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The Problem of Evil

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by Leslie Allan

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The existence of evil, pain and suffering is considered by many philosophers to be the most vexed question concerning the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect deity. Why would a loving God permit wanton acts of cruelty and misery on the scale witnessed throughout human history? Leslie Allan leads a discussion on common theistic responses to this problem, exploring how each approaches the problem and outstanding issues. He then examines a theistic defence designed to show that the problem of evil is not a problem at all.

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Argument:

Premise 1: If an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent god exists, then evil does not.

Premise 2: There is evil in the world.

Conclusion: Therefore, an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God does not exist.

Theodicy must explain:

Types of evil: 'moral evils' (human agents) and 'natural evils' (natural events)

Amount of evil: Could God's purpose be achieved with a lesser amount?

Distribution of evil: geographical, economic/social position, temporal

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