

**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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TOPIC: GOD VERSUS EVIL; A THOMISTIC PERSIPECTIVE.

STUDENT NAME:

NYABARO FRANKLINE JOHN.

REG. NO.

20/00418

SUPERVISOR.

REV. FR. DOMINIC MUTUKU (OP)

**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BA. IN PHILOSOPHY.**

NAIROBI-KENYA.

2022.

DECLARATION.

I officially state that this is entirely my own original work, not the product of anyone else.

Name:

Date

Signature:

Supervisor

Date

Signature

HOD

Date

Signature.

DEDICATION

Special dedication to my mother Jackline Kerubo, my brother John Kaiser and all my relatives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

My gratitude to Rev. Prof Apollinaire Chushugi, Rev. Fr. Dominic Mutuku and Rev. Dr. Oliver Babirye. Their efforts of making me know more about the existence of God and evil. They have really done their best to make me understand these two concepts. These have moved me to make a reconciliation of the two based on St. Thomas of Aquinas's views.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

It has been a challenge in our lives today how to balance the presence of God with evil in this world. The evil that brings suffering in our lives every day raises a question which takes a lot of time to answer. The question of the existence of God in the presence of evil. How can the omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omnipresent God exist in the world where evil brings suffering? This becomes a big challenge but using some of the Thomistic views we shall make a clear distinction of the existence of the two. Reconciling the attributes of God with what evil brings in the world, makes it difficult to agree that God exists. Also, it raises more questions about God and his existence. This essay is prepared to reconcile the two using the Thomistic views.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

Problem or rather evil and suffering in this world are inevitable in the sense that they have become part of human life. Suffering has been apprehended as a phase in the human life in the light that when a person undergoing suffering, there is always the hope that it is in a short time and time being a master healer, that period of suffering will pass. Although evil and suffering are inevitable, there is need to question on the incipience of this evil and why it exists. There has emerged a debate on how to reconcile the co-existence of God who is supreme and perfectly holy with evil and suffering. If really, God is all knowing, why can't He know the evil before it happens and prevent it? This is a significant problem that has prompted some to contest the idea that God exists. The presence of evil in the society is axiomatic, it less needs demonstration for justification. Evil and suffering are approached from religious and philosophical perspectives.

The Christian approach seems to be a more coherent response to evil and suffering. St. Augustine, following the thought of Plotinus says that is the privation of the good and also emphasized that this is a consequence of the free will. Even though the will is what makes us to choose what is right or wrong, for those born blind or with some disabilities, is not their will, it is the nature has defined it to be so. Evil is a privation of the good; it is not a created creature. We need to take a close look at how evil and suffering may be reconciled with the existence of God in order to provide a solution to this issue.

This question has been tackled by many philosophers who have given their views on the subject matter, and we shall look at them at the literature review. Also, there are those who deny the existence of the supreme being and have given also their views and mostly they are

known as atheists; For them humanity is the key, that is to say whatever is done by a being for the service or good for the other being without harm, you have achieved good life. The search for the existence of God who is omnipotent and omnipresent, who allows evil to exist has been there from ages.¹ It is given that there are three intellectual beliefs that God thought to be serving. These provide an explanation of the nature of the universe and the certainty that life is worthwhile, which is the ultimate destiny of all people. But the fundamental query here is: How can an all-powerful and all-benevolent God allow for evil to exist? Why can't he stop it before it happens? These questions remain a task for us to answer them in order to make others not confuse the existence of both God and evil.

As said earlier, according to St. Augustine, evil results from our own free will, which means that when we make the wrong decisions or act on them, we are committing an act of evil. Theistic explanations of the world cannot adequately explain the issue of evil; as a result, theism is viewed as a broad hypothesis that attempts to explain some important facts and is disproved to the extent that it fails to do so.²

According to St. Anselm, God is a being than which no greater can be conceived.³ He defines God as great being from which no other being can be compared to. According to Anselm, the presence of God results from the concept of a being that cannot be thought of as being larger than it is. St. Anselm believed that if such a being stopped existing, then a larger being could be created, specifically, a being that both exists and cannot be considered to be greater than it.

¹ MCKLOSKEY J, *God and evil*, (martinusnijhoff 1974), 1.

² ROWE W, *God and the problem of evil*, (Blawell publisher ltd 2001), 125.

³ M.J. Charlesworth, *St. Anselm's proslogium*, (university of Notre Dame press 1979),117

The supreme being enjoys a lot of attributes and qualities. These attributes and qualities are also supported by the scripture. Job 42:2 makes reference to a God who is able to bring about any state affairs that must adhere to the laws of logic, that is, that it must be logically possible in itself and at the same time be logically consistent with other fundamental attributes of God. This verse makes clear reference to God as being all-powerful. The second characteristic of God is His omnipresence, which is demonstrated in Jeremiah 23:23–24. Because He is fully present in all of space and time and is everywhere at once, everything occurs in His presence. Additionally, the book 1 John 1:9, Jr. 12.1 mentions the attribute Omnibenevolent, which is fully excellent. This attribute is regarded to be the inventor of moral principle; as a result, he is the core of all moral norms and acts in accordance with those norms. The all-powerful deity desires for His creation to consistently reflect the same good. Isaiah 40:28, which refers to God as being all-knowing and omniscient, provides support for this belief. This implies that he is aware of all that has already happened, is happening, and will happen according to God's plan.

God is a spiritual being even though he has the ability to influence physical entities because He is not a corporeal material. This indicates that He is an embodied agency. Psalm 90:1-4 states that God is self-existent, which means that He is unchangeable from eternity to eternity. God has His own essence or being, which makes His existence obvious. This indicates that his existence is ontologically independent and does not depend on any other reality. It is thought that he is the creator and sustainer of everything visible and invisible. Because He owns existence in Himself, everything He made draws its existence from Him.

MEANING OF EVIL.

When we are talking of evil, it can be described in several different ways. It can be a negative or destructive energy and thus being given some words such as bad, unjust, painful, suffering, painful and many others. Evil can also be described as something which is harmful to the well-being of humanity. Also, it can be the presence of doing which is bad that means that the absence of doing good. As we can see, we can describe evil as pain and suffering. To make a distinction of these two words we can say that pain is a sensation causing effect that is subjected to physical torture of an individual. These cause the tortured individual to suffer in misery. Suffering is a state of mind that the mind experiences whether or not anything is going to get better. Physical or emotional suffering can be classified as pain. Rowe emphasized that extreme human and animal suffering always takes place on a daily basis. This fact is pervasive in our world and is undeniably proof of evil, he said. He also argued that the existence of intense suffering which the omnipotent, omniscient being could have turned away without thereby losing some greater good, or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.⁴

This indicates that evil has started to interfere with our daily lives and appears to prevail over good. Rejecting either the presence of a theistic God or the existence of evil is the most straightforward method to find a solution to this conundrum. The presence of God is still being defended by theologians, and the existence of evil cannot be questioned because it is obvious. These are now grappling with the problem of evil and the existence of God. So, in an effort to bring the two into harmony, I have now reached St. Thomas' viewpoints. We will then proceed to employ the Thomistic justifications to support the presence of both God and evil.

⁴ Rowe W, *the problem of evil and some varieties of atheism*, (American philosophical Quarterly 16, 1979), 335.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

In our case, we assert that even though God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good, evil nevertheless exists. These claims may be illogically contradictory or logically improbable to be true simultaneously. Even if some theists claim that all of the claims are true, there appears to be a conflict between them. According to J.L. Mackie, the paradox is resolved provided we assume a further premise that links the terms "good," "evil," and "all-powerful." These additional propositions are that good is opposed to evil, in such a way that the good things always eliminate evil as far as it can.⁵ Even though it seems contradictory, theists accept the truth of both the existence of God and evil in the same world. Investigating if the two statements can be reconciled or combined is the task that remains. Thus, this essay aims to examine the two, bring them into harmony, and help us recognize that they exist independently of one another.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW.

1.3.1 EXISTENCE OF GOD.

In an effort to refute theistic claims about the presence of a monotheistic God, atheists create the conundrum of God's existence and the existence of evil existing simultaneously. This argument remains so powerful claim in the weapon against theism.

In the medieval times we have great apologist who have greatly defended the existence of God against evil whereby St. Thomas agrees with them all. These apologists are also known

⁵ J. L. Mackie, *freedom and omnipotence, mind*, vol 64 No. 254, 1955), 202

as early church fathers and really, they give a strong spontaneous knowledge of God is common to all men, including even the pagans.⁶

Some of these apologists are like Clement of Alexandria who says that in all men there are certain seeds of divinity by virtue of which they are impelled to think God as first cause and ruler of all things.⁷

St. Irenaeus asks rhetorically that how could be possible for any creature to be ignorant of God, by seeing that they all exists in Him and from Him and are all contained in him.⁸ He explains that God, through invisible by reason of His eminence, could never be unknown to men because of the manifestation of his providence, the divine rule clearly extends to all things. That is why, the natural reason with which we are endowed move us to know that there is one God, the Lord of all things.⁹

Tertullian states unequivocally that a particular understanding of God is the soul's original endowment. In his celebrated text he explains, 'O testimony of the soul, which is by natural instinct Christian.'¹⁰ The soul is naturally house of the body, even though it is ensured by untrue opinions, victimized by false learning, indeed it remains Christian even though weakened by lust and concupiscence and chained to false gods. He continues and says that for when it awakens as from intoxication or sleep or some sickness and enjoys health again, then it

⁶ Anderson F. James, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*, (The Bruce Publishing company, 1956) 4.

⁷ *Cohitoadgentes*, ch.6, PG 8,174

⁸ Cf. *Adversushaereses*, Bk. II, ch. 6; PG6, 724

⁹ James F. Anderson, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*, (The Bruce Publishing company, 1956) 5

¹⁰ Cf. (O testimonium animaenaturaliterchristianae,) *Apologeticusadversusgentes*, ch. 17; PL 1, 433

utters the unique name of God, because it is He alone who is properly speaking the one, true being.

