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## Understanding Cooperation with Evil

Cooperation with evil falls into three categories. I'll try to define them and give a helpful example for consideration.

(1) Formal Cooperation: when the person cooperating shares the intention of the one doing the evil action. This is never morally acceptable. *Example: you purchase a product and are pleased to support a company because it exploits its workers.*

(2) Immediate Material Cooperation: when the person cooperating does not approve of the evil action and does not want it to occur but participates in the execution of the evil action itself. This is only morally acceptable if done under duress. *Example: you are a pharmacist for a state prison who personally disagrees with the death penalty yet you mix the lethal dose of drugs for an inmate's execution.*

(3) Mediate Material Cooperation: when the person cooperating does not approve of the evil action and does not want it to occur but participates indirectly or in an unessential aspect of the evil action. This is morally acceptable if there is proportionate reason to do so and there is no danger of scandal. *Example: an IT worker fixes an internet connection so a student can complete his schoolwork but the student subsequently uses the internet to look at pornography.*

To further complicate the issue mediate material cooperation is often broken down yet again into the categories of proximate cooperation and remote cooperation. These indicate how closely one is associated with the evil action.

A last distinction. All of the examples I've given are examples of active cooperation. Each of these forms of cooperation with evil also have passive forms as well.

It's important to note that we ought not easily accept any kind of material cooperation if there is a way to avoid it.

But, and finally, when we're using proportionate reason, cooperation with a grave evil requires a much stronger proportionate reason than does a lesser evil.

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