

The Problem of Evil in the Face of a Benevolent God: Intricacies of Philosophico-Theological Theodicy

Moses ITENE, PhD.

Pontifical Mater Ecclesia College – Ecclesiastical
Faculties, St Mary's University London
mosessm05@yahoo.com

Abstract

This article provides both overview and insights, elucidating and evaluating the philosophical and theological arguments on the problem of evil in various contexts and indexes, as well as indications and manifestations. Drawing contemplation from classical and contemporary collection of readings that adequately represent recent and ongoing research and discourses on the subject matter, comprehensive and cogent contemporaneous paradigmatically philosophical arguments, embedded in theological beliefs and religious studies are invaluable explored. Suffering that is not accompanied by any restorative reward, is one of our world's most perturbing and apparent inconsistencies. It is intensely more troublesome for anyone who believes that the world was created by a supremely morally good, infinitely knowledgeable, and absolutely powerful God. Consequently, this article analytically assesses whether the amount of seemingly pointless pains and sufferings in the world count against the rationale to believe in God, and the rationality to continue to believe in God, a supreme being, who is highly held to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good. This question engages the hearts and minds of the broader religious, philosophical, and theological intellectual community. In practical procedure terms, this article contextualises the fundamental question(s) associated with the perennial problem of evil, by exploring currently scholarly interests in the evolution of religious philosophy and dynamism of analytic philosophy, in addressing the recurring problem of evil. In the light of evil being ubiquitous, this article enthusiastically examines the concept of theodicy – the attempt to reconcile divine perfection with the existence of evil, through the lens of philosophico-theological reflection.

Keywords: Evil, benevolent God, Theodicy

Introduction

The existence of evil in the world commonly known as the problem of evil is a complex topic in philosophy of religion, theology, religious studies, and amongst world religions. This topically intriguing discourse reinforces and questions these tripartite prepositional and existential realities: God is almighty, God is perfectly good, and evils exist in the world created by a perfectly good God. Conceivably, the most obfuscating question concerning the connection between morality and the belief in God, is the problem of evils, which is consistent with the existence of God. That is, God and evil existing in the world in *pari passu* (God's goodness and evil existing side by side), which seemingly suggestive of a paradox of “excluded middle”.

If God exists and He is omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresence (all-presence at all-times), and omniscience (all-knowing), and omnibenevolent (perfectly good), then, why would such a God allows so much evils, natural disasters and devastations, large-scale cataclysms, and calamitous global political or social upheavals, such as hurricanes and tsunamis, tornadoes and typhoons, earthquakes and avalanches, the outrageous Holocaust (the genocide of European Jews during the Second World War, in Nazi Germany), the South African apartheid that existed from 1948 to the mid-1990s), the 1994 Rwanda genocides, the event of September 11, 2001 coordinated terrorists attacks in the United States, all manners of wars characterised by awful killings and bloodlettings, and all sorts of unimaginable atrocities and tragedies to happen in this world? Simply put, why should evil happen to innocent (good) people with the full awareness of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God?

The problem of evil in the world is not just a conceptual, intellectual, or theoretical one, evil is real, ostensible, and ubiquitous. Therefore, this article explores new ways of thinking about this longstanding problem, bearing in mind the essentiality of reorienting and reinvigorating the philosophical discourse around the nexus between God and goodness, and evil events, with

superlatively refreshing outcome. In epistemic procedure terms, this article uses existentially informed thematic analysis to rationalistically examine, the hermeneutic explanations of the problem of evil, theodicy and theistic approach, together with the Church's position and biblical allusions, as well as objections arising from theodicy as a defence of God amid the consistent occurrence of evil in the world.

Recrudescence and Trepidation of Evil: Hermeneutical Excursus

Broadly speaking, the problem of evil is not circumscribed to only human sufferings and miseries. It has now been expounded to non-human species, including all animals suffering from natural evil, and human cruelty to them, which in itself is evil and problem to the animals. Animals suffering such as diseases, natural disasters, fear and violence they face from predators is known as **Darwinian problem of evil**. This coinage is a derivative from the name, Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882), the English biologist, geologist, and naturalist, famously known for his evolutionary theory of science (theory of evolution). Darwin's work in 1856, wrote:

A being so powerful and so full of knowledge as God who could create the universe, is to our finite minds omnipotent and omniscient, and revolts our understanding to suppose that His benevolence is not unbounded, for what advantage can there be in the sufferings of millions of the lower animals throughout almost endless age (Barlow90).