St. Cyprian likewise makes the same point to make people in general to naturally acknowledge the existence of God. He asks why is this so? He answers that the reason is precisely because it is God Himself who is the author and source of man's mind and soul. He also declares in a striking passage that it is the very height of transgression for men to be unwilling to recognize Him when they cannot possibly ignore.¹¹ '...the crowd naturally acknowledges God in many ways, when their minds and souls are reminded of their author and prince, he continues and says, but the heights of transmigration, which is *summa delicti*, to be unwilling to acknowledge him whom you cannot possible ignore.'¹²

Additionally, St. Jerome makes the astounding claim that since no one can be born apart from Christ, all individuals are born with an inherent knowledge of God, even as it is impossible not to have in oneself the seeds of wisdom and of justice and of the virtues.¹³

St. Augustine in one of his commentaries on St. John's gospel, he says, 'God could not possibly be hidden altogether from any creature having the use of reason because he is, quite apart from revelation whatever, naturally known to all men as the author of the world.'¹⁴

We discover a remarkable degree of agreement on this topic of natural knowledge of God as we read the medieval thinker on whom our essay is based. While their justifications differed considerably, they all maintained the same factual claims.

¹¹James F. Anderson, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*

¹² Cf. *Liber de idolorum vanitate*, No.9; PL4, 577

¹³*Commentary of the epistle to Galatians*, Bk 1, Ch. 1, v. 15; PL26,326.
Cf. *Jerome's commentary on St. Paul's epistle to Titus*, ch.1, PL 26, 570.

¹⁴*In Joannis Evangelium*, tr. 106; PL 35, 1910.

St. John Damascene laid it down that, ‘the knowledge of God’s existence is naturally placed in us by God himself.’¹⁵ After sometime later we find St. Anselm making a conclusion which he considered to be ultimately and necessary implied by this “naturalness” of man’s knowledge of God’s existence, namely, that His nonexistence is truly unthinkable.¹⁶

Some scholastics in the Middle Ages developed a large body of naturalism and spontaneous doctrines of such knowledge with various explanations of its obscure and conceptually indistinct character. Some of these scholastic philosophers are like Alexander of hales, St. Alberto the great, St. Bonaventure and Dun Scotus, even went as far as to claim that comprehending the conception of any entity, although very vaguely, was possible, and even went as far as to claim that comprehending the conception of any entity, although very vaguely, was possible.¹⁷

St. Thomas agrees with all the Christian doctors on the fact of man’s having some natural knowledge of God. In his work Summa Theological he says, “to know, in general and confused way, that God exists is naturally implanted in us, in as much as God’s existence is self-evident, for man naturally desires beatitude and what is naturally desired by man is naturally known by him.”¹⁸ In agreement to this fact, however, he sees a real difficulty and he questions as St. John Damascene say that knowledge of God is implanted in us, does that mean this kind of knowledge is innate? He continues and say if it is innate then it is not self-evident?

¹⁵*De fide orthodoxa*, Bk1, ch. 1, No 2; ed. E. Buyataert (St, Borniventure, New York: The Franciscan institute) “omnibus enim cognition exitendi Deum ab ipso naturaliter est.”

¹⁶ Cf. *Proloslogion*, Ch. III

¹⁷*In IV sententiarum*, 1. 1, dist. 3, q. 2, n. 3: “cognoscendo quodcumque ens ut hoc enest, indistinctissime concipitur deus.” 1. 1, dist. 3, q. 3, No. 26.

¹⁸ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Trans. By The Fathers of the English Province, (Benziner Brother, Chicago, 1947) Part 1, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1.

Up to this point don't we think that we are being driven to St. Anselm's conclusion that God's nonexistence is unthinkable? The fact of formal atheism makes that concern untenable.

The answer, according to St. Thomas, is that, God's existence is indisputable in and of itself because it is the essence. And this is all about his perception of the fundamental significance of Anselm's assertion that God is not a being and cannot be conciliated. Thomas continues, "God's existence is not self-evident to us who view His essence, yet the knowledge of His existence is said to be innate in us insofar as it is possible for us to come to know through principles which are intrinsic in us that God exists. In quote from St. Thomas' work," Because the predicate and subject of the assertion that God exists are the same, I assert that it is self-evident in and of itself. Although they are less obvious on their own, these things must be used to demonstrate the claim because we do not know what God is, therefore it is not self-evident to us."¹⁹

1.3.2 EXISTENCE OF EVIL AND SUFFERING.

According to St. Augustine, good works lead to integration while bad works lead to disintegration. He also claims that nature, which was essentially good, has been corrupted by evil. St. Augustine disavows Plotinus' notions about emanation, which were formulated out of incidental necessity. Instead, he embraces emanation that results from voluntary acts carried forth out of a love for God. Additionally, he asserts that the misuse of human free will is how evil first came to be. Man cannot behave in a way he does not choose to, but can only act in a way he wills to, which means we are free to do whatever we please. Hence, we must not believe that God gave us free will so that we might sin, just because sin committed through free

¹⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Trans, I, q. 2, a. 1

will.²⁰ Augustine is still adamant that God chose to create the universe. He also recognized that God had given man free will and formed him as a creature. As a moral being, man has the choice to either adore God or rebel against Him. This means that man has a choice of doing whatever of which is his choice. Then he says that the misuse of the free will has led to sin in the world. Now here is where St. Thomas comes in and set his bases of make the existence of God through his arguments to be in a way of proving the existence of God.

1.4 THE RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

One should eventually comprehend the meaning of evil and realize that the existence of evil and suffering in the world does not negate the existence of the omnipotent, omniscient, and completely good God via successful study of evil and suffering. Most things that are seen as evil in this world can be avoided. For instance, the numerous deadly accidents are typically the result of careless driving, drunk driving, and disregard for traffic laws. Therefore, an accident can be caused out of our own ignorance does not add up to blame God because God as given as the intellect where we are to reason well and choose well. In response to natural disasters and calamities for example volcanic eruption kills hundreds of people it should be understood that it is the nature of volcanos from mountain tops erupt, that they are created by God to do that means when they are erupting, they are doing what they are meant to do therefore this could be very hazardous to human life. We are in a position of comprehending all these that happen and we are capable of controlling them by use of our will as St. Augustine has told us earlier. God does not intervene in the happenings of nature. From the religious perspective suffering is a stepping stone to something greater.

²⁰St. Augustine, *on free choice of the will* (trans Anna Benjamin and L. Hackstaff New York Bobbs-Merrill, 1964) 36.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.

The reason to which the existence of God has become a problem, which needs deeper clarification for the understanding of the two is due to the arguments which are set in front of us to prove God who is all powerful, all knowing in the presence of evil. Hence this essay has come forth to reconcile the two and bring understanding amongst them. This essay is based on the Thomistic views.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY.

1. To understand the concept of evil and suffering, and also the concept God.
2. To explicate the types of evil in the universe.
3. To strike a balance between the reality of evil and the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing and completely good God.

1.7 STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Is the existence of evil evidence against the existence of God?
2. Is it possible to be liberated from evil and suffering?

1.8 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.

This work that I am devoted to focuses on explaining the problem of evil and suffering, its existence in the presence of all powerful and all-knowing God. To well comprehend this work some of the philosophical methods which I will use is rational method. This method is the stature of the intellect. The power of reason is logical and systematic which brings the flow of ideas. This intellectual approach will serve as an illustration of how the existence of God can resolve the logical conflict between evil and suffering. To add flavor to this work I will appeal to phenomenological method which will give us chance to go to things themselves particularly evil. The analytic method will be applicable to analyze the ideas which arise from my topic

through the study. I will indulge to the ideas of St. Thomas, also engage other philosophers on the views concerning this particular topic and eventually I will implore the historical method, this method provides a historical treatise to the problem on the development of thoughts concerning evil and suffering over the periods and the existence of God.

1.9 THE SCOPE AND LIMITATION.

The goal of the study is to use Thomistic principles to explain and reconcile the concept of the issue of evil and suffering with the existence of God. The goal of the research project is to determine whether God and evil can coexist peacefully. The study is restricted to ideas held by Christians, who believe in an all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-merciful God. This research explicates how the problem of have developed in the medieval time or period. It also focuses on giving the meaning of evil. The existence of God will be examined and made obvious in order to understand it, just as it will be in the problem of evil and suffering with its existence. I will analyze evil as understood by Christians and Muslims. This paper is limited to Christians and Muslims. Also, it is more limited to Thomistic views but other philosophers may be added on the way.

1.10 CONCLUSION.

The presence of evil can never diminish the reality of God. Evil is all about the will of man which St. Augustine talks about that makes man to sin hence brings evil and hence from these evil and suffering to man comes in. the attributes of God always are there and they can never change because of this evil. Augustine gives three kinds of evil that is moral, physical and metaphysical in which he says moral is due to our will, physical and metaphysic occur naturally. But all this can't make God not to exist. Despite that both God exists in the presence

of evil it doesn't make Him to be responsible of evil. That is to say good can exist without evil but evil can't exist in the absence of good.

CHAPTER 2.

2.1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES; THOMISTIC VIEW

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most crucial issues for human concern is whether or not to believe in the presence of a superior being, or God. By this, we imply that debating the existence of this all-powerful being known as God is among the most challenging undertakings. Whether the answer is favorable or negative, it will have a significant impact on how we view the world, as well as how we think, feel, and behave. Given the profound consequences the answer has for human life, it would be an overstatement to suggest that it is our obligation as rational creatures to consider the question.

The majority of individuals at some point or another try to figure out the meaning and purpose of life as intended by God. One must make an effort to accept the implications of this belief, which is that there is no personal scheme of things in which human life makes sense, if one comes to feel that it is rational to believe in the existence of God. It would seem that everything in the universe, including human life itself, is just a random accident. The implications of humanity's accidental creation for religion, morality, justice, the law, and other crucial human endeavors then demand serious consideration, no matter how challenging or unpleasant the solution may be.

To effectively describe the issue of evil, a thorough understanding of the concept of God is required. This notion has been defined in many different ways, and it is our understanding that each meaning has led to the various religions and denominations that exist today. Despite differing interpretations of this idea, all Christians from all backgrounds are impacted by the problem of evil. We delve thoroughly into St. Thomas' arguments for the existence of God in

this chapter. These arguments for the existence of God are based on the relationship between the nature of the universe and the presence of evil in the world.

