of humans i.e. a person born with Down’s syndrome.
3. **Behaviour:** some scientists believe that human behaviour is determined by DNA i.e. behavioural traits like friendliness, confidence etc are controlled by our genetic make-up (DNA).

* Therefore, a person is no more than a product of their genetic make-up. The implication of this is that a person is fully determined by their DNA. This is sometimes referred to as ‘biological determinism’.
* This could be seen to have a profound implication for moral behaviour. This is because any effort to change one’s behavioural patterns is useless because it is out of our conscious control.

**Genetic Fixity**

* Biological determinist, Daniel Dennett, called the above idea ‘genetic fixity’.
* Genetic fixity is the scientific idea that the DNA of our parents inevitably determines our characteristics. Therefore, a child’s characteristics, and thus lifelong behaviour, is determined at the moment they are conceived.
* The idea of genetic fixity received a boost from the Human Genome Project (1990-2003). The Genome Project attempted to map the genes of human DNA. Some of the findings of the project support genetic fixity.

**Example:**

* Obesity: a recent study suggested the existence of ‘an obese gene’. This particular gene limits the production of the protein Leptin. Leptin is an important protein because it regulates appetite and energy use. Therefore, if our DNA limits the production of leptin, it is inevitable that our bodies will become obese.

**Overall:**

* Therefore, if the above is correct it could be argued that people can be reduced to no more than genetic robots; programmed and determined by their DNA.
* This is sometimes referred to as ‘puppet determinism’ because metaphorically speaking moral agents just act on the strings of their DNA.

**2d. Psychological Determinism (Ivan Pavlov - classical conditioning)**

**Background**

* Psychological determinism is associated with the Behaviourist school of thought in Psychology.
* One behaviourist concept of determinism is called reflex conditioning (a.k.a. classical conditioning).
* One of the pioneers of reflex conditioning was Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936). Pavlov’s work on reflex conditioning revolved around his work dogs; thus, his work is often referred to as ‘Pavlov’s Dogs’.

**Reflex/Classical Conditioning: the process**

* Pavlov started his work by agreeing with the common notion that the normal reaction of a dog to the presence of food was to produce saliva. Pavlov called this an ‘unconditioned reflex’ i.e. a dog does not need to be taught this, it is just a normal biological reaction.
* Pavlov started his experiment by ringing a bell, which he called a neutral stimulus, every time food was given to the dogs. Therefore, the dogs began to associate receiving food with the sound of a bell.
* Pavlov developed his experiment by eventually ringing the bell but not producing food for the dogs. However, Pavlov noted that the dogs still produced saliva, even in the absence of food.
* Pavlov concluded the dogs had been ‘conditioned’ to produce the unconditioned reflex of saliva to the neutral stimulus of the bell i.e. the dogs had no choice but to salivate to the sound of a bell.
* Definition of conditioning: the sub-conscious repeating of behaviour to certain environmental conditions i.e. the dogs sub-consciously salivated to the environmental conditions of a bell ringing.

**Reflex/Classical Conditioning: conclusions**

* From the above experiment Pavlov postulated that all human reactions are also just conditioned responses, associated with the environmental conditions of one’s surroundings.
* For example, a young child may enjoy throwing their food. However, a parent will get ‘cross’ with the child for doing this. The child will, therefore, develop an association with throwing their food and a ‘cross’ authoritarian figure (even though throwing food is actually fun). Therefore, in later life the child will have been conditioned not to throw food (which may be a good thing – especially when visiting the parents of a girlfriend/boyfriend).
* Therefore, expanding out, the above example, we can postulate that all of a person’s actions are determined by their own unique environmental conditioning i.e. every action we do is just subconsciously repeating taught conditioned behaviour.

**Operant Conditioning**

* Behaviourist psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) further developed the idea of reflex/classical conditioning, in a form referred to as ‘operant conditioning’.
* Operant conditioning states that a young child can be conditioned to repeat behaviour, by rewarding behaviour that we wish to be repeated (a toddler can be rewarded with a chocolate for using the toilet correctly) and to not repeat certain behaviours with a form of punishment (not allowing a child to watch ‘Peppa Pig’ on TV if they soil themselves). It is this way that a child is conditioned to use the toilet correctly.
* Skinner argued that, in fact, all human reactions come from operant conditioning; therefore, all human reactions are determined by conditioning.

