7 hard questions on God and problem of evil

Victor Christianto & Florentin Smarandache

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Cover image illustration: a Japanese painting on *Jesus's baptism event* as depicted in the Bible, source from www.reddit.com

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Preface

This small book consists of discussion of several hard questions on God and problem of evil. This compilation is partly stimulated by discussions with several close friends in a number of occasions, especially a question from one of us (FS).

A number of these questions can be called ontological in nature, while the others may touch on philosophical-theology. Nonetheless I shall admit that I'm not extensively writing on these theme, except publishing an outline of alternative proof on the existence of God based on Pascal and Pavel Florensky's arguments. (see *Appendix*)

While surely this small compilation may not address all your questions, hopefully you will find several hard questions are answered, to the best of our knowledge ..along with assistance of a large language model / AI.

Questions regading this book and my other books, can be sent to : smarand@unm.edu or victorchristianto@gmail.com.

We will be more than happy to address any of your question regarding theology, NT, God etc.

Thanks for choosing to read this book, enjoy reading. Jesus love you all.

Maranatha

End of April 2024

Victor Christianto[1] & Prof. Florentin Smarandache

Contents

[1] A humble servant of Lord Jesus Christ, visit our channel: http://bit.ly/ApocalypseTV

Preface

Question 1: Does God exist? Can we find an ontological proof of His existence?

Question 2: Why does God, which is at mighty, not destroy the
evil from the world?

Question 3: How can we find God's hidden purpose behind all of our hardships in life?

Question 4: Is there meaning of life?

Question 5: Is there life after death?

Question 6: Can we find an answer to logical problem of the Trinity?

Question 7: How can we know that God love us, humans in this Earth?

Appendix.[2]

[2] Original source of article: *Scientific God Journal*, https://www.scigod.com/index.php/sgj/article/view/682/740

7 hard questions on God and problem of evil

Question 1: Does God exist? Can we find an ontological proof of His existence?[3]

The question of God's existence has captivated philosophers and theologians for millennia. Our discussion today explores the diverse approaches taken by four thinkers, each offering unique arguments for the divine: St. Anselm, Immanuel Kant, Gödel, Plantinga, and Pavel Florensky.

St. Anselm (1033-1109) and the Ontological Proof:

Anselm, a medieval philosopher-theologian, proposed the ontological proof. He reasoned that the concept of God is the greatest conceivable being – something than which no greater can be conceived. By definition, this greatest being must exist, for if it didn't exist, something greater could be conceived – a being that exists. This inherent contradiction, Anselm argued, proves God's existence as a necessary truth.

Kant (1724-1804) and the Limits of Reason:

Kant, a towering figure in modern philosophy, challenged the ontological proof. He argued that existence is not a predicate – a property – that can be simply added to a concept. Just because we can conceive of a "greatest being," Kant argued, doesn't necessitate its actual existence. For Kant, reason alone cannot definitively prove God's existence.

Gödel (1906-1978) and a Modern Ontological Argument:

Gödel, a brilliant mathematician and logician, attempted to revive the ontological argument in the 20th century. He employed complex modal logic, a system formalizing possibility and necessity, to construct his own version of the proof. However, Gödel's work remains highly technical and contested, with many philosophers questioning its underlying assumptions.

Florensky (1882-1937) and the Iconostasis Argument:

Florensky, a Russian Orthodox priest and philosopher, offered a unique approach. He focused on the concept of the iconostasis, a wall of icons separating the nave from the sanctuary in Orthodox churches. The iconostasis, Florensky argued, symbolizes the

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unknowable nature of God. We can approach God through experience, art, and beauty, but not through pure reason or logic.

The Continuing Quest:

These four thinkers demonstrate the diverse attempts to grapple with the question of God's existence. From the elegant simplicity of Anselm's argument to the complex logic of Gödel and the experiential approach of Florensky, the search for God continues.

Key Points to Consider:

- Can logic and reason definitively prove God's existence?
- What role does faith play in the quest for the divine?
- Are there alternative ways of knowing God beyond reason?

This discussion merely scratches the surface. Each thinker's argument deserves deeper exploration. The question of God's existence is likely to remain a topic of philosophical and theological debate for centuries to come.

More on St. Anselm's argument to prove the existence of God

St Anselm argues that by definition, God is the "*being than which nothing greater can be conceived*." If something exists only in the mind, it's less perfect than something that exists both in the mind and in reality. Therefore, if we can conceive of this greatest being, then it must exist in reality, not just in our thoughts.