2.1.2 WHAT DOES ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS DEFINE AS EXISTENCE.

According to St. Thomas he defines the existence as an act of being. What he calls the ‘actus assendi’. According to him, when existence is compared to everything else as an act, it is the most perfect thing there is. Nothing has reality other than what it already is, after all. As a result, existence itself is the reality of everything, including forms. It is more often likened as received to receiver than as receiver to received when compared to other things. Because when I talk about the existence of anything that exists, “existence itself is considered as formal and received, not however as that to which existence happens.”²¹ St. Thomas develops the point or view of Aristotle that it is the form which is the fundamental position of things. He suggests that even form must have a further actuality which is existence.

2.2 THE ARGUMENT OF GOD’S EXISTENCE.

The existence of God, as claimed by religions or other people, is a matter of philosophical debate. Philosophers try to determine whether there is any evidence for or against God's existence.

The a-posteriori and a-priori arguments are two categories used to classify the different arguments that have emerged. What sets these two apart from one another? When we talk of a-posteriori statements we mean that statements which needs empirical data and more research to be done for them to be proved true statements. While talking of a-priori statement we talk of statements which only need our reason to affirm that they are true. That means the statements

²¹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, q4, art. 1

which are going to be made are a-priori statements which need only reason to be proven true without any experience.

By focusing a lot on the realm of experience, the a-posteriori attempts to demonstrate the proof of God's existence. The arguments limit their premise that God can only be known by what we experience in the world by attempting to demonstrate that everything we encounter in the world must have a beginning. There must be a conclusion someplace, and this is where it is possible to identify God. The idea that every event in the world must have a cause-and-effect chain cannot continue indefinitely into eternity. The supporters of this argument made the second kind of a-priori claim that it is possible to know the presence of God apart from human experience. Pure reason in this situation supports the presence of God. This type of argument is formulated similarly to St. Anselm's ontological argument, whereas the a posteriori argument is similar to the cosmological and teleological arguments. St. Thomas' research focuses on the a-posterior argument, which claims that God exists based on how people interact with or perceive the world. To demonstrate the existence of God, we will rely on St. Thomas' beliefs.

2.3 THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BY ST. THOMAS.

The Greek words logos, which translate to "rational account," and cosmos, which means "world" or "universe," are the ancestors of this argument. The same argument has been made in several ways, but they are all united by the fact that there is a world rather than nothing, and that something outside of that world must have caused the world to exist. The five methods we can demonstrate the existence of God are laid out in St. Thomas' defense. Among these five approaches are:

1. The argument from motion

2. The argument from efficient cause
3. The argument from contingency and necessity
4. The argument from degree of perfection
5. The argument from design

The five approaches listed by St. Thomas are a-posterior, which implies they are derived from our experiences in the outside world. These arguments they come from man's experience with the world and are really influenced by Aristotle in his concept of four causes. These arguments are to be discussed deeply as follows.

2.3.1 THE ARGUMENT FROM MOTION.

To start, motion can be described as the localized movement of a thing, a person, or a substance. According to St. Thomas, everything in this universe is in motion, and nothing actually moves unless something else moves it or acts upon it. Up until an infinite mover, which cannot be forced to move yet causes other things to move, there is always a series of causes for things to move. He concludes by arguing that God is the "unmoved mover," who is what is driving other things to move. Our senses are able to recognize motion by seeing how objects interact with one another. Any movement is affected by outside forces.

In summa Theologica St. Thomas say;

“The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus, that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and

moved, i.e., that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.”²²

According to St. Thomas, God is the uncaused causer. In addition, things do change to other things due to the potency of them being to change to a particular thing which it has its potency. For example, we can talk of flour changing into ugali, that which has caused this flour to change into ugali is the cause that change. That means, if we continue that way we will reach somewhere where we can trace anymore its cause and that becomes the cause of everything which move or changes.

Another question which says, does it not immediately occur to us to ask whether living things which move themselves, are not an exception to the axioms that whatever is in motion is moved by another?²³ For sure the answer to this question is no. This is because self-movers must be moved to move themselves. Summa contra gentiles, a work of St. Thomas, states that, “on the subject of finite self-movers and the need to themselves, the following observations may be helpful. First of all, motion in its primary signification, refers to the local movement of the body substance. Taken in this sense, we can say that living things are self-movers, for it is obvious that animals and men, for example, can move themselves locally. However, if living bodies are to be self-movers in an absolute, primary sense, they must be moved by reason of themselves and not by reason of a part of themselves. That is a living body must be moved by

²²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q2. Art 3.

²³ Anderson F. James, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*, 26.

itself as a whole, and not a part by part, if it is to be primarily self-moved, for they are not moved as wholes, but by part, as when an animal is moved by the motion of its foot.”²⁴

He continues to say that, “if motion is taken in the wider sense of all change of whatever kind, even the motion involved in thinking and in willing, then the expression ‘finite self-movers’ would refer to spiritual substances such as the human soul and angels. But even here distinction must be made between the being of the human soul and of angels and their knowing and willing powers. Moreover, men and angels, in order to think or to will, must think things and will some good, so that ultimately their very actions of thinking and willing depends upon the causality of the true and the good, which depends on God.”²⁵

It is evident from our senses that certain objects are moved by other things, according to the argument from motion. Everything that moves is moved by someone else. That implies that whatever is moved by one must also be moved by another. In this way movement doesn’t mean the natural locomotion but that which receives the act of being. Where does this act of being come from? The simple answer to this question is from which causes everything to be, which is the unmoved mover.

In this case this unmoved mover makes the once which are existing move it means that yes it exists. Its existence can be shown or demonstrated in different way. It has caused something to change from one thing to the other and if that series continues to be so then it means we shall reach on the one which cannot be moved. This unmoved mover is what St. Thomas is calling God.

²⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One on God*, trans. Anton C. Pegis, (A Division of Doubleday and Company, New York, 1955) ch. 13.

²⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One on God*, ch. 13

2.3.2 THE ARGUMENT FROM EFFICIENT CAUSE.

This way is based on the nature of causation, it moves from dependent cause to independent causes.²⁶ St. Thomas asserts that causes are discovered to be arranged in series in the observable universe. There are initial causes, subsequent causes, and final causes. We never witness something producing itself because that would imply something which before itself, which is illogical. There must be an end to this causation. This emphasizes that there is an observable order of effective causes in the sensible world. Since the efficient cause of an action or effect comes before the action or effect, neither the ultimate cause nor any proximate causes would exist without the initial efficient cause.

Everything must have a cause, or something that has an influence on something else, because nothing can cause itself. Without the initial cause, subsequent causes would not exist. Therefore, God is the First Cause.

St. Thomas in his work *summa theologica* he states that;

“In the world of sense, we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore, it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.”²⁷

²⁶ Maurice m. Makumba, *natural theology with african annotations*, (pailines publication, nairobi, 2006) 60.

²⁷ thomas aquinas, *summa theologica*, part I, q. 2 art. 3.

Experience discloses which is undeniable facts that there is an order in the activities of sensible agents. In addition is that every cause is necessary prior in nature to its effects.²⁸We discover that there is a regular order of effective causes among material things. But since it would have to come before itself, which is not feasible, we do not find that anything is the effective cause of itself. The number of effective causes cannot increase indefinitely at this point. Since the first is the cause of the intermediate and the intermediate is the cause of the final, whether the intermediates are numerous or singular, provided we arrange all effective causes in order. There won't be a last or an intermediate cause if there isn't a first among efficient causes, but if we remove a cause, we also remove the effect. This is what men call God. A first efficient cause or any intermediate efficient causes won't exist, on the other hand, if we go on to infinity in efficient causes, which is a horribly false claim. It is therefore necessary to assume the existence of some initial effective cause, commonly known as God.

2.3.3 THE ARGUMENT FROM CONTINGENCY AND NECESSITY.

Being that everything in the world creates and destroys itself, it is possible for some things to exist or not at any given time. But nothing can be created out of nothing. It follows that something must be present at all times. That's God.

In *summa Theologica*, St. Thomas says that;

“We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to

²⁸ James f. Anderson, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of god'*, 34.

exist; and thus, even now nothing would be in existence---which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore, we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.”²⁹

Being an argument based on what is needed to be and on what must be. This means that there are other things which come into being and pass out of being. Note that it has not been said that everything contingent is generated and corrupted is contingent. But that conceivably a thing could be beginningless and still be contingent; such as Aristotle’s eternal world.³⁰ If a thing comes into existence and then pass away, then it clearly has existence from a cause. It exists not of itself but from another; its existence is not necessary but contingent. Not all things can be contingent; there must be something whose existence is absolutely necessary and uncaused.³¹

One is therefore forced to suppose some being which owes its existence to no other than itself. Beyond the contingent existence, there exists another that has not received existence after not being existed. In fact, it is itself the cause of other things. Only necessary Being is God.³²

In conclusion let it be stressed that the argument from contingent in things is intrinsically independent of time. For whether or not a thing be supposed to have been always, its existence is necessary deprived from something else. If it is anything other than God. And this something else instance, God Himself, for his existence alone is simply necessary or underived.³³

²⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q.2, art.3.

³⁰ Cf. James F. Anderson, *The Cause of Being* (St. Louis: Herder, 1952) Ch. III.

³¹ James F. Anderson, *natural theology, ‘the metaphysic of God’*,36

³² Maurice M. Makumba, *Natural theology with African Annotations* 62.

³³ James F. Anderson, *natural theology, ‘the metaphysic of God’*,40

2.3.4 THE ARGUMENT FROM DEGREE AND PERFECTION.

Different things vary in their levels of goodness. According to the "Great Chain of Being," which maintains that complexity increases gradually, created objects proceed along it from unformed inorganic matter to physiologically complex beings. Therefore, there must be a being who represents the highest good. God is this ideal being.

In this argument St. Thomas states that;

“Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like. But "more" and "less" are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph. ii*. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore, there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.”³⁴

We gauge the degree to which objects and individuals are more or less precisely genuine, good, noble, and so forth. We have expectations for what people and things should be like. But unless there were a perfect entity, something that was the best, truest, and noblest, we wouldn't have such criteria. God is the most perfect being. This argument from degree, also known as an argument from gradation in some circles, is heavily influenced by the ideas of the ancient philosopher Aristotle. It reads as follows: There are various perfections of various degrees across the universe. These levels presuppose the existence of a flawless altimeter standard. Therefore, there must be a peak to perfection. We refer to this peak as God.

