

RE: Why is there suffering and are there any good solutions?

1. Key People

Jews	Followers of God who believe that they must follow God's laws as part of the covenants God made with Abraham and Moses.
Christians	Followers of God who believe that Jesus of Nazareth's death means their souls can exist with God after they die.
Buddhists	People who use the teachings of the Buddha to find inner peace, so that when they die they can exist in a state of bliss or nothingness.
Muslims	Followers of God who believe that they must follow God's laws as revealed to the prophet Muhammad.
atheist humanists	People who don't believe in a god, gods or afterlife and share the same ideas about how people should live so that all are happy.





2. You need to know...

- There are different **causes** of suffering in the world today
 - Some people live in absolute poverty, when people fall below a global level of income and are **unable to access basic services**, like medicine and shelter
 - Other people live in relative poverty, when they are poor in relation to the standard of the society they live in
 - Humans **use** animals for many things, like transport, wool and food. Sometimes they are seen as a **means to an end** and are harmed.
 - More often, animals are cared for and valued, as in the case of **pets**.
 - Many Jews and Christians say animals should be treated well because the Bible says God created **all** living things and humans should work **with** nature to **maintain** Earth. This doesn't mean people shouldn't use them for their needs, like food.
 - The idea of **stewardship** is shared by many religious and non-religious people.
 - Many people are **vegetarian** because humans don't need meat in their diets. They say killing animals for food is unnecessary and causes animal suffering. **Vegans** say using **any** animal-based products is cruel.
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- Judaism teaches that Jews have a **responsibility** to make the world better; **tikkun olam**.
 - **Tzedek** is a Jewish charity that helps people regardless of their beliefs
 - Judaism and Islam have religious laws about food. In Islam, acceptable things are **halal**.
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- Many Christians say **sin** is the **cause** of suffering
 - Jesus said that people should **help** each other in times of need
 - **Christian Aid** is a Christian charity that helps people regardless of their beliefs
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- Many Buddhists say **craving** things and being **attached** to things causes suffering; **dukkha**
 - Buddhist teaching emphasizes that **individuals** cause their own suffering, in the way they **react** to the things that affect them in life
 - Buddhism promotes vegetarianism
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- Many atheists and atheist humanists say religions that focus on a god that **rewards and punishes** people for their actions encourage many believers to accept suffering when they should try to **stop** it
 - It is said by many atheists that if God existed, God would **stop** suffering in the world, so there is **no** God. Suffering is completely humans' doing.

3. Key vocabulary

- vegetarian:** only eating vegetables, not eating meat
- vegan:** not using anything that comes from animals
- tikkun olam:** Hebrew for "world repair"
- sin:** doing things that are wrong to God, or being apart from God
- dukkha:** "unsatisfactoriness", suffering
- metta:** loving kindness towards oneself and other beings
- halal:** Arabic for "allowed"
- stewardship:** being in charge
- human rights:** things everyone should be able to do or have
- faith:** believing something to be true without needing evidence others can see

4. Concepts

Ultimate Questions	morality 	divinity 
Living a Good Life	relationships 	self/spirit 

5. Contexts

- Farming methods are often used as examples of animal cruelty, but many countries have very high standards of animal welfare on their farms. The UK is one of them.
- For many atheists and atheist humanists, believing in a god, especially the god of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), goes against **common sense** and reason; there is no **proof** of God's existence and scientific evidence strongly suggests that many Bible stories are untrue
- They say there is a big **problem** because some religions put forward the idea that **only** God can solve Earth's problems, rather than people