The problem of evil applied to animals as a result of avoidable suffering they experience, is the one cause by human beings, such as animal cruelty or when they are shot or killed. This is evil to animals because, most animals are helpless, innocent, defenceless, amoral but sentient sufferers of these painful attacks.

Human cause of suffering is not only to animals but also to other fellow humans. According to Peter Kivy (1934 – 2017), there is a secular problem of evil. The secular problem of evil manifest in the pains and sufferings human beings inflict upon one another, as well as when one injures another through malicious damage or “unmotivated malice” without any ostensible rational explanation or justification. The problem of evil is generally considered a theistic one, but man's inhumanity to man, and human ruthlessness for ruthless sake is a secular problem of evil indeed. In reality, evil exists even if one is atheistic or gives up belief in God. In Kivy's view, the most extreme moral disbelievers believe that humans have a moral duty not to knowingly harm one and another. Psychological egoism and self-interest motivated by particulars or specifics such as ambitions, goals, and desires are some of the adduced reasons used to explain human evil, but these reasons are neither justificatory nor satisfactory to inflict any kind of evil on one and another.

Conceptually, the problem of evil is both philosophically systematised and intellectually compartmentalised into two forms, namely: **the logical problem of evil** and **the evidential problem of evil**. On the one hand, the logical problem of evil, centres on valid and sound arguments demonstrating a logical impossibility and incompatibility of the existence of God and evil existing concomitantly. The idea of **logical problem of evil** originated from Epicurus (341 -270 BC), the ancient Greek philosopher who established Epicureanism, a highly influential and prestigious school of philosophy. David Hume (1711 – 1776), the Scottish Enlightenment empiricist-philosopher concisely puts Epicurus version of problem of evil this way: “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is He impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then is He malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil (186).

The evidential problem of evil, also known as **the probabilistic or inductive version of the problem of evil**, attempts to prove that, given the fact that evil exist in the world, it is improbable, that is, highly unlikely, that there is an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God. **The probabilistic or inductive version of the problem of evil** tends to demonstrate that the existence of evil, even though logically consistent with the existence of God, counteracts the probability of the truth of theism.

Theistically and metaphysically, omnipotence, ought to imply absolute and maximal power to determine and control phenomena beyond the limits of human and scientific possibility. However, the views Karl Rosenkrantz (1805- 1879), and Donald D. Hoffman (b. 1955), captures that an almighty agent isn't inescapably obliged to beget or bring about insolvable situations. For both Rosenkrantz and Hoffman, minimal power possesses logical and temporal limitations, including but not limited

to the limitation, that an agent with almighty power cannot determine another agent's voluntary opinions.

Epistemologically, omniscience presupposes maximal knowledge, and this maximal knowledge is exclusive to the domain of the supernatural, that is, belonging to only the Supreme Being, God. As elucidatorily espoused by Edward Wierenga (1989), "maximal knowledge or power is not unlimited but limited to "God knowing what is knowable" (202-205). This Wierenga's view is the most widely accepted postulation about God's omniscience amongst contemporary scholars. William Haskett (b. 1935), calls the Wierenga's view, *freewill Theism*. The *freewill Theism* suggests that future events that are contingent upon and within choices of free will made by individuals, are not knowable until they materialise.

Metaethically, God as omnibenevolence is understood and seen as God who is all-good, and all-loving at all-times. This necessarily follows that, if God is all-good and all-loving, accordingly, he acts to what is absolutely ultimate, that is, what is best in view of any prevailing circumstances. Plausibly, if there is no best option or action available, God changes the events, situations, and circumstances, if possible and when necessary, to bring about the state of affairs that are both determinable and creatable as well as optimal within the limitations of physical reality.

From the above postulations and explication, the problem of evil is characterised by the rationale challenge of reconciling the belief in God as all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, and all-loving, alongside with the existence of all manners of evil and miseries in the world. This cognitive challenge arises from the assumption that God with His aforementioned stated characteristics, if He really does exist, will empathise with human perspectives, and wish to eradicate all evils as man sees and feels them. This assumption underscores theistic anthropomorphism, but not all theodicians would accept; that God has interacted at some point, and still interacting with the world, and He will continue to do so as He pleases. Human beings have the cognitive capacity to recognise and agree upon what is evil and render it intelligible by subjecting it into analytical and critical topical discourse.