In this argument we realize that being realizes itself in various ways according to hierarchical scale of existent beginning with inmate up to the ladder of rationality, that is a

³⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q.2, Art.3

human person.³⁵ In this it means that we cannot take everything to be the same due to the difference of their perfection. The continual in climbing the ladder to perfection we shall reach a point which we shall get a being which is more perfect than everything that exists. At that particular point it means that that perfect thing is God.

If we have this perfection in God then the perfection exists. That means that He cannot give perfection to the things which exists if there is no perfection in Him. The perfection then exists because through the experience we can see the perfection in created things. That is why we say that God exist. If perfection exists and it comes from something which is much perfect than others and hold the perfection the it holds that there is the existence of a perfect being. And this perfect being is God.

2.3.5 THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN.

To say that things act in an orderly way is to say that they tend in definite directions. Now, there are only two possibilities: either they know and intend those directions themselves or they are known and intend by something else.³⁶ Everything has a structure or layout that points them in a particular direction. The order of the universe cannot be the result of chance; there must be design and purpose at work. This implies that the creator possessed supernatural intelligence. That's God.

Because we see that some things, like natural bodies, which lack knowledge, fulfill a purpose. This is evident from the fact that people consistently, or at the very least frequently, behave in the same way to obtain the best results. It is therefore clear that they do not arrive

³⁵ Maurice M. Makumba, *Natural theology with African Annotations*, 63.

³⁶ James F. Anderson, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*, 48.

there accidentally but rather on purpose. But those who lack knowledge are unable to proceed toward a goal without the assistance of something or someone who possesses knowledge and intelligence, such as an arrow fired by an archer. As a result, there is something, what we refer to as God, that is intelligent enough to steer all natural things toward their intended outcome.

St. Thomas, he states that;

“We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.”³⁷

This argument has been seen as the most acceptable argument to the human mind, because it reveals the himself in his philosophical spirit. It is an argument according to which nature is intelligently constructed. Organized nature leads us to the organizer in much the same way as the flying stone leads us to the boy launching it.³⁸

In conclusion in this argument, the design in which things are made to be is being given by something which owns that particular design. The design which nature takes it from a perfect design. And this perfect designer is God. St Thomas presents this argument from finality, does not start from things which know they are acting in a certain definite direction, but from things that don't know. Yet in this case it is true that definitely ordered action is intended action. But to be intended is to be directed intelligently.³⁹ Having an intelligent designer then it means

³⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q. 2, Art. 3.

³⁸ Maurice M. Makumba, *Natural theology with African Annotations*, 64.

³⁹ James F. Anderson, *natural theology, 'the metaphysic of God'*, 48.

everything that is designed by that intelligent designer will always lead us back to that designer. And this designer is God.

2.4 THE OBJECTION

2.4.1 KANT'S OBJECTION

Despite of giving all these arguments, St. Thomas also received some objections. The cosmological argument has based some objection like from Kant, who see there is impossibility in this cosmological argument. Kant has a problem with the principle of causality, which according to him has significance only in the phenomenal world and not in the limits beyond, its sphere as it is used in the cosmological argument.⁴⁰ Kant states in his works of critique of pure reason that, “in this cosmological argument are assembled so many sophisticated propositions, that speculative reason seems to have exerted in it all her dialectical skill to produce a transcendental illusion of the most extreme character. It imposes upon us an old argument in a new dress, and appeals to the agreement of two witnesses, the one with the credentials of pure reason, and the other with those of empiricism; while, in fact, it is only the former who has changed his dress and voice.”⁴¹

Here, Kant contends that the use of experience by reason is actually just a ruse to ascend once more into the illusory world of the metaphysical. In reality, this experience only helps reason go one step toward the existence of a necessary creature. Kant contends that reason ultimately gives up on experience altogether and turns to the realm of pure ideas to elucidate the characteristics of a being that is absolutely necessary. Kant holds the same opinion in this

⁴⁰ Maurice M. Makumba, *Natural theology with African Annotations*, 65.

⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of pure reason*, (Prometheus books, New York, 1990)

case as he did in the ontological argument, which serves as the foundation for the cosmological argument. It turns out that the so-called experience was just intended to help us come up with the idea of an absolutely necessary being; yet, it is unable to show how prevalent this quality is in any particular person or object. It is unable to prove the reality of a real being or thing that is also unavoidably necessary. Because of this, even though the cosmological argument claims to lead us down a different path to the desired destination, it ultimately leads us back down the same deceptive path that the ontological argument had already tried and failed to take.

It follows that Kant's major issue with the cosmological argument is that it requires establishing the existence of a being that is inherently necessary. Kant, however, conflates necessity as a quality of propositions with necessity as a property of actualities or realities. The cosmological argument advances an inherent necessity that is peculiar to actualities and realities rather than attempting to demonstrate necessity, which is a quality of propositions. Immanuel Kant categorically rejected the argument, not only because he believed that the concept of a "Necessary Being" was illogical, but also because he believed that since our knowledge is constrained to the phenomenal world of space and time, it is impossible to make educated guesses about what may or may not exist independently of these two dimensions.

2.4.2 HUME'S OBJECTION.

The argument from causes inside the cosmos to causes of the universe as a whole cannot be formed, according to Hume, who also said that we have no experience of universes being created. The reasoning overlooks a logical leap that exists. Talking about the causes that function within the universe's system is one thing, but speculating on whether the system as a whole is caused is quite another. The idea that the universe has a cause is in conflict with Hume's contention that every occurrence in the universe has a reason. Bertrand Russell said that this

was like movingly stating that every human being has a mother in order to make a comparable argument. It is impossible to go from a claim that the entirety has a cause to individual reasons.

2.5 THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

God has been given a lot of attributes in which are making many people really not to understand why there is evil in the world. These attributes give God lots of praise yet others question them by posing the question of evil. God is traditionally viewed in Western (Christian) philosophy as a being who possesses at least three essential qualities: omniscience (all-knowing), omnipotence (all-powerful), and omnibenevolence (supremely good). In other words, God is totally good, aware of everything, and endowed with all power. Although many other attributes, such as omnipresence, have been said to be necessary for a god, these are the three that are most often accepted and predominate in Christian tradition. Monism, in contrast, holds that everything is made of a single fundamental essence, substance, or energy. A form of monotheism known as monistic theism sees God as both immanent and transcendent. Both of these are key ideas in Hinduism.

Well, the myth of the one God of the Christians started to contradict itself as an all-good and all-loving creature. Take a look at these tales of the one God worshipped by the Christians and the atrocities connected to his actions or fueled by his divine might.

A form of monotheism known as monistic theism sees God as both immanent and transcendent. Both of these are key ideas in Hinduism. These qualities surely seem nice at this point. Do they make sense, though? How can an all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful god allow evil to exist? The Problem of Evil, which is addressed in a different portion of this text, is that. Here, a brief discussion of a few of the traits will be sufficient to show the general path that critical thinking takes.

How is it possible that there is evil, suffering, and agony when the deity is all-powerful, all-loving, all kind, and all merciful? How is it possible for the deity to be morally bad despite being all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful? How is it possible that the deity is infinitely loving, kind, and merciful yet there is a place of perpetual punishment called hell? These attributes set the base on which many at some point denies the existence of God.

The Divine Attributes examines the traditional theistic view of God as the most perfect being conceivable and discusses the primary divine attributes that follow from this perspective: personhood, transcendence, immanence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, perfect goodness, unity, simplicity, and necessity. It contends that because of the doctrine of perfect being, the a temporalist's conception of God is preferable to the temporalist's, but even if the temporal God existed in place of the atemporal God, He would still be "perfect enough" to be considered the God of Theism.

2.5.1. OMNIPOTENT

The majority of individuals agree that God is thought of as an all-powerful or almighty being. Why does this matter? According to St. Augustine, omnipotence means that God is able to do any task that He chooses. But what might God decide? Could God will anything that is illogical, such as that adding 2 and 3 results in 4 or making an object that is simultaneously round and square? The majority of philosophers think that omnipotence solely refers to the power to create logically sound, not contradictory, situations of affairs.

St. Thomas makes some extremely compelling arguments for God's omnipotence in this passage, and I believe that he gets off to a strong start when discussing God's omnipotence. It is challenging to write an article about St. Thomas without mentioning additional beliefs that he also believed because his work is always woven into a web of various perspectives and

arguments. I find the argument that God cannot create anything that is not a word to be convincing because to suggest that God could create something that is not even a word would be to essentially babble before God and impudently ask Him if He could create such a babble.⁴²

However, St. Thomas did state that no intellect could understand what a non-being could be made into, which leads me to believe that the only logic that God provided was for our own logic. St. Thomas doesn't appear to address this topic in this passage. Although this is a philosophically intriguing subject, I do not wish to place too much weight in it because it is a part of the mystery of God's operation. His thoughts are as high above us as the sky are. And if science has taught us anything, it is that the skies are incredibly far above us (perhaps even nearly infinitely beyond us). God be given all the glory!

2.5.2 OMNISCIENT

Knowing everything there is to know is a common definition of omniscience. But when we think about whether God has knowledge of the future and how this affects our free choice, things become more complicated. For instance, it would appear that you are not permitted to send in your term paper sooner if God knows that you would submit it 4 minutes before the deadline. Philosophers' responses to this issue vary, frequently depending on their ideas of what it means to have free will and whether God or anyone else is actually capable of foreknowledge (and whether there are truths about the future now).

St. Thomas makes a distinction between God's knowledge and that of creatures. God chooses and carries out a plan for the world from all eternity, and as a result, His providential guidance of the world leads to foreknowledge. God's sure knowledge of contingent future

⁴² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q. 25, Art. 3.

events differs from a predictor who has little or no influence over his predictions. Take note of St. Thomas' reference to Scripture as proof of divine foreknowledge.