The Steps of Anselm's Logic (Simplified):

1. **Premise 1 (P1):** We can conceive of a being than which nothing greater can be conceived (God). Let **G** represent God's concept.
2. **Premise 2 (P2):** Existence is a greater property than non-existence. (Something existing is "greater" than just an idea of it existing) We can represent existence as **E**.
3. **Conclusion (C):** Therefore, a being than which nothing greater can be conceived (God) must exist in reality. (**G E**)

Why it's Controversial:

The ontological argument has been debated for centuries. Here are some key criticisms:

- **Confusing definition with reality:** Just because we define God as the greatest being doesn't mean such a being exists.
- **Existence isn't a property:** Some argue existence isn't a quality like greatness, so adding it to a concept doesn't change it.

Logic and the Argument's Limits:

Logic is a powerful tool, but it has limitations. Anselm's argument relies on the idea that existence is a property that can be added to a concept. This is where the debate comes in. Logic can help us analyze the structure of the argument, but it can't definitively prove God's existence based on this definition alone.

St. Anselm's ontological argument offers an intriguing way to think about God's existence through reason. While the logic may be interesting, its validity remains a topic of philosophical discussion.

More on Kant's argument to prove the existence of God

Immanuel Kant wasn't buying St. Anselm's ontological argument for God's existence. While Anselm used logic to move from the concept of God to God's existence, Kant argued this logic had a critical flaw. Let's see why Kant disagreed, and why we can't use logic algebra in the same way here.

Kant's Objection:

The key point of contention for Kant is the nature of existence. Anselm treats existence as a property, something you can add to a concept (like adding "tall" to the concept of a person). Kant disagrees. He argues that existence isn't a property like "tall" or "great." It's not something you add on; it's about the concept referring to something real in the world.

Anselm's Argument (Simplified, from previous article):

1. **Premise 1 (P1):** We can conceive of a being than which nothing greater can be conceived (God). (Let G represent God's concept)
2. **Premise 2 (P2):** Existence is a greater property than non-existence. (Something existing is "greater" than just an idea of it existing) (Let E represent existence)
3. **Conclusion (C):** Therefore, a being than which nothing greater can be conceived (God) must exist in reality. (G --> E)

Why Logic Algebra Doesn't Apply:

Unlike properties like "tall," existence doesn't change the concept itself. Saying "God exists" doesn't tell us anything new about the concept of God; it just tells us whether God applies to something real.

Here's the analogy Kant might use: If I say "a unicorn with a rainbow horn," I haven't added any new properties to the concept of a unicorn. The concept already includes all its possible features. Similarly, saying "God exists" doesn't add a new feature to the concept of God; it just tells us whether God corresponds to something real.

So, what can logic do?

Logic can help us analyze the structure of arguments like Anselm's. It can show us if the argument follows a valid form (if the conclusion follows from the premises). However, in this case, logic can't tell us whether existence is a property or not. That's a philosophical question about the nature of reality.

Kant's critique highlights a key weakness in Anselm's argument. By questioning the nature of existence, Kant shows that logic alone might not be enough to prove God's existence. The debate on the ontological argument continues, demonstrating the complexity of using reason to approach questions of faith.

More on Plantinga's argument to prove the existence of God

Alvin Plantinga, a contemporary philosopher, offered a new take on the ontological argument for God's existence. Unlike Anselm's classic version, Plantinga utilizes the concept of possible worlds from modal logic to make his case.

Introducing Possible Worlds:

Modal logic deals with possibility and necessity. Possible worlds are hypothetical realities that could exist alongside our own. In Plantinga's argument, these possible worlds play a crucial role.

Plantinga defines a maximally great being as one possessing perfect goodness, knowledge, and power. He argues that if such a being is possible (exists in at least one possible world), then it must necessarily exist (exists in all possible worlds). This necessarily existing being would be God.

Steps of Plantinga's Argument (Simplified):

1. **Premise 1 (P1):** There exists a possible world (W) where a maximally great being exists. (Let M represent maximal greatness)
2. **Premise 2 (P2):** A maximally great being necessarily possesses all perfections, including existence (necessarily existing = existing in all possible worlds).
3. **Conclusion (C):** Therefore, there exists a necessarily existing maximally great being (God) (There exists a world W where (M --> E) and M, so necessarily (M --> E))

Logic Algebra and Plantinga's Argument:

While possible worlds add complexity, we can't directly translate the argument into logic algebra like Anselm's. Here, the focus is on the concept of necessity across possible worlds.

The Debate Continues:

The key question is whether Premise 1 is true. Is it actually possible for a maximally great being to exist? Here are some points of contention:

- **The nature of possibility:** What does it mean for something to be possible? Can we truly conceive of a maximally great being without assuming its existence?
- **The problem of evil:** If God is all-powerful and good, why is there evil in the world? Plantinga offers various defenses, but some argue they don't address the challenge.

