



## Research Paper

# Divine Justice and the Problem of Evils

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## Abstract

The issue of the existence of evil in the world has been the most important argument for atheists in denying God and religion. They say that in view of the absolute perfection of God, there should be no evil in the world, while evils exist in the world. Philosophers and religious theologians have tried to show in the face of these doubts that there is no incompatibility or conflict between the belief in divine justice and the issue of evil. Another issue raised regarding the issue of evil is resorting to it to deny the existence of God, which of course can at most distort the existence of a just God and cannot prove the non-existence of God. In this article, we will examine the views of several contemporary religious philosophers on the compatibility or incompatibility of the existence of evil with divine justice, and in particular, we will analyze their views on several issues: first, what factors prevent God from intervening in preventing the occurrence of evil, and whether these factors justify God's action in such a way that His non-intervention is compatible with His justice. Second, what role does the occurrence of evil in human life play in strengthening the human spirit and providing the conditions for his growth? And finally, whether the claim of skeptical theism regarding our ignorance of God's evidence for not preventing the occurrence of evil can solve the problem of evil, or does this claim itself confront us with new problems.

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## Extended abstract:

### 1. Introduction

One of the important issues in the philosophy of religion is the issue of the existence of evil in the world, the explanation of which has always been a problem for religious thinkers. On the other hand, this issue has been the most important tool for atheists in denying God and religion. They raise this issue in two places: one in the discussion of divine attributes and the other in the issue of the existence of God. What is mentioned in their words regarding divine attributes is doubt in the attribute of divine justice, in the sense that they say that in view of the absolute perfection of God, which is manifested in all of His attributes, especially omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnibenevolent, there should be no evil in the world, while we see that evil exists in the world. In this world, we see that some people are born in luxury and comfort and grow up, while others are born in poverty and misery, and they face difficult and sometimes disastrous conditions until the end of their lives, and they are in these difficult conditions until the end of their lives. One is born into a religious and god-believing family, and the other into an atheist and atheistic family; one into a wealthy and well-off family, and the other into a poor and helpless family. These show that human beings are not in equal conditions, and therefore it cannot be said that God has placed them in equal positions and established justice between them. If God is omnipotent and is able to do anything, except for the impossible, that is, what would lead to contradiction, then why does He not prevent evil from occurring in the world?

Philosophers and religious theologians have tried to show in response to these

doubts that there is no incompatibility or conflict between the belief in divine justice and the issue of evil. Among the reasons they have given is that evil is either non-existent or the origin of non-existent things. Another is that the existence of evil is necessary for human free will, in the sense that giving free will requires that man has the ability to perform evil acts, and of course, God will punish those evil acts on the Day of Resurrection. Another answer is the theory of compensation or retribution, according to which God has established a balance between this world and the next, such that the more blessings and less hardship a person has in this world, the more intense the demand in the next world, and the less blessings and more hardship he has, the easier the demand in the next world. In other words, on the Day of Resurrection, God will hold each person accountable for the blessings He has bestowed upon him. In this article, we will examine the views of some contemporary religious philosophers on the relationship between divine justice and the problem of evil.

### 2. Methods

In writing this article, the method of theoretical study and philosophical analysis of issues has been used, so this is not a field study, but rather it is based on research in written works.

### 3. Results

The findings of this research include an analysis and critique of the thought of a number of contemporary philosophers of religion on the issue of the existence of evil and divine justice. And because this research is a philosophical study, its results can be theoretical findings and naturally do not have empirical findings.



## 4. Conclusion

At the beginning of the article, we saw that, on the one hand, Salamon believes that elements such as human agency, the provision of the ground for human spiritual growth, the desirability of divine concealment, and the necessity of order in the universe require God's non-interference in preventing the occurrence of evil. On the other hand, those such as Rojka and Halamova believe that the existence of evil in the universe, as an indisputable fact, is incompatible with divine attributes, especially omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnibenevolent, and that the denial of any of these divine attributes entails the denial of the existence of God. In the capacity of arbiter between these two views, it can be said that the incompatibility of the existence of evil with divine attributes is acceptable if no solid evidence can be provided for the necessity of God's tolerance of evil, while we know that different evidences such as human free will and the theory of exchange can show the compatibility between the existence of evil and the existence of God. Another issue that was considered in this article was the issue of the effect of mental tensions caused by evil on human spiritual development. Another issue examined in the article was that according to Harrison's skeptical theism, since moral virtues are different for humans and God, we cannot be confident in our understanding of God's reasons for not preventing evil, and rather, these reasons are not revealed to us. Therefore, we cannot subject God's actions to moral judgment in this regard. Therefore, one

way to escape the problem of evil is to appeal to our ignorance of God's reasons, which in itself eliminates the problem of the occurrence of unjustified evil. However, Harrison's view, which is actually an appeal to the theory of exclusion in the past theological tradition, produces problems, some of which we have quoted from Linford. In the end, as a final judgment, it can be said that there are two important theories regarding divine attributes and the possibility of comparing them with human attributes: the theory of comparability and the theory of incomparability; however, since defending the theory of incomparability requires promising to close the minds in understanding divine attributes and distorts the similarity to God as the ultimate goal of human perfection, it is possible to believe in the theory of comparability and, with the help of Mulla Sadra's theory of gradation of existence, consider divine attributes to be the highest level of human attributes and speak of the comparability of God's attributes with human attributes.

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### Authors' contribution

This article has just one author.

### Conflict of interest

Author declares no conflict of interest.

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