**Section 3: Soft Determinism**

**3a. Soft Determinism - Background**

* Hard determinism, as we have seen above, is an attempt to illustrate that all (100%) of human actions are determined.
* However, hard determinism was seen by some philosophers as too extreme. Therefore, Soft Determinism developed, which was an attempt to soften the hard determinist view.
* Soft determinists accept that humanity is mostly determined, but there are elements of a person’s life which could be argued to be not determined.
* We will consider two soft determinist theories: Thomas Hobbes and A.J. Ayer.
* Both Hobbes and Ayers’ theories are now known as ‘Classical Soft Determinism’ theories.

**3b. Soft Determinism - Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes)**

* Philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was an early supporter of what is now known as classical soft determinism.
* Hobbes starts his theory of classical soft determinism with the claim that all human choices, including all moral choices, are completely determined. Hobbes did face criticism for this because it would appear classical soft determinism was just the same as hard determinism i.e. both agree all human choices are determined.
* However, Hobbes explained the difference between classical soft determinism and hard determinism by stating there were two types of causes: internal and external.
* **Internal cause:** the choices a person internally makes e.g. thinking about whether I should hold the door open for my teacher or not. Hobbes accepts that both hard determinists and soft determinists would agree that all internal causes are 100% determined by the determinist factors studied above (causation, conditioning, genetics etc) e.g. it is pre-determined as to whether I will hold the door open for my teacher.
* **External cause:** when someone forces another person to do something against their pre-determined will e.g. through a pre-determined internal cause I want hold the door open for my teacher, but another student pushes me out of the way, so I cannot fulfil my pre-determined desire to hold the door open for my teacher.
* Hobbes explains the difference between hard determinism and classical soft determinism by considering the above two types of cause:
* **Classical Soft Determinism:**
* **Internal Cause**: Accepts all internal causes are determined.
* **External Causes**: A person is free from external causes
* **Example**: Through a deterministic cause I want to hold the door open for my teacher (determined internal cause) and no one stops me holding the door open for my teacher (I am free from external causes). Therefore, in this case my choice was soft determined: partly determined (I had no choice but to want to hold the door open) and partly free (I was free from external interference, so could hold the door open)
* **Hard Determinism**:
* **Internal Cause:** Also accepts all internal causes are determined.
* **External Cause**: A person is also determined by external causes.
* **Example**: Through a deterministic cause I want to hold the door open for my teacher (determined internal cause) but another student stops me from holding the door open for my teacher by pushing me out of the way (determined external causes). Therefore, in this case my choice was hard determined: determined by both an internal cause (I had no choice but to want to hold the door open) and determined by an external cause (I was not free to carry out my internal cause of wanting to hold the door open)
* Therefore, Hobbes has illustrated the difference between classical soft determinism and hard determinism.

**3c. Soft Determinism by A.J. Ayer (caused acts v forced acts)**

**Background**

* British philosopher A.J. Ayer (1910-1989) supported the concept of classical soft determinism
* Ayer further developed the classical soft determinism theory by empirically studying the language differences between soft and hard determinism; to illustrate the difference between the two theories.

**Soft Determinism – ‘Caused’**

* Ayer stated that when a particular moral situation was soft determinist in nature (i.e. when a person is only determined by internal causes but not an external cause) the moral agent will use the word ‘caused’ to describe it.
* For example: I was ‘caused’ by an internal cause to want to hold the door open for my teacher.

**Hard Determinism – ‘Forced’**

* In the case of a hard determinist moral situation (i.e. when the person is determined by both an internal cause and an external cause), the person will use the word ‘forced’.
* For example, I wanted to hold open the door for my teacher, but was forced away from the door by another student and therefore was unable to hold it for my teacher.

**Conclusion**

* Therefore, Ayer concludes, from his empirical studies of language, that people make a language distinction between:
* Hard Determinism: when both external and internal causes are ‘forcibly’ determining an event
* Soft determinism where only an internal cause is ‘causing’ an event, but there is no external cause.
* Note: there is a strong link between this theory by Ayer and his work on Logical Positivism in the Philosophy unit.

**Section 4: Implications of Hard and Soft Determinism on Moral Responsibility**

**Part 1: Hard Determinism**

* As we have seen hard determinists believe a person’s life is completely (100%) determined by various factors such as: God’s predestination power, psychological behaviourism, biological determinism and/or universal causation.
* There are a variety of implications of hard determinism for moral responsibility your syllabus wishes you to explore:

**4a – Hard Determinism - An Overview**

* As you know Hard Determinism means that a person has absolutely no free will. If this is correct then the following must also be true:
* I have no control over any of the choices I make.
* This logically must also include all the moral choices I make e.g. “should I steal that smart phone?”
* Therefore, I have absolutely no control over the moral choices I make e.g. “I’ll steal that smart phone”
* Therefore, I should not be blamed for the moral choices I make e.g. “I had no choice but to steal that smart phone, therefore I am blameless”
* We will explore the implications of the above in more detail below.