Conclusion:

Plantinga's modal ontological argument injects new ideas into the debate. While it offers a more nuanced approach than Anselm's, the question of God's existence remains open for philosophical and theological discussion.

More on Godel's ontological argument to prove the existence of God

Gödel, a brilliant mathematician and logician, attempted to formulate a new ontological argument for God's existence. Building on the ideas of his predecessors, he employed modal logic and set theory to construct a complex argument.

The Gist of Gödel's Argument:

Gödel argues that certain properties are inherently positive, meaning it's better to possess them than not. Existence, he claims, is one such property. He then defines a "god-like" being as one that has all positive properties. Through a series of logical steps, he aims to show that such a being must necessarily exist.

Steps of Gödel's Argument (Simplified):

1. **Axiom 1:** If a property is positive, its negation (not having the property) is not positive. (Ex: Better to be powerful than not powerful)
2. **Axiom 2:** Any property entailed by a positive property is itself positive. (Qualities of a positive property are also positive)
3. **Axiom 3:** "God-like" is defined as having all and only positive properties. (A perfect being by definition)
4. **Definition 1:** Existence is a positive property. (Better to exist than not exist)
5. **Theorem (Conclusion):** Therefore, a God-like being necessarily exists. (Since existence is positive and a god-like being has all positive properties, it must necessarily exist)

Logic Algebra and Gödel's Argument:

Gödel's argument relies on modal logic symbols beyond basic logic algebra. However, we can represent some aspects with simplified notation:

- Let **P** represent a positive property.
- Let **E** represent existence.

From Axiom 1 and Definition 1, we can say ~**E** is not positive (not existing is not good). From Axiom 2, any property of a god-like being (**G**) is positive, so **GE** must be positive (a god-like being existing is positive). Gödel then uses modal logic to argue that this translates to the necessary existence of a god-like being.

Criticisms and Considerations:

- **The nature of positive properties:** Is existence truly a property in the same way as power or goodness?
- **Modal logic complexities:** The use of modal logic can be challenging to interpret and some argue Gödel's use is flawed.
- **Circular reasoning:** Critics argue the definition of a "god-like" being already assumes the existence of such qualities.

Gödel's ontological argument is a fascinating attempt to bridge the gap between logic and God's existence. While it showcases the power of logic, its validity remains a topic of debate. The argument highlights the complexities of using reason to approach questions of faith and the nature of existence.

More on Florensky's ontological argument to prove the existence of God

Unlike the classical ontological arguments, Pavel Florensky, a Russian theologian and philosopher, took a unique approach. He argued that the nature of God is beyond the grasp of pure logic and reason. Instead, he focused on the idea of "antinomies" – contradictory yet inseparable truths – to explore the concept of God.

Florensky and the Limits of Reason:

Florensky believed that reason alone cannot definitively prove God's existence. He argued that human logic operates on a binary system (true/false), while the divine reality transcends such limitations. He proposed "antinomies" – seemingly contradictory statements that might both be true when considering the divine.

Logic Algebra Isn't Applicable Here:

Florensky's approach doesn't involve a step-by-step logical deduction like Anselm or Gödel. His focus is on theological concepts that may appear contradictory but hold deeper meaning when contemplated through faith and a non-rational lens. For example, the idea of God being both infinite and personal might seem illogical, yet Florensky suggests such paradoxes point to the ineffable nature of God.

Key Ideas of Florensky's Approach:

- Divine antinomies: God is both one and three (Trinity), both immanent (present in the world) and transcendent (beyond the world). These seeming contradictions can be understood through faith, not strict logic.
- Theoria vs. Logika: Florensky differentiates between theoria (contemplative knowledge) and logika (logical reasoning). He argues that theoria is better suited to comprehend God's reality.
- The role of experience: Faithful experience and a sense of the sacred can provide a deeper understanding of God than pure reason alone.

Criticisms and Considerations:

- Vagueness and lack of clarity: Critics argue that Florensky's approach is too vague and lacks the precision of a formal argument.
- Faith vs. reason: The emphasis on faith over reason might be seen as dismissive of the role of logic in theology.
- Complementarity, not exclusion: Perhaps Florensky suggests that reason and faith can work together, with reason acknowledging its limits when encountering the divine.

Florensky's approach challenges the idea that God's existence can be definitively proven through logic alone. He highlights the limitations of reason and proposes a more holistic approach that integrates faith, experience, and a recognition of the paradoxical nature of the divine. While it may not be a formal argument, it offers a unique perspective on the relationship between reason and faith in understanding God.