Realistically, the problem of evil is double dimensional, this means, it can either be described experientially or analysed theoretically. *Experiential problem of evil* is the difficulty in believing in the conceptual love of all-good and all-powerful God when one is simultaneously experiencing a trial and travail of real evil in this present world. *Experiential problem of evil* includes, epidemic and pandemics like the ongoing coronavirus, wars and natural disasters with devastating consequences, whereby innocent people become victims. *The theoretical problem of evil* is the usual descriptions and discussions on the topic of evil and studied and analysed by theologians, philosophers, and religion scholars. The scholarly discussions on evil are subsumed under the categorisations of *the logical problem* and *the evidential problem of evil* earlier explained. Consequently, reactions to the problem of evil have classically been categorised into three formulated responses, which are: refutations, defences, and theodicies. Within the wider spectrum, the definition of evil encompasses any, and all pains and sufferings of any form or kind.

The Problem of Evil: Theodicy and Theistic Approach

In view of theistic response(s) to the question of evil in the world, believers in God have recourse to two major strategies: first, is the approach of theodicy. As defined by Alvin Plantinga, theodicy is the "answer to the question why does God permit evil in the world"(10) ostensibly, due to the consequences of sin committed by man. In other words, theodicy is a theological construct that attempt to vindicate God in response to the evidential problem of evil that mitigates against the existence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God. The second approach is an attempt which seems to be a more limited "defence" and does not explain God's purpose but apparently show that the existence of some evils in the world is logically compatible with God's goodness, wisdom, and power. However, many theologians, religious scholars and analytico-critical philosophers have disputed the first approach of theodicy as inherently implausible, and as an attempt that goes beyond the bounds of human knowledge to discern God's inscrutable purpose. It is indicative to note here that academic, logical, and legal knowledge or scholastic intellectualisation without deep rooted faith in God is not consequential to this intriguing and complicating theological discourse characterised by philosophical intricacies. Any attempt to analyse the problem of evil in the world without faith in God will be tantamount to "aprobata et repobata" (approbate and reprobate). Many scholars without faith in God have compartmentalised and intellectualised God over the problem of

evil in the world, thereby wallowing in intellectual idolatry and falling into the fallacies of “argumentum ad populum” and “argumentum ad hominem”.

Earliest and renowned theologians have only attempted to address the problem of evil from the moral perspective without satisfactory recourse to natural evil. St. Augustine of Hippo, the 4th-and-5th century theologian and philosopher was the first to develop Christian theodicy. He rejected the idea that evil exist in itself, instead, he regarded evil as a corruption of goodness cause by human abuse of free will. St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor of the Church, in his *Summa Theologiae*, used his famous *Quinque Viae* (Latin: five ways) to proof the existence of God as a rebuttal to atheistic view on the problem of evil in the world. Similarly, St. Anselm rejected the claim that God must eliminate evil in his *De Casu Diaboli*.

There is a plethora of plausible arguments proffered to the problem of existence of evil both in theodicies and the defence of the existence of a benevolent God. Argument of the free will defence purport and support the claim that evil is not caused by God but by human beings, who must be allowed to choose evil if they are to have free will. This argument presupposes that man is indeed free, but it fails to put into account natural evil, except if it is caused by human factors such humangreed and thoughtlessness.

The argument by Richard Swinburne, an English philosopher, has theological coloration. Swinburne opined that natural evil can be the means of learning and maturing. In order words, natural evil can help in cultivating virtues such as courage, and generosity by necessarily compelling humans to confront danger, adversity, and needs. This Swinburne's argument suggests eschatological belief, such as life after death, so much so that, there is a compensation or reward for human suffering by the way in which God brings good out of evil, even before the end of time.

However, since many theodicy arguments seem limited on the basis of the fact that one can easily imagine a better world devoid of evil, and since many theologians and religious scholars have not been convinced by the argument that the reality of the existence of evil in the world reinforces atheism and faithless in God, Christian rational analysis will attempt to balance the reality of the existence of evil in the world against the background of the evidence in favour of the existence of the perfect will and the permissive will of God for mankind. Essentially, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding about the problem of evil in the world, I herein pose some fundamental rhetorical questions in view of arriving at convincing and satisfactory answers in consolidation of our Christian faith: Is the problem of evil in the world cause by God, the devil, man, or all three agencies respectively or concomitantly at specific instances or circumstances? Does the existence of evil in the world negate the attributes of God as omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresence (all presence at all-times), omniscience (all knowing) and omnibenevolence (perfectly good)? If it does not, why then, should the all-knowing, all powerful and perfectly good God allows so much evil in the world? What is the view of the Scripture and the position of the Church on the problem of evil and human sufferings? Does the Church have any definite theological position deducible from the Sacred Scripture on why is there evil in the world created by a perfectly good God? It was deducible the book of psalm which explains that what is wrong with this world, and with us, is that mankind doesn't want God to be in charge. This whole world system is in loud revolt against God and his chosen ruler, his Messiah, his Christ. So we shouldn't expect it to be full of peace, prosperity, and contentment. In fact, the apostle Paul says, the whole of creation is groaning right now, waiting for release (Romans 8:22).