The Bible declares that God is omniscience, or all-knowing. The Latin words *scientia*, which means knowledge, and *omnis*, which means all, combine to form the English word "omniscient." God is omniscient, which simply implies that He has complete knowledge of everything. Nothing needs to be learned by Him, and nothing has been lost. God doesn't need to progressively come to understand, discover, or study anything. He is aware of everything that has occurred and everything that is about to occur. God is also aware of every possible scenario. Even the things that humanity has not yet discovered are known to God. This understanding is inherent and unearned. God's omniscience entails that He possesses perfect knowledge, perfect comprehension, and perfect wisdom in regard to how to use that knowledge.

2.5.3 OMNIBENEVOLENCE

What does it mean to be completely morally upright or omnibenevolent? This implies that such a being is entirely morally upright, i.e., kind, generous, and loving; never malevolent or cruel; never causes or permits needless pain; always does right and never evil. Does having a perfect moral character mean that one cannot have any moral failings? Or even if God never chooses to do wrong, could an all-powerful God choose to do wrong if God so desired? The first possibility may provide difficulties: is goodness truly goodness in any meaningful sense if God's nature or essence forbids God from doing wrong?

Consider two persons, Alex and Blair, and contrast this with the goodness of humankind. Since she believes it to be the correct thing to do, Alex actively pursues being nice and giving even when tempted to do otherwise. But Blair is nice and giving because he can't possibly be anything else; Blair couldn't possibly do wrong even if he wanted to. Who has the

edge in this situation? People who prefer Alex could object to the idea of God's kindness being impeccability or the literal incapacity to sin.

Some people could disagree that genuine goodness necessitates the ability to act otherwise and determine that God could be like Blair without lacking in goodness. The Euthyphro Dilemma, which asks whether God acts morally upright because it is just or because God is righteous, is closely related to this issue. The first option appears to subject God to a separate standard of goodness that even God must follow. However, the second option implies that whatever God wills is unquestionably good. Therefore, if God could will something gruesome, it would be good.

Since being and goodness are actually interchangeable, God, who is the greatest being imaginable, is also goodness itself. A being is good insofar as it resembles God, and a being is bad insofar as it differs from God. All of creation is arranged in accordance with this good, therefore it is reasonable to ask, "If all of creation is arranged in accordance with the greatest good, who is God, and to what good may we claim that God is arranged? to none other than himself, the ultimate good. An infinite being can only have an infinite being as its finale.

2.6 CONCLUSION.

In conclusion we can say that the existence of God is self-evident. This is through the cosmos and what is there. The way the cosmos appears is exactly how that what made it to be is like. That means if we move step by step we shall reach where anything can't continue which means you've reached the ultimate cause of that thing or object. That ultimate thing is what Aquinas calls God who is the cause of what is good in the world.

Secondly, being given all these attributes why the does evil occur in the world. When we say that God is good and He is goodness itself it means that everything that he created is good. Also, if we are saying He is powerful why can't He remove these evil from the earth. And lastly all-knowing meaning He knows everything before it happens why can't he stop it before it happens. These are the major conflicts we are facing with this problem of evil.

CHAPTER 3.

3.0. THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL

3.1. INTRODUCTION.

As mentioned in the chapter on the problem of evil, the endeavor to reconcile the existence of God and evil is a philosophical conundrum. In the last chapter, we examined the existence of God based on St. Thomas' viewpoint and used his methods to prove and deeply

explain how they confirm God's existence. Moving on, we now consider the idea of evil and suffering from the viewpoints of Christians, Muslims, Medieval times, and how St. Thomas talks about it.

Everyone's life is miserable because achieving a wish requires a lifetime of battle. And our cosmos turns into a pool of ills of every description in the search for fulfillment. Other types of evil, such as natural evils, are not the responsibility of humans. Although man experiences these types of horrors, he or she is not accountable. Due to this, humanity has attempted to find fulfillment in a variety of ideas and things, including witchcraft, voodoo science, self-gratification, power, and money. However, some can find solace in God. While some strive to convince others that God is the solution to their unhappiness, others reject the idea that there could be such an entity.

The fact that there is evil in universe cannot be denied. Consider the genocide in Rwanda. Prevalent propensity for torture where massive loss of life. This was one incident of evil experienced in the world. These instances that occur in the world today are of evil acts otherwise human cruelty of imposing misery on fellow human beings, for no reason.

It is possible to deny that there is evil in the world. Take the Rwandan genocide, for example. This was a particularly horrible episode that occurred in the world due to the widespread predilection for torture and the resulting tremendous loss of life. These are merely examples of evil deeds or other acts of human brutality inflicting needless suffering on other people.

On a related note, it may not always be appropriate to use the word "evil" to describe natural events that happen as a result of natural causes because it is so frequently used to imply

deliberate cruel acts. Even if we may categorize it as a common bad, the existence of conditions like illnesses and disasters that are kept notwithstanding are maintained as a testament to the trust in God's benevolence.

Given the prevalence of wicked deeds in the world, how can we trust in the existence of God, if he exists and is? The fact that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and able to avert both these inhumane crimes and the natural causes of human suffering is a direct challenge to his other characteristics. This type of issue is challenging to resolve since the fundamental question is: How can the all-knowing, all-powerful God allow evil to exist in the universe without even assisting his creatures? It becomes really challenging to reconcile the two and comprehend that. This chapter will mostly focus on the presence of evil and suffering and St. Thomas will be the main reference with some medieval philosophers.

3.2. THE NOTION OF EVIL.

In our life, some problems come into our way until we question our existence and the existence of a supreme Being. This has led to the rise of this topic in different centuries. The problem of evil and suffering in the broad sense is a question on its existence and what it means. It can be sensed by the following statements on the attributes of God; omnipotent, Omni benevolence. The problem is that accepting the first two exposes us to the rejection of the third which is omniscient. If either the first two are real, the third is false. Demonstrations are not needed to demonstrate the existence of evil in human history today or in the past. Evil and suffering, in all its aspects physical moral, social is a problem intimately connected with the religions and philosophies, and also humanities. The Christian message is the most coherent

response to evil and suffering from all points of view. Philosophy must also have its word concerning evil and suffering.⁴³

St. Augustine taught, following Plotinus, that evil is the privation of good; Evil is not even created, nevertheless only manifests itself through choosing what is right from what is wrong. Evil intrinsically cannot be desired by human determination, because the goal of willpower is essentially good. By maintaining the dogma of evil is a privation of good, St. Augustine does not mean to suggest that evil is an illusory, in the logic of being a deception. Evil is not a being, in the understanding of the existence; it falls does not fall under at all in the ten groups of being. Evil occurs as a privation in the good, as opposed to its right as a positive entity. Privation has no sense or beingness apart from existence. Evil by alone cannot cause anything, nevertheless, it is and can be caused through the privation of good. For instance, the deformity in the willpower of a deprived angel cannot be the aforementioned because of the positive existence in which it is. The more prevailing the being in which it exists, the superior the effects.⁴⁴

The Longman dictionary defines evil as; something that is morally wrong because it harms people. The notion of suffering is very eminent in the definition of the Longman dictionary contemporary English and this can be divided into three terms.

1. Pain to experience physical or mental pain.
2. Immoral experience or immoral condition when someone agonizes because of unpleasant consequences of not what is right.

⁴³ Luigi Bogliolo, *Metaphysics, Pontificia UniveritasUrbaniana*, (Theological publications in India, Bangalore, 1987) 36

⁴⁴ Julian Marias, *History of phiosphy*, (Dover publications, New York, 1967) 116.

3. Become worse to become worse in the quality because a bad situation is affecting something or because nobody is taking care of it.⁴⁵

Now we can say evil and suffering is a serious physical or mental pain.

3.3. THE NATURE OF EVIL.

Evil can be divided into two basic categories: moral evil and physical, or what is known as natural, evil. Moral evil, or wrongs attributed to humans through the abuse of their free will, is an evil done against mankind by a human being for which that person has responsibility and should therefore be held accountable. The opposite of moral evil, which is perpetrated against mankind and for which people are responsible, is natural or physical evil, which is committed against humanity but for which people are not accountable. It implies that for there to be evil there must also be a victim, who is a person who suffers from evil. Finally, there must be an act; this is the evil or terrible circumstance that someone or something goes through. We will have an explanation of the two categories of evil indicated above later in this chapter.

3.4. TYPES OF EVIL.

As said earlier, evil can be grouped into two, whereby we have;

3.4.1. PHYSICAL EVIL

When contemplating physical evil, St. Thomas has a propensity to view supernatural entities as the maker and the cosmos as his creation. The superiority of that work by the best artist requires a variety of beings, though not specifically as such but rather by coincidences, for the benefit of the righteous, the upright of the entire cosmos.

⁴⁵ Longman Dictionary of the contemporary English person, 537

3.4.2. MORAL EVIL.

He maintains that autonomy is beneficial and that without it, humans would be unable to give supernatural entities their most precious gifts, with which they are well-intentioned, and so on. Self-determination elevates a person's stature in relation to God. Self-determination transforms people into supernatural beings who do not bear God's likeness and gives them the power to make decisions that are against his will and morality, which constitutes sin. Therefore, it was intolerable for someone to exist in the natural world who should be limitless and at the same time incapable of being corrupt. While it is true that a supernatural entity permitted moral evil, He only did so in order to further a higher good. Here, the question is whether a supernatural creator could have created a free human who was also incapable of corruption.⁴⁶

3.5. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF EVIL BY ST. THOMAS.

Thomas, like many medieval philosophers, addressed the issue of evil. He claimed that good is deprived by evil. An evil exists when there isn't a good. So, where there is no good, there is evil. Evil does not, in a philosophical sense, have substance. Only the accident exists. Typically, substance and accident must coexist. Accident cannot happen if there is no substance. Because substance and accident go hand in hand, yet substance cannot exist without accident. Regarding the nature, St. Thomas claims that since evil is merely the denial of good, it is not always a bad but rather a flaw of a good that is due to natural causes.

The majority of them, philosophers, hold the view that every deprivation of good is accompanied by a difficulty. They believe that anything that has ever been created must be good. Nothing was created by God haphazardly. People are therefore always constrained by a

⁴⁶ Juliana Marias, *History of Philosophy*, 116.

certain frame. People blame God for everything's creation of evil as a result of this, regarding this issue.