Why the Ontological Argument Matters

For centuries, philosophers and theologians have grappled with the question of God's existence. One of the most enduring arguments in this debate is the ontological argument, a concept that continues to spark lively discussions.

The ontological argument, most famously championed by St. Anselm in the 11th century, proposes that the very idea of God necessitates his existence. It reasons that God, by definition, is the greatest conceivable being – a being than which no greater can be conceived. If such a being existed only in our minds, something greater could be imagined – a greatest being that actually exists. This inherent contradiction, Anselm argues, proves God's existence as a necessary truth.

The Power and Perils:

The ontological argument holds significant weight for several reasons. Firstly, it's an a priori argument, meaning it relies solely on reason and doesn't require empirical evidence. This can be appealing to those seeking a purely intellectual foundation for faith. Secondly,

it attempts to prove God's existence from the very nature of the concept itself, offering an elegant solution to the question.

However, the argument has also faced significant criticism. Immanuel Kant, a towering figure in philosophy, argued that existence isn't a property that can be simply added to a concept. Just because we can conceive of something doesn't mean it exists in the real world. Critics also point out that the definition of "greatest being" can be subjective, weakening the argument's universality.

The ontological argument isn't simply a "proof" or "disproof" of God. It's a valuable tool for understanding the nature of God and the limitations of human reason. It pushes us to grapple with the complexities of existence, definition, and the relationship between thought and reality.

The Lasting Significance:

The ontological argument continues to be debated because it touches upon fundamental questions about God, existence, and the power of reason. Whether one finds it convincing or not, it remains a cornerstone of philosophical theology, forcing us to confront the nature of the divine and the limits of our own understanding.

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*see the Appendix section (two files are included in the later section)

Question 2: Why does God, which is at mighty, not destroy the evil from the world? Unveiling the Mystery with Plantinga and Lennox[4]

The existence of evil in a world supposedly created by an all-powerful and benevolent God is a question that has troubled theologians and philosophers for millennia. Alvin Plantinga and John Lennox, prominent Christian thinkers, offer intriguing perspectives on why God might allow evil to flourish despite his immense power.

Plantinga and the Problem of Evil

Alvin Plantinga, a renowned philosopher of religion, grapples with the problem of evil through his concept of "free will theodicy." He argues that God desires a world filled with creatures capable of love, morality, and genuine free will. However, genuine free will necessitates the ability to choose both good and evil. In essence, a world without the possibility of evil wouldn't be a world with true moral freedom. Plantinga acknowledges the horrific consequences of human evil, but argues that the richness of a world with free will, capable of both immense love and creativity, outweighs the absence of evil altogether.

Lennox and the Limits of Power

John Lennox, a mathematician and Christian apologist, approaches the issue from a slightly different angle. He emphasizes that God's power is not simply raw, unchecked force. Instead, it's a power intertwined with wisdom, justice, and love. Lennox argues that eliminating evil might necessitate curtailing human free will or creating a world devoid of genuine moral choice. He highlights the importance of human responsibility, suggesting that overcoming evil is not just God's task, but also ours. By freely choosing good, we partner with God in the ongoing fight against evil.

Criticisms and Considerations

Both Plantinga and Lennox's views have been challenged. Critics argue that the free will defense doesn't account for the prevalence of natural evil – earthquakes, diseases, and

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other occurrences beyond human control. Additionally, some find the limitations placed on God's power unconvincing.

Why Does Evil Persist in a World Made by God?

The horrors of war, natural disasters, and everyday acts of cruelty can lead many to ask a fundamental question: if God is all-powerful and good, why doesn't he simply eradicate evil from the world? This is a theological puzzle that has challenged thinkers for centuries.

Free Will and the Price of Good

One prominent response comes from philosopher Alvin Plantinga. He argues that God desires a world filled with creatures capable of love, morality, and genuine free will. However, true free will necessitates the ability to choose both good and evil. Imagine a world where everyone acted out of obligation, not genuine love or moral conviction. Plantinga suggests such a world, devoid of free will, wouldn't be a world with true meaning or the richness that comes from freely choosing good.

God's Power: Beyond Brute Force

John Lennox, a mathematician and Christian apologist, offers a complementary perspective. He emphasizes that God's power isn't simply raw, unchecked force. It's a power interwoven with wisdom, justice, and love. Lennox argues that eliminating evil might necessitate curtailing human free will or creating a world devoid of genuine moral choice. He highlights human responsibility, suggesting that overcoming evil is not just God's task, but ours as well. By freely choosing good, we partner with God in the ongoing fight against evil in the world.