The Church's Position and Biblical Allusions on the Problem of Evil

Throughout the history of the Church, the existence and prevalence of evil in the world remain an inexplicable paradox to the Christian belief and claim that God is all powerful and infinitely good. *Ipsa facto* (by its very fact), the problem of evil has always required a comprehensive explanation arising from its attendant apprehensions. Consequently, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), clearly clarifies that the problem of evil is inscrutable, beyond human immediate comprehension or explanation. “If God the Father Almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice” (CCC #309). To fully grasp the Church's position on the problem of evil from the above Catechism, we need to juxtapose it with two other Catechisms.

Now, however, 'we walk by faith, not by sight', we perceive God as 'in a mirror, dimly' and only 'in part'. Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it(*CCC#164*).

Thus,

Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus 'the power of God and the wisdom of God'. 'For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men' It is in Christ Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe (*CCC#272*).

Deducing from the all the aforementioned Catechisms, the reality and response to the problem of evil is epitomised and summarised on Good Friday. The day of the crucifixion and death of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. By implication, the suffering and death of Jesus, as terrible it was, for us Christians it a recurring resilient reminiscence in recognition of the culmination of God's plan to redeem His people from evil, arising from the adamic fall and sins of humanity.

From the Catholic point of view and theology of the cross, evil may be an impetus for a greater good and outcome. God does bring good out of evil. The echoes of *Felix culpa* (happy fault, necessary sin of Adam), paved way for the incarnation and redemption of man. The biblical accounts of Joseph, Job, and Jesus underscore the unpredictable awesomeness of God amid the manifestation of evil.

Biblically, there are four kinds of theodicy, these include: (i) *The retributory theodicy* which suggests that suffering is brought about by God's holy indignation on evildoers (Cf. Genesis 3:14-19; Isaiah 29: 5-6; Ezekiel 38: 19; Romans 1: 24-32, 5:12, 6:23, 8: 20-21; Revelation 6: 12, 11: 13, and 16: 18). (ii) *The soul awakening theodicy* which implies that suffering shift our focus from self-centredness into other-centredness (Cf. Proverbs 10: 13, 13: 24, 22: 15, 23: 13-24, 29:15; Romans 5: 3-5; 2 Corinthians 4: 17; Hebrews 12: 5-11, James 1: 2-4; and 1 Peter 1: 6-7). (iii) *The permissive pain theodicy* postulates that God sometimes somehow allows pains and suffering to draw the attention of unbelievers and backsliding Christians in a non-coercive manner, so that they might turn from their sinfulness and vanities and consider spiritual and holy life. (Cf Luke 13: 1-15, as well as the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15). (iv) *The higher order good theodicy* upholds that some good cannot exist without some elements of evil preceding them. For instance, there is no courage without the pain, fear, or danger of loss; no sympathy or empathy without the suffering of others; no forgiveness or atonement without sin; and no triumph without trial or travail, (Cf. Ephesians 1: 13-10, 1 Peter 1: 18-20)

Theodicy: A Defence of the Goodness of God amidst Objections Arising from the Problem of Evil in the World

Theodicy is the rational and intellectual human attempt to justify the actions and vindicate the inactions of God in response to the evidentiality of the existence of evil present in the world. Theodicy seems to provide analytical and critical framework within which God's existence is both logically possible and theologically plausible with the prevalence of evils and sufferings in the world. Gottfried Leibniz (1646 – 1716), derivatively coined the term theodicy in his work, in 1720, *Theodicee*. In this work, Leibniz, particularly postulated a comprehensive theodicy that God had adequate reason to bring into existence the actual world, irrespective of all its evils, because it is the best of all possible worlds, and all actual evils are essential components in it, such that omitting any of them would tarnish the design of the whole (Theodicy §110).

