

IS THEODICY POSSIBLE?



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Arguments for God's Existence

- Pythagorean: Laws of nature: simple, elegant, exact, universal, anthropic, suggestive, hierarchical — discoverable.
- Beauty and diversity of life (T. Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*)
- Thought, solving problems at the scale of the Universe, discovering its laws.
- If thought is not fundamental, there is no reason to trust and value its cosmic-scale efforts.
- Kant's practical argument: strength of duty and the source of inspiration.
- Argument of gratitude (sort of Pascal's wager)
- All these arguments support and complement each other. However...

Ethical Conflict

If God created the world with

1. significant evil and
2. conscience, intolerant to evil,

what is the meaning of this contradiction?

He does not care?

He does not see it?

He is not sophisticated enough?

Each of these variants is morally catastrophic.

If none of them is true, does it mean that He wants this contradiction?

May this contradiction be a consequence of God's perfection?

The problem of Theodicy is essential and crucial for Christianity.

Does *Free Will* Resolve the Problem?

Why God did not create all humans good and wise as saints and sages?

Their wills were not less free than those of stalins and hitlers.

They are all different, and each of them is in most likeness to God.

Why God allowed natural, totally meaningless evil?

How free will could justify that?

Negative Theodicy:

Is it reasonably possible,
to reconcile an idea of the perfect Creator
with a lot of evil,
human and natural?

Hick's Theodicy

In which way man can be an image and likeness of God?

Man has to be to a significant degree self-dependent creator not only of external things but of himself.

Man has to be the material, logos, author and goal for himself.

This divine project requires evolution, with as low as possible initial condition.

Man will never be God; the goal is growth to God.

Freedom, audacity of thought is principal.

God can be only hidden (epistemologically distant), its existence uncertain.

The world must look like determined by laws and chance; natural evil must be present.

Human and natural evils are those which we have to overcome, being strongly motivated.

We should not fall asleep in a steady state of Eliade's "eternal return": a sharp sense of evil is a great motivation to move on.

God shares our pain and joy, saving us and leading to Him.

Did Fall Ever Happen?

“... today we can acknowledge that there is no evidence at all of a period in the distant past when humankind was in the ideal state of a fully realized “child of God.” We can accept that, so far as actual events in time are concerned, there never was a fall from an original righteousness and grace. If we want to continue to use the term “fall,” because of its hallowed place in the Christian tradition, we must use it to refer to the immense gap between what we actually are and what in the divine intention is eventually to be. But we must not blur our awareness that the ideal state is not something already enjoyed and lost, but is a future and as yet unrealized goal. The reality is not a perfect creation which has gone tragically wrong, but a still continuing creative process whose completion lies in the eschaton.”

John Hick, in “The Problem of Evil: Selected Readings, Second Edition (p. 266). University of Notre Dame Press. Kindle Edition.

I think that
Hick's approach solves the problem:
it suggests
a coherent negative theodicy.

To have maximal space for growth
in more and more likeness to God,
we were placed at low start,
to overcome more and more evil,
being faced with 'meaningless'
natural and accidental pain.

I cannot imagine a greater gift.