Thomas Aquinas makes an effort to uphold believers' faith and offers some form of remedy, such as, "For the want of sight is not an evil in a stone, but it is an evil in an animal; since it is against the nature of a stone to see."⁴⁷ It is considered an absence rather than a privation when a stone is without an eye, because a stone should not have eyes. If someone lacks wings, it is viewed as a lack of goodness rather than a privation. This is due to the fact that man was not created with wings. Privilege and absence are not the same thing. A person is supposed to have an eye, therefore if they don't, it's a privation rather than an absence. When an elephant lacks a trunk, it is regarded as a privation rather than an absence because something is missing that ought to be there.

The terrible reality of the world is that it is filled with numerous examples of evil, sometimes even a superabundance of it: harm, deformity, illness, incapacity, and natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, fires, and drought. There are also evils that are caused by people, such as injustice, aggression, rape, torture, all forms of cruelty, murder, and genocide. Unending examples of all this wickedness could be shown, with horrible results. It is plainly difficult to accept that there is an all-good, all-powerful God who has loving concern for his creation in the face of all this suffering and sorrow.

The main obstacle to theistic religion in general and Christian belief in particular is the problem of evil. The only reality that might conclusively demonstrate there is no God is evil.

⁴⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q.48, Art.5

The philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas can help us understand how evil, at the very least, is not incompatible with belief in the God of traditional monotheism.

In atheistic argument the problem of evil is put out philosophically as a defense of the nonexistence of the traditional monotheistic God;

1. God would desire to eradicate all evil if he is an all-good being.
2. If God is all-powerful, then he has the ability to accomplish whatever he pleases, even eradicating all evil.
3. Therefore, there wouldn't be any evil if God existed.
4. However, evil exists.
5. As a result, there is no all-powerful, all-good God.

This argument is sound as it is presented here. If the premises are true, then the conclusion should follow. Theists undoubtedly concur that evil exists and that it is a sad reality of life. Therefore, one must examine whether the other two premises are true in order to decide whether one should draw the conclusion that there is no such God. To do this, we must comprehend not just what evil is, but also what it means to assert that God is all-powerful and all-good.

Evil does not exist as a separate entity, invading goodness and obliterating it like some sort of noxious seeping sludge. Evil is not a "thing" at all; rather, it is the failure, void, or malfunction of something else. What is lacking or imperfect about what is good that it does exist.

As a result, evil is not something that is made; rather, it is a lack that arises as a result of good things seeking to perfect themselves at the price of the goods of other things. According to the perfection of their nature, lions rob gazelles of their lives. God gives lions their particular nature, but He also allows the wickedness that their nature involves.

In the same way, God does not make people choose to commit sin; rather, He creates people who are by nature free; it is these people, not God, who freely choose to commit sin by failing to behave in a way that is consistent with their rational nature and by depriving others of what is rightfully theirs. Again, God does not deprive free moral agents of moral goodness by causing their actions to be good; the free agent is solely accountable for that. However, God allows some of their free decisions to be morally evil.

3.6. CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF EVIL.

Christian belief based on the scripture, now regarding the problem of evil and suffering is due to the disobedience of our first parents in the stories of creation. Of all the creatures created by the Lord God, the serpent was the most cunning. The serpent deceived the woman into eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, which she then handed to her husband. The woman was duped by the serpent into consuming the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, which she then gave to her husband. Consequently, they were punished. God said in the book of Genesis 3: 14-19, that, “because you have done this, you shall be banned from all other animals. By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground from which you were taken; for you are dirt, and to dirt, you shall return?” That marked the start of the issue of suffering and evil, which impacted all other human beings. The preliminary consequence of the origin of evil leading to suffering is the misuse of human free will.⁴⁸

3.6.1. CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM.

God has given freedom to human beings; however, Satan misused his freedom after rebelling against God, and successively became exceedingly evil. The climax of all these is

⁴⁸ John M. Kasyoka, *An Introduction to philosophy of religion* (Zapf chancery, Eldoret, 2008), 93

what in the Old Testament is the episode where God and Satan contend with one another about job's integrity. Have you seen my servant, Job? There is no one like him; he is blameless and righteous, reverencing God and doing no wrong. "Have you discerned my servant Job, and there is no one on earth like him," the Lord asked Satan. "He is without blemish and upright, reverencing God and avoiding evil. "It is not for nothing the Job is God-fearing?" the devil replied to God. Have you not sworn to defend him, his family, and everything he owns? He's touched everything, and he'll openly blaspheme you. The Lord told Satan, "Behold, all he has is your power, "but" do not lay a hand on his person. This is supported by scripture as illustrated above and all comes from the book of Job 1:6-10, 2: 6-10, 3: 6-10.

Here we see God permitting Satan to give trouble to his servant Job. After a long talk with his friends, Job wanted an answer from God as to why he was suffering innocently. In answer, God put before Job so many challenges in form of questions that he could not answer. Finally, Job bows out of the contest answering. "I discovered that you can accomplish anything, and that your goals are unstoppable. I've dealt with wonderful things that are beyond my comprehension; wonderful things that are beyond my comprehension. I had heard about you through rumors, but now I had actually seen you. As a result, I retract what I've said and apologize in dust and ashes," which is supported in scripture from the book of Job 40: 2-6.⁴⁹

From this another closing conclusion, that this sharing between God and Job demonstrate that there is no way a man has no rights before God but into commission and demand answers. On the divergent, the truth is that man has no rights before God but only a duty to fulfil. The execution of the innocent Jesus, the son of God, on a cross represents the

⁴⁹Peter Kreeft, *Making Sense out of suffering*, trans. Ann Arbor (Servants Books, Michigan, 1986), 138

height of wickedness in the New Testament. The death is portrayed as an instance of absolute injustice as well as a violent and homicidal denial of God's messiah. This scriptural belief holds that evil is categorically evil and directly opposes the spirit of God.⁵⁰

3.7. MUSLIM UNDERSTANDING OF EVIL.

Before the birth of Adam, the first human being in existence, Islam claims that Satan, also known as Iblis, was at the cradle and heart of evil. Satan is the source of evil's power and base. He was the first creature to rebel against God and lead a revolt. This is mentioned in the Holy Quran when it says.⁵¹ "And don't forget what the Lord said to the angels when he said, Lo! I am making a finite out of black mud altered potter's clay, so when I have finished making him and breathing my spirit into him, prostrate yourselves before him. So, with the exception of Satan, all of the Angels prostrated themselves. He denied being one of the prostrate." In the Qur'an 15:28-31. Therefore, it is clear that Satan disobeyed Allah even before the creation of humans and gave rise to evil. Even if Adam and his wife Hauwa committed transgression, it was not with the intention of rebelling against their Creator. They genuinely confessed to Allah, and He pardoned them. Because of Adam's disobedience, manhood is spared from sin and bad. Sin is not an inherited trait. Adam was made Allah's first messenger on earth, despite his guilt. He was supposed to be a father figure to his children. How could God refuse a wrongdoer such a higher rank?

⁵⁰Ibid, 138

⁵¹Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity, 'A muslim and Christian dialogue'*, (Uzima PressLimited, Nairobi, 1980), 23-24

3.8. THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN SCIENCE.

In the current intellectual atmosphere, religion has been severely hampered by a series of specific jurisdictional issues between claims of religious and scientific knowledge. The effectiveness of the scientific method has been demonstrated in each conflict between science and religion.⁵² It was discovered that the biblical authors who recorded their observations of God's intervention in human history did so while concealing their accounts behind their era's prescientific understanding of the biosphere. A contrast has been drawn between their testimony to divine foreknowledge and calling and the fundamental worldview that shaped their way of thinking. Biblical cosmology's three-tiered structure and Joshua's order to make the sun stand still are no longer tenable theories. Religion has been viewed as a losing struggle that will eventually be eliminated from ever more fields of human knowledge.⁵³

Does it then follow that there is no God? This is the main question to be addressed here. Does it mean that we can no longer have a true religion just because of the discoveries in science and technology, or we have to do away with God and join Nietzsche in declaring that, "God is dead." The discovery by Copernicus that the world is no longer the core of the universe, and that the earth is no longer a fixed point in which the rest of the universe revolves, as well as modern astronomical observations demonstrating the earth's movement, would inevitably shatter our beliefs in God's existence? Will these results make us think that faith is hopeless?⁵⁴

⁵² John M. Kasyoka, *An Introduction to philosophy of religion*, 99

⁵³ *ibid*, 99

⁵⁴ John M. Kasyoka, *An Introduction to philosophy of religion*, 99

3.9. CONCLUSION.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of definitions of evil, we humbly argue that this does give an adequate basis for our discussion. The issue of evil affects many different religions. People ask the incessant question of what life is all about since they experience so much misery in their daily lives. As a result, religions must provide accurate explanations for the beginning, nature, and conclusion of evil.

Regardless of religion or ideology, all of humanity can agree that there is a problem with evil in the world. As a Christian, I have personally had to struggle with it for a very long time, especially when it comes to explaining how the evil in the world can be reconciled with a good and flawless God. The definition of "evil" is "morally corrupt", which contrasts sharply with the morally upright character of the God of the Bible. The question that arises is how a morally perfect God could have created a world with moral corruption like ours. First, I think we can all agree that the earth is not inherently immoral or evil; rather, it is possible to attribute such characteristics to the individuals who inhabit it. But even so, does that imply that God made morally flawed people? Not exactly!

CHAPTER 4

4.0. DOES THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL CONTRADICT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?

4.1. INTRODUCTION.

Unfortunately, we are dealing with the reasons why people don't believe in God because we have to deal with the issue of evil and suffering, which has an answer in the very existence of God. It goes without saying that the predominance of pain, suffering, and dysfunction in the world is a huge barrier to the presence of God. With so much suffering in the world, is it rational to believe in a good and powerful God? At the end of the essay, an effort will be made to address

this question. Before focusing on a detailed explanation of how the problem might be understood, we must first sketch a general picture of the problem and the different forms the argument has taken. The world is filled with a lot of misery. This definition of "pain" refers to the physiological sensation that most people and animals try to avoid. Sometimes pain can bring about better things. A measles vaccination would serve as an example. Contrarily, pain indicates a shift in one's own circumstances that is definitely undesirable. Other unpleasant and upsetting events can also be categorized as dreadful in the sense that it would have been preferable if they had never occurred.