**4b - Hard Determinism - The value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts**

* If you stole your friends smart phone, I imagine they would not only be unhappy, but they would also question your sense of morality.
* However, hard determinism questions whether such human values, as stealing is wrong, are useful concepts.
* This is because the value of blaming people for so-called ‘immoral acts’ is questionable because people have absolutely no control over the moral actions they carry out i.e. “I had no choice but to steal your phone”
* Therefore, it would also seem unfair to punish people for committing immoral acts because it was beyond their control. In fact, it would be as nonsensical as blaming your goldfish for swimming round its bowl in circles.

**Example**

* A contemporary example of this comes from Italy. In 2007 Abdelmalek Bayout murdered another man, who he claimed had insulted him.
* Though he was found guilty, his sentence was reduced by a year because it was illustrated he had a specific gene e.g. Monoamine Oxidase (MAOA). Some scientists claim the MAOA gene is a determining cause of violence (it is commonly called the ‘warrior gene’). The judge reduced Abdelmalek sentence because in part he accepted that Abdelmalek had no control over his violent reactions.

**4c – Hard Determinism - The usefulness of normative ethics**

* Another implication of Hard Determinism is to question the usefulness of the normative ethics you have studied.
* The purpose of all normative ethics is to act as a moral guide, helping a person down the moral path and away from the immoral path.
* However, if hard determinism is right then it can be argued normative ethics becomes superfluous.
* This can be illustrated by considering one of the normative ethics you have studied:

**Act Utilitarianism: Atheist based teleological normative ethic.**

* As you know Act Utilitarianism is an atheist based ethic, created by Jeremy Bentham. He wanted to create a normative ethic that reflected the moral needs of people in society, which he believed was based on pleasure.
* Act Utilitarianism revolves around the idea called, the ‘Principle of Utility’: which basically states that an action should only be carried out if the consequences of that action bring about the maximum happiness, for the maximum amount of people, affected by the action.
* However, Bentham is presupposing that people have the free will to select the course of action that fulfils the ‘principle of utility’. If they do not, as hard determinism promotes, then Act Utilitarianism becomes pointless.

**Part 2: Soft Determinism**

**4d – Soft Determinism - Implications of Soft Determinism on moral responsibility**

**Classic Soft Determinism**

* Classical soft determinism, as stated by Hobbes and Ayer, basically states that the only aspect of free will that a person has is if their predetermined actions are not forcibly stopped (see earlier notes)
* However, the key point to note is that classical soft determinism still fully accepts, like the theory of hard determinism does, that a person’s actions and thought processes are a 100% caused by determining factors.
* Therefore, the conclusions drawn above about ‘hard determinism and moral responsibility’ are also applicable to classical soft determinism i.e.:

1. There is no value in human ideas of right and wrong because people have no ability to control their actions.
2. There is no value in blaming people for immoral acts because they cannot freely control their moral actions.
3. Normative ethics are of no use at all as moral guides because a moral agent is not free to choose to follow them.

**Section 4: Implications of Hard Determinism / Predestination on Religious Belief**

**Part 3: Hard Determinism**

**4e - The implications for God’s omnipotence.**

**Definition and Implication**

* Definition of Omnipotence: the quality of having unlimited power.
* Predestination can be seen to support the concept of God’s omnipotence. This is because only an omnipotent being has the power to predestine the lives of the whole of humanity.

**Supporting Evidence:**

**Augustine:**

* Augustine reacted angrily to the teachings of Pelagius (see the next section on free will).
* If Pelagius’ freewill theology was correct it would, according to Augustine, reduce the omnipotent nature of God. This is because if humanity has free will, then humanity can freely choose to be morally good – thus enabling the mere human being to tell God to send him to heaven.
* That for Augustine was a denial of God’s omnipotent power.

**Calvin:**

* Calvin’s supporters at the Synod of Dort (1619) argued for the theory of ‘unconditional election’ i.e. that God alone predestined the elect. Therefore, election is based purely upon God’s omnipotent will.