The problem of evil has elicited and still eliciting the question, why would a benevolent God, with all His classical theological characteristics as all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good, permits the manifestation of evil to consistent with His existence? This specific question has led ancient and modern, as well as contemporary philosophers, critical thinkers, meta-physicists, existentialists, theologians, and both secular and evolutionary ethicists, to identify various theodicies. John Hick, the British philosopher traced and categorised the history of moral theodicy

into three major traditions: First, the Plotinian Theodicy, named after the Hellenistic Greek philosopher Plotinus (204/5 - 270 BC); secondly, the Augustinian theodicy, based on the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo developed by Hick; and thirdly; the Irenaean theodicy, also developed by Hick, based on the thinking of St. Irenaeus.

Amongst the pre-modern philosophers and theologians in the Islamic tradition was Max Weber (1864 – 1920), the German philosopher who viewed theodicy as a social problem arising from man's unbridled curiosity and inclination to explain enigmatic realities of the world. In the same vein, Peter Ludwig Berger (1929 – 2017), the Austrian-born American sociologist and Protestant theologian, opined that religion emerged from a need for social order and an implicit theodicy of all social orders arose to sustain it. Meanwhile, as a reaction to the obnoxious events of the Holocaust, considerable numbers of Jewish theologians articulated a response to the problem of evil, known as **anti-theodicy**, maintaining that God can neither be meaningfully justified nor vindicated for allowing the Holocaust. In lieu of theodicy, Alvin Carl Plantinga (b. 1932), the American analytic philosopher of religion and epistemologist concentrated on explicating logical possibility of God's existence. Plantinga argued that the concomitant existence of God and evil is not logically impossible, and his free will defence supports the occurrences of evil in the world without diminishing the fundamental goodness and existence of God.

In view of counterbalancing the free will defence of the co-existence of God and evil in the world, the conceptual analyses of the paradoxes of omnipotence, and omniscience, is consequential in rationalising and philosophising about a benevolent God as all powerful, and all knowing, alongside with evidential reality of evil in the world. In the paradox of omnipotence, a difficulty of understanding and explanation arises when it is claimed that God, having endowed man with freedom, definitely can, but would not prevent man's free will and its misuse. This then, generates a fundamental question: can God create what is beyond his control? Simply put, how would the all-powerful God create what he cannot control? Any answer proffered to this question(s) would appear to be inconsistent with God's omnipotence, and as a result, an apparent necessity for flexible and adaptable adjustment of the concept of omnipotence as capacity to do anything logically possible requires esoteric comprehension.

The paradox of omniscience focuses on the problems over how God's foreknowledge can be compatible with his timelessness, on the ground that omniscience implies foreknowing and all-knowing of future occurrences, including human actions (in moral evil) and natural cataclysms (in natural evil). Arguably, foreknowledge is not always meaningfully ascribable to timelessness, hence the conceptual meaning of omniscience required modification; such that, foreknowledge of an action would be consistent with both freedom and free will. By implication, even though God is perceived as not able to genuinely foreknow free actions, is omniscience is therefore and only limited, as a condition of granting human freedom.

By and large, theodicy argues that occurrences of evil are logically necessary for greater good. Therefore, an omnipotent God whose power has no contingent logical limits would have the morally sufficient reasons to permit or cause evils in order to bring an attendant betterment. For instance, permitting hardships for full exemplification of certain virtues. Besides the concerns about whether actual evils are in fact necessary for greater good, this presupposition is confronted and fraught with the question whether it wrongly assumes that the end justify the means. Integral to theodicy is the traces of all or some evils to sinful free will of human or supernatural beings, such as fallen angels or disembodied evil entities (demons). Proponents of this proposition, presuppose that free will action in any creature either human or spiritual, is of enormous value, and is logically incompatible with divine causal control of creatures' actions or activities. This by implication suggests that God is not intervening to prevent sins is necessary, even though sins by their very facts are not, for the good of the sinners, and the society.