According to J. L. Mackie, there is no clear conflict between the claims that there is an all-powerful, entirely good God and that there is evil. However, if we add the at least initially tenable premises that good is inherently opposed to evil and that an omnipotent being has no bounds, we do have a contradiction. A perfectly benevolent, omnipotent being would be able to completely abolish evil; if evils genuinely exist, then such a being is not feasible.

4.2. CAN EVIL EXIST IN THE PRESCENCE OF GOD?

Returning to the prior query, "How can an all-knowing, all-powerful God exist in the face of evil?" This will lead us to the answer of the existence of the two. Yes, we cannot deny that evil exists due to its practical experience which is in the world. Then a question comes that how can evil exist since the one who created the universe and everything in it is good. How can a good creator create evil in what He has created? It is a strong question which has brought many challenges in the thinking of many people.

Concerning this theme many philosophies have been created and are trying to give a solution to this. One of the philosophies is that of the Augustinian and Thomistic theodicy construction. This philosophy has at least four motives which it based on. First is said that, "evil

has not been created by God and certainly not desired by God; evil rather is to be understood as the privation of good brought by the existence of the living creatures.”⁵⁵

When St. Thomas asserts that a fault in good is not always an evil but rather a defect in good that is naturally occurring, he is not merely negating the idea that all defects in good are bad. Due to the majority of believers’ conviction that any deprivation of good is an evil, many people have abandoned their religious beliefs. They think that everything that was created in this world has to be good. God didn’t create anything without a reason. Everything what was created has a reason. So, people always limited themselves in a particular frame. Because of that people have abounded God and say that everything was created in evil.

St. Thomas attempts to protect the faith of the believers and gives some sort of solution saying, “For the want of sight is not an evil in a stone, but it is an evil in an animal; since it is against the nature of a stone to see.”⁵⁶

The topic of privation was never used by Aquinas and his opponents to address the issue of evil; instead, it served primarily as a critique of dualistic theodicy.⁵⁷ They wished, in the other words, to emphasize that God alone is responsible for the creation of all things out of nothing and that any attempt to attribute evil to an evil being or beings is to be rejected.⁵⁸ We have in effect deprived ourselves of potential goods which God intended for us. Charles Cardinal Journet cites and defends the relevant Augustinian text: “evil is only a privation of a

⁵⁵Barry L. Whitney, *what are they say about God and Evil?* (Paulist press, New York, 1989) 30

⁵⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q.48, Art.5

⁵⁷Karl Rahner, *why does God allow us to suffer? In his Theological Investigations*, (New York, Crossroad, 1983) 208

⁵⁸ Whitney L. Barry, *what are they say about God and Evil*, 30

good and it tends towards what has no existence in any way.”⁵⁹ Evil is not a thing or an entity in and of itself; rather, it is the absence of a quality or good that the object may have had.

The second theodicy links the existence of evil to the idea of abundance. Since only one creature could not fully symbolize the divine goodness, God created a wide diversity of animals with a variety of skills and characteristics.⁶⁰ If there were only one level of goodness in everything, the cosmos would not be flawless. Given that certain things will have the potential to deviate from the good, some things will necessarily be better than others. This is related to divine providence.⁶¹

The atheistic notion of evil is the third philosophical theme. It asserts that although the various components of the world may seem to flawed human minds to be evils in and of themselves, from God's flawless perspective, these so-called evils are actually either means to good purposes or components of a good total.⁶²

According to the Thomistic philosopher Jacques Maritain, God allows evil to exist in order to bring about greater good. However, some philosophers, like Karl Rahner, have rejected the inference that pain is a necessary byproduct of a growing universe that is a universe that is good overall. He adds that it is possible to envision freedom and its dignity existing in paradisiacal harmony without pain, a theme that Journet has extensively explored.⁶³ Rahner maintains that this explanation for evil is unsatisfying and superficial due to the fact that

⁵⁹ David Hume, *God and evil*, “*Hume on Evil*”, trans. Nelson Pike, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964) 88

⁶⁰ Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*, (London, Collins, 1950) 80

⁶¹ Paul Schilling, *God and Human Anguish*, (Nashville, Abingdon, 1977) 70-73.

⁶² Whitney L. Barry, *what are they say about God and Evil*, 31

⁶³ John Bowker, *Problem of Suffering in Religion of the World*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1970) 2.

freedom has resulted in vast and unfathomable suffering that cannot be attributed to physical or biological factors.⁶⁴

Many authors have disputed this point of view. Why would an all-loving God choose not to use this option if He could have created a world free of evil while yet allowing beings to live as they please? The fact that God has not accomplished this is a strong argument against God's existence and refutes the notion that evil is necessary for the existence of the universe.⁶⁵

The idea that God both causes and only permits evil is St. Thomas' fourth philosophical subject. The conflict and antagonism among species are best seen as an unavoidable or unintentional side-effect of the development of some great good because evil is not directly willed by God. God would have to eradicate the species altogether in order to eliminate the harmful effects.⁶⁶ According to Jacques Maritain, God does not directly generate evil; rather, he lets it. God does not definitely will or produce evil; He just permits it.⁶⁷ He acknowledges that God is the initial cause of everything, including our free choices, but that we are the first cause of our evil deeds, with the resulting evil being known to God without having been created by him.

4.3 EVIL AS A PSEUDO-PROBLEM.

The existence of evil does not, however, make the existence of God illogical or implausible, as is evident from the analysis of the problem of evil. But Hick's claim that God

⁶⁴ Brian Hebblethwaite, *Evil, Suffering and Religion*, (London, Sheldon Press, 1976) 14-39.

⁶⁵ Barry L. Whitney, *what are they say about God and Evil?* (Paulist press, New York, 1989) 32

⁶⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden, (London, SCM Press, 1975) 83.

⁶⁷ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 83

allows pain because He is involved in the process of soul creation is one of the most important theodicean arguments. He argues that facing difficulties, hardships, disappointments, danger, and even suffering is the only way we can grow in virtues like patience, courage, and compassion. We won't have the opportunity to if we don't. God desires to assist us in becoming the kind of beings capable of an eternal existence of loving communion with Him. To be compassionate, one needs possess the character traits mentioned above; traits that one cannot develop without facing and overcoming difficulties, including sorrow. This process raises a number of issues, such as what happens to baby deaths as humanity evolves into a creature capable of perpetual existence through suffering. What proof do we have that the world of the future will be better? Will God grow in strength or goodness? It is clear that the issue still exists despite theists' best efforts to dismiss it. From a human standpoint, it is possible to comprehend the scenario in which God is the cosmic design that permits evil. Imagine a situation where a child is drowning in front of a respectable, decent man who is averagely clever and capable of swimming. The swimmer's behavior will be questioned if he is unable to save the youngster; we may conclude that he is unconcerned if he fails to do so. We can continue to cast doubt on either his alleged goodness or his acknowledged swimming prowess. We must revisit our understanding of him if, despite having all the attributes, he is unable to save the child. The same is true of God, who possesses the attributes that conventional theists assign to him. Every time we encounter evil, we wonder how we came to know him.

4.4. FREE-WILL DEFENSE.

An effort to assert the dominance of freedom in human creation is another endeavor to solve this conundrum. It aims to explain why an entirely good God gave people free will, even though it might occasionally result in evil. It must be demonstrated why it is preferable for

people to act freely and occasionally make mistakes than for them to be perfect automatons who always act in the right way. As a result, freedom is now viewed as a third-order good, which makes it more valuable than second-order virtues like sympathy and bravery would be if they were produced deterministically. It is also claimed that second-order vices like cruelty are a logically required prerequisite to sympathy.⁶⁸

The main difference between a theologian and those who support the free-will response, then, is that they hold different perspectives on human freedom—the former is compatibilist, the latter is libertarian. Both affirm individual liberty. However, the former asserts that this freedom is compatible with casual determinism, whilst the later disputes this.

One hand compatibilist concurs that there are enough conditions or causes for every event to occur and that, given those conditions, only one specific consequence or event may occur and nothing else. A new set of incidental circumstances must be present or have already happened for anything different to occur. In other words, each event must necessarily follow from its corresponding cause. Compatibilists, on the other hand, contest the claim made by determinists that freedom is only visible because everything is causally determined. Freedom actually exists. When we are not forced to make a decision or behave in an unfavorable manner, then we are free.⁶⁹

Geivett contends that libertarians insist on our inherent freedom whenever the causal circumstances are insufficient to compel, dictate, or compel us to act in a particular way. We are unable to assess casual situations or choose between potential causes of action when they

⁶⁸J. L. Mackie, *Freedom and omnipotence, mind*, 1955 vol. 64 No. 254, 209

⁶⁹Geivett R. D., *Contemporary Perspectives on religious epistemology*, (oxford University Press, New York, 1992) 78

are sufficient to decide the outcome. Moreover, without the capacity to assess those circumstances and decide amongst potential causes of action. without having the capacity to make meaningful decisions.

Thomas Aquinas adopted this strategy in an effort to harmonize Augustine's ideas on predestination and human freedom with Aristotle's notion of human action. John Damascene and Aquinas both liken the will to a sensible appetite. Despite the fact that humans are unable to choose happiness as their ultimate aim, they can choose amongst a variety of proximate rewards. Between the freedom to specify and the freedom to exercise, he draws a divide. The freedom to specify is the type of liberty that results from having the mental flexibility to consider various options. The freedom to choose whether to act or not to act is found in the will. There is disagreement among academics as to how much Aquinas's explanation of free will and Aristotle's explanation of purposeful action are different.

Both Aristotle and Aquinas held that debate must include contingent circumstances that are not capable of being predicted in the future. In contrast to Aristotle, Aquinas firmly believed that God is omniscient and all-powerful. How does God know what lies ahead? Following the early Christian author Boethius, Aquinas asserts that God knows future contingents not as things that will occur in the future but as things that will occur in the eternal present. Even God was powerless to foretell what lay ahead. What part does providence of God play in dependent events like free human acts? God causes required events to occur in a necessary way and contingent occurrences to occur in a contingent one. God is the sole universal cause, even though the agent is the total proximate cause of a free act. In his later writings, Aquinas, like Augustine, makes it abundantly clear that original sin has made it impossible to live a really virtuous life aside from grace and that predestination predates any anticipated merits. When God decides to

save one person while permitting another to sin and experience the consequences, it is not the individual's responsibility.