**4f - The implications for God’s omnibenevolence.**

**Definition and Implication:**

* Definition of omnibenevolence: the quality of been all-loving
* Predestination can be seen to support the concept of God’s omnibenevolent nature. This is because if God just allowed humanity to freely follow their own desires (which is tainted by the fall of Adam and Eve) all humanity would descend to hell post-mortem. Therefore, God loving predestines all human life to ensure some of humanity ascends to heaven post-mortem.

**Supporting Evidence:**

**Augustine**

* Augustine argues God would be ‘just’ in leaving all humanity to descend to hell because the sin of ‘the fall’ of Adam and Eve is inherited by all humanity.
* However, through His grace God shows His all-loving nature by saving some people; which Augustine called ‘the elect’. God enabled this by lovingly sending His son, Jesus, to die on the cross, so that ‘the elect’ can receive atonement for their sins and be saved.

**Alternative Implication 1**

* However, it could be argued that the above is not an illustration of the actions of an omnibenevolent God. This is because God only appears to predestine some people to be an ‘elect’ (and be forgiven of their sins).
* Therefore, God is only allowing some people to benefit from the atonement of Christ’s death on the cross. The rest of humanity (the reprobates as Calvin called them), will not be saved by God.
* For some this has serious implications for God’s omnibenevolent nature. This is because God is punishing and rewarding certain people on behaviour He predestined**.** It is like a parent loving one of their children but completely ignoring the other one.
* Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) summed up this point by calling God ‘a monster’. As Russell argued this is because: “A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God’s own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral.”

**Alternative Implication 2**

* God’s omnibenevolent nature can also be questioned if people’s lives are predestined by God.
* If God is predestining all human life, then he must take responsibility for the moral evil that humans carry out e.g. events such as the holocaust.
* This point was illustrated by the Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Arminius was inspired to write his free will theory (see later notes) because he felt the need to defend God’s omnibenevolence against the concept of predestination; so that: **“God might not be considered the author of all sin.”**

**4G - The use of prayer.**

**Definition and Implication:**

* Definition of Prayer: to ask or beg God earnestly.
* If God predestines humanity, then the meaningfulness of prayer can be doubted. This is because if God has already predestined the whole of human existence then earnestly asking Him to change something, for the better, would appear pointless.

**Supporting Evidence:**

* The above point is supported by the Calvinist theory of ‘unconditional election’ - God alone chose the elect, based solely upon His own will, before the Earth was even created.
* Therefore, any attempt to pray, to God, to earnestly ask to become an elect is a complete waste of effort.

**4H - The existence of miracles**

**Definition:**

* Definition of a miracle: originally comes from the Latin ‘miraculum’ meaning ‘wonder’, however, in a religious sense tends to mean: An act carried out by God that breaks his own laws of nature.

**Implication 1:**

* It is within the power of an omnipotent and omniscient God to have pre-planned all miraculous events before the universe was created.
* Therefore, famous miraculous events, like God parting the Red Sea in Exodus, could have been pre-planned by God because he knew these events would occur and would need to a miracle.

**Implication 2:**

* Predestination theory does potentially rule out miracles as an answer to spontaneous prayer e.g. if you prayed for the miracle of time standing still so that you could finish an exam on time.
* The reason why such miracles can be doubted, if predestination occurs, is because such miraculous requests are as a result of spontaneous prayer from the individual. However, if an omnipotent God has already predestined all outcomes then spontaneous requests for a miracle to change an outcome are impossible.
* For example, if a student were to pray for the miracle of time standing still so that they could finish an exam on time and thus get a higher mark. However, because the outcome of these exams is already predestined, by God, then potentially the miracle will not be forthcoming.

**4I - The link between God and evil.**

* The link between God and evil has partly already been addressed above.
* This is because If God is predestining all human life, then He must take responsibility for the moral evil that humans carry out e.g. events such as the Holocaust.
* This link was illustrated by the Arminius, who wrote his free will theory (see later notes) because he felt the need to defend God against predestination; so that: **“God might not be considered the author of all sin.”**
* However, Calvin’s predestination theory does not necessarily support the above implication.
* This is because Calvin argues that God is not predestining people to be evil but just predestining whether a particular person will seek forgiveness for a sin i.e. Calvin stated that the‘elect’ could still commit sins but God predestines them seek forgiveness in Jesus’ atoning power; thus, when the elect sin they cannot resist the calling to seek forgiveness.
* Therefore, Calvin’s theory could imply that moral evil is humanities fault and all God does is predestine what a person will do once they have committed that sin.