The aforementioned presupposition is a morally sufficient reason for God, not avoiding avoidable evils. It is a herculean task of clarity and conviction for this kind of theodicy to explicitly explain why God would permit those evils that are not themselves outcomes of free choices of His creatures, but the creatures, mostly humans suffer the devastating consequences of such evils. Most religious theodicies focus more on ostensible outcomes rather than origins. Some religious beliefs are embedded in eschatology and therefore, suggest the immanetisation of the eschaton. Meaning, God's goodness would be bestowed in a life after death, after the suffering and travail of experiencing evil in this present world. This belief may be combined with one or other types of theodicies which

also addresses the problem of evil “to make the existence of an all-knowing, all-powerful and all-good or omnibenevolent God consistent with the existence of evil or suffering in the world” (Pecorino Ch. 3, Section 11).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the discourse on the existentiality of evil in the world is one of the most intricate problems of intellectual history and an open-ended intellectual and religious omnibus. Not until relatively recently, the problem of evil is not openly discussed amongst many Christians on the ground that doing so, seemingly constitutes absence of personal faith in God and compromises the reality of the existence of God. A lot of irreligious reflective thinkers, and promoters of secular humanism and transhumanism are persuaded that the problem of evil is insoluble. The reason for such underlying persuasion is the so-called “powerful argument against the existence of God”, which is formulated thus: If there is an all-powerful and all-knowing, perfectly good God, He would certainly not permit the continuous occurrence of vast amounts of horrific evil and horrendous sufferings, and since such evil and sufferings exist, then, God does not exist.

The repudiation of this argument is a simple counterfactual conditional question: Is God defined by categorical syllogistic logic or understood in the context of a paradox of both the logical and legal principle of “excluded middle”? Obviously not! Therefore, God cannot be a subjunctive conditional to human logic or rationalisation. God cannot be compartmentalised, and God cannot also be characterised by syllogistic enthymemes. That is, where there are sound rhetorical and truncated syllogisms without valid conclusions. The reality of the existence of God amid the problem of evil is not determined by enthymematic arguments – arguments that are appropriately appraised by deductive standard whose premises are partially consequential to the contextual conclusions. A conventional, cogent, coherent, and profoundly resounding logical arguments and critical thinking do not epistemically define God, despite the existence of evidence of evil in the world. From religious perspective and spiritual experiences, we do not need a *modus tollendo ponens* or a prepositional calculus in complex predicated logic to decipher the supremacy and benevolence of God albeit the problem of evil.

There are various facts and facets to the problem of evil, and for scholars and all peoples who are unfamiliar with the subject, grasping the main issues can be a daunting undertaking. Indisputably, 'the problem of evil' presents profound problem to humanity. As a result of this challenging problem, many philosophers and theologians have abandoned the needed explanation of evil embedded in the concept of theodicy. However, academic approach to theodicy unavoidably capitulates to theological abstraction and deficit, incapable of any concrete connection to Christian faith, life, and practice. Nevertheless, irrespective of the problem of evil in the world, God is real, supremely powerful, foreknowing, and benevolent. The occurrence of evil in the world does not vitiate the supremacy and omni-potency of God. Therefore, anyone who denies or disbelieves the existence of God thematically because of the problem of evil, is only affirming or believing God unthematically. This truism is characterised by analytical truth by synonymy and analytical truth by tautologous.

Works Cited

- Adams Robert Merrihew and Adams Marilyn McCord, *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Audi Robert (ed.) *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Barlow, Nora (ed.) *The autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969.
- Bryan Frances, *Gratuitous Suffering and the Problem of Evil*. Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.
- Card Claudia, *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Chapman Geoffrey, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. London Cassell Imprint, 1994
- Flew Anthony, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. London: Pan Books Ltd, 1984
- Geivett Douglas R., *Evil and the Evidence for God: The Challenge of John Hick's Theodicy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

- Hume David *Dialogues Concerning Natural religion* Penguin Books Limited (1779). Inwagen Kivy, Peter “Melville's Billy and the Secular Problem of Evil: The worm in the Bud” *The Monist* 63:4 (1980), pp.480-493
- Leibniz Gottfried Wilhelm, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1985.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Theodicy—Essays on the Goodness of God, of the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*, ed. Austin Farrer, trans. E.M. Huggard. London: Routledge & K. Paul.(1952 [1710]).
- McBrayer Justin P. and Snyder Daniel Howard, *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishers, 2013.
- Pecorino, Philip A. “Chapter 3: 'Philosophy of Religion', Section 11: Problem of Evil”. *An Introduction to Philosophy: An Online Textbook*. Queensborough Community College. (2000).
- Peterson Michael L., *The Problem of Evil: Selected Readings*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.
- Plantinga Alvin, *God, Freedom and Evil*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Scott Mark S.M., *Pathways in Theodicy: An Introduction to the Problem of Evil*. Minneapolis: 1517 Media, 2015.
- Swinburn Richard, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Van, Peter *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Wierenga, Edward R. *The Nature of God: An Inquiry Into Divine Attributes*. Cornell University Press. (1989). pp. 202–205.