4.5. IMPORTANCE OF THE FREE-WILL

This is the most significant remedy that individuals have advocated for in order to address the issue of evil. This approach maintains that God endows human beings with free will, despite the fact that this will inevitably lead to grave spiritual evils like cruelty, injustice, and other such things, because it is preferable for people to act freely and occasionally make mistakes or even intentionally commit sins than for them to be like machines that must always act in a predetermined manner that is always right or good. In other words, the argument makes the case that freedom is what matters most. If freedom exists, then there must logically be spiritually evil options. It follows logically from the existence of freedom that sins or spiritual evil must also exist.

However, is this rationally required? We ponder why God did not design humans in such a way that they could exercise their freedom while always making moral decisions. When a person freely selects what is excellent on every occasion, there is no logical conflict there. If there is no logical inconsistency here, then God could have freely produced a human being who always makes the right decisions, and since he didn't do that, God can't be all good and all powerful.⁷⁰

One could respond that the concept of a human being who is free but is not free to sin involves a logical contradiction. Making some bad decisions is logically necessary as part of having freedom. However, whoever said this seems to be taking the word "free choice" to denote a

⁷⁰ J. L. Mackie, *Freedom and omnipotence, mind*, 1955, vol. 64 No. 254, 209

decision that is entirely accidental or random and not in any way influenced by a person's character. If so, choosing this value consciously would mean choosing freedom as the most valuable good. What use is a choice that is made freely if it is made randomly and not because the person making the choice caused it?

After discussing free will, we continue to wonder why God subjects' humanity to such suffering in the name of freedom. The same freedom explains why people are accountable for their actions. Given that God is all-powerful, completely good, and aware of the future, I fail to see how it makes sense for him to grant people the freedom that, in accordance with Abrahamic belief, will ultimately prevent their happiness in this world and send them to hell in the next.

God may have determined the proportions of human freedom granted and human capacity to exercise that freedom. We must identify the circumstances that make human activities morally necessary if humanity is to be held morally accountable. When we consider the conditions that make human activity necessary, it is evident that our free will has a greater influence. Since God is the source of free will, it follows that he is involved in that.

4.6. EVIL AS A NECESSARY MEANS OF THE GOOD.

God permits evil because it serves as a vehicle for good. That implies that bad things make room for good. On the other hand, Mackie says that this line of reasoning is futile because it limits the power of God. This is because casual rules require that there be a cause before an event occurs, therefore the earlier events function as a means, which is contrary to the Judeo-Christian notion of God's omnipotence. Additionally, it would go against the notion that God created everything, even arbitrary laws. It is impossible for God to have created the arbitrary laws and then be subject to them. How can God make a stone too heavy to lift or a law that

binds him? It would be necessary to investigate Mackie's argument that this position can only be tenable if we can accept the idea that an omnipotent creature can bind himself.

4.7. CONCLUSION.

It is evident from the discussion on the problem of evil that this is a genuine issue. Despite several disagreements between theists and skeptics, it is evident that theists are eager to demonstrate that there is no issue while skeptics work to demonstrate that there is. We've seen how the realization of the logical issue of evil necessitates the elaboration of more premises that demonstrate how unworkable it is for good and evil to coexist in the presence of a perfectly excellent God. Some theists have made an effort to demonstrate that there is no contradiction, offering no justifications such as how God permitted evil to result in a greater benefit.

The evidential problem of evil, which asserts the quantity and quality of experienced evil, has also been mentioned. Theists have developed several theodicies that aim to refute the argument put forth by skeptics that God does not exist since evil exists. The free-will theodicy is the most convincing one. The camps appear to agree that God gave people free will, but they disagree about how to use it. The libertarian view of theists holds that man is entirely free and that God has no role in regulating or guiding that freedom toward a willed end. If man is not free, then he is not free. The libertarian view of theists holds that man is totally free and that God has no role in regulating or guiding that freedom toward a willed objective. If man is not free, then he is not free. The compatibilist perspective of freedom, on the other hand, holds that man is free notwithstanding God's involvement in guiding that freedom towards a willed aim, namely to always do good. They believed that rather than God giving man freedom, which allows him to choose between doing good or doing evil, claiming that since man has the freedom to choose to do good, that freedom should continue to exist as long as he does good throughout all of

time. His justification seems convincing because if angels in heaven are free and always act in the best interests of others, why can't this be said of humans? More importantly, why did God grant men this freedom despite knowing that it would be abused? As a good father, we can nevertheless question God's goodness on this matter. He ought to have protected His kids from the perils of giving in to temptations that lead to terrible lives both in this life and the next, which is to say, damnation.

I find it quite absurd when the Bible and the Quran refer to an angry, vengeful God while expressing the idea of a kind, loving parent as the character of God. It is obvious that the way we think about God needs to alter if any of the tenets of the Abrahamic faith are to be abandoned. It is impossible to reconcile the existence of evil with the reality of God, who is almighty and omnibenevolent. In the same way that light and darkness cannot coexist, evil and good are two opposing energies. We cannot deny the reality of evil because it is so obvious to our senses, hence it follows that the traditional theist's conception of God does not exist. Alternately, theists should consent to changing a weaker God's qualities.

However, according to the Christian perspective, we can discuss the absence of God even when discussing the existence of evil. Humans were endowed with free will, which is something that God himself does not control. We must correctly exercise our free will in order to pick the right action rather than just the wrong one. Most of the time, it is us humans who abuse the free will that God granted us by attempting to do the wrong thing and ultimately performing the wicked thing. This implies that God does not actually produce this evil; rather, God just allows it to happen. Since he is good, he is not to blame for that specific evil's occurrence.

Additionally, He is aware of when something will occur, but because of the free will that humans have been given, He chooses not to interfere. He never forces you to do anything; you always have the option. This implies that every human being has the freedom to do whatever they desire. The decisions we make today do not necessarily mean that God is in control of them; rather, He has granted us the freedom to decide what we want to do. This means that even if evil exists, we cannot reject the existence of God.

CHAPTER 5

5.0. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The existence of evil poses a contradiction, or rather serves to disprove, the existence of an all-powerful, omnibenevolent, and loving God, as stated plainly in this work's research problem statement. The goals of this study also included determining whether or not the evidence for God's existence contradicts the presence of evil and vice versa. to determine whether it is logically possible for evil to exist. to find out if the traditionalist can reconsider the attributes they attribute to God. A logical foundation must be established before discussing the issue of evil and the existence of God.

The concept of God and his existence have been extensively examined in this work. We can recall the teleological and cosmological arguments as well as the ontological argument put out by St. Anselm in support of the existence of God, who is considered to be almighty and omnibenevolent. All of these arguments have been refuted, thus none of them can be regarded as convincing—especially in light of the presence of evil's refutation. Therefore, the arguments

in favor of God's existence are illogical. In the face of the moral and natural ills we encounter, there is no way an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God could exist.

We have made an effort to define the concept of evil and provide many interpretations or definitions of the word. This variance may be mostly the result of the individuals' varied backgrounds. It is noteworthy that there are two primary sources of evil, namely, nature and humans. While some believers claim that God's impotence in the struggle between good and evil results in the victory of natural evil, moral evil originates from humans and is caused by their ignorance, carelessness, and abuse of their freedom. There are some wicked behaviors that people commit that make them guilty, whereas others are independent of their level of understanding or mental condition.

The study also distinguishes between moral ills and natural evils, two sorts of evil. Natural evil does not hold people accountable, whereas moral evil demands accountability from the culprit. Even if the nature of evil has been defined differently, terms like wickedness, malevolence, and cruelty have been used to describe it. We have also seen that there are various types and degrees of evil based on the purpose and outcomes.

It has been stated that the existence of evil is in conflict with the existence of an almighty and omnibenevolent God. It illustrates how absurd it is to hold that a powerful, kind God exists while still acknowledging that there are atrocities in the world. According to Mackie, a fully good, omnipotent deity would utterly eradicate evil, if there were any at all, and since He does not, such as being cannot exist. Since the nature of the issue has been extensively covered, there is no question that it exists.

We learn from this discussion that there are individuals who fiercely deny that there is a problem, whom we refer to as theists, and others who vehemently declare that evil undermines the belief in God, whom we refer to as atheists. We have logical and empirical versions of evil as a result of these. Mackie contends that the existence of evil conflicts with the existence of an all-powerful, omnibenevolent God under the logical problem of evil. He makes assumptions that suggest a conflict between God and evil. According to the evidentiary version, it is doubtful that God exists given the scope and depth of evil in the world. Both interpretations are intended to show that, in contrast to theists who dismissed it as a pseudo-issue, the problem of evil is a real one.

This study also shows that one of the main theodicies that theists use to argue against skeptics who claim that there is no God is the theodicy of free will. It asserts that human misuse of God's gift of free will leads to evil. Both sides agree that people have free will, but they disagree over how it should be exercised. Some advocate the compatibility point of view, arguing that God could have created people who voluntarily select only the good. Contrary to this libertarian's assertion that God could not have done so, since doing so would have resulted in the creation of automata rather than people.

Although free will is regarded as God's greatest gift, it also contributes most to human depravity. Sometimes it seems that the negative effects of free choice exceed their value. We are prompted to ask if it is significant because of the results. Some believe it would be better if God never completely freed man because if man is left to his own devices, he can easily destroy himself.

Hell is justified by the same free will. Man is left to his own devices, his free will guiding him to either heaven or damnation. When the subject of free will is examined critically, we seek to

feel that God is accountable for the existence of horrors in this world. God gave people free will haphazardly, without taking into account their degrees of understanding or abilities to use it, even though He knew in advance what would happen if they used it. This raises a challenging question about His benevolence and power: why He never took human capacities into account. It's comparable to a mother allowing a youngster to play with a sharp knife while fully aware that the child may damage himself with the knife due to insufficient knife skills. There can never be a defense for the presence of the traditional theistic God given the existence of evil. Either the theist abandons his faith and declares the demise of God with Friedrich Nietzsche, or the theist can equally accept that the qualities of God be altered to account for the discrepancies between belief and reality.

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