Is There Another Answer?

These viewpoints aren't without criticism. Critics argue that the "free will defense" doesn't account for natural evils – earthquakes, diseases, and other occurrences beyond human control. Additionally, some find the limitations placed on God's power unconvincing.

A Mystery That Endures

The existence of evil remains a profound mystery. While Plantinga and Lennox offer valuable insights, the question of why God allows evil to persist is an ongoing conversation. Theodicy, the attempt to justify God's ways in the face of evil, is a complex issue. While we may not have definitive answers, this question opens doors to deeper reflection on the nature of God, free will, and the role we play in shaping a better world.

Question 3: How can we find God's hidden purpose behind all of our hardships in life?[5]

Life's hardships can leave us feeling lost and questioning. We grapple with the age-old question: why does a good God allow suffering? The Book of Job, a powerful narrative in the Hebrew Bible, offers a window into the profound struggle to find meaning in the midst of immense hardship.

Job's Unrelenting Trials

Job is a man known for his piety and righteousness. Yet, he is struck by a series of devastating misfortunes – the loss of his wealth, children, and even his health. His friends offer simplistic explanations, suggesting Job's suffering is punishment for hidden sins. But Job cries out in anguish, unable to understand why he, a faithful man, is enduring such pain.

Beyond Simple Answers

The Book of Job doesn't provide easy answers. God himself enters the fray, not to justify Job's suffering, but to challenge him with questions about the vastness and mystery of creation. God's response underscores the limitations of human understanding. We cannot always grasp the divine plan, but we can choose faith and trust even in the darkness.

Lessons from the Whirlwind

While the Book of Job doesn't offer a formula for finding purpose in hardship, it does provide valuable lessons:

- **Questioning is Allowed:** Job doesn't passively accept his suffering. He wrestles with God, expressing his pain and confusion. Our honest cries, like Job's, can be part of the journey.
- **Faith Can Deepen:** Though Job questions, he doesn't reject his faith. His suffering tests his faith, but it also refines it. Through hardship, our faith can become more resilient and authentic.

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- **Perspective is Key:** Job's suffering is immense, yet the book reminds us of the bigger picture. Our challenges, though significant to us, are part of a larger cosmic story.
- **Meaning is Found, Not Given:** The Book of Job doesn't offer a preordained purpose for suffering. Finding meaning may involve perseverance, growth, and ultimately, a deeper connection with something larger than ourselves.

The Path Forward

The Book of Job doesn't promise a pain-free life, but it offers solace and a path forward. It reminds us that hardship is an inevitable part of the human experience. By wrestling with our questions, holding onto faith, and seeking growth, we can discover purpose even in the midst of life's storms. Finding meaning in hardship may not be about understanding God's hidden purpose, but about becoming more compassionate, resilient, and ultimately, more human.

Question 4: Is there meaning of life?[6]

Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and renowned psychiatrist, famously declared that "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life." In the face of unimaginable suffering, Frankl not only clung to life, but found purpose within it. His experiences offer profound lessons for navigating our own existential quest for meaning.

Beyond Happiness:

Frankl challenged the notion that happiness is the ultimate goal. Happiness, he argued, is often fleeting and circumstantial. Instead, he focused on the concept of meaning – a sense of purpose that transcends temporary pleasures and circumstances.

Finding Meaning in Three Dimensions:

Frankl identified three primary avenues for finding meaning:

- **Through Work and Creation:** Contributing to the world through work, creativity, or service to others provides a sense of purpose and fulfillment.
- **Through Love and Connection:** Deep relationships with loved ones offer a sense of belonging and connection, a source of meaning that transcends individual experiences.
- **Through Facing Suffering:** Even in the face of hardship, suffering can become an opportunity for growth and meaning. It can transform us, allowing us to appreciate life more deeply and develop resilience.

The Power of Choice:

Frankl's central message is that even in the most dire circumstances, we retain a fundamental freedom – the freedom to choose our attitude. We cannot control what happens to us, but we can control how we respond. Our perspective, our choices, and the meaning we create shape our lives.

Finding Your Why:

Frankl's teachings don't offer a one-size-fits-all answer to the meaning of life. The purpose we seek will be unique to each individual. However, his framework encourages us to:

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- **Explore Our Passions:** What ignites our curiosity and brings us a sense of fulfillment?
- **Connect with Others:** Building strong relationships fosters meaning and belonging.
- **Embrace Growth:** Even challenges can be opportunities for learning and personal development.
- **Live with Purpose:** Every day is an opportunity to contribute something meaningful to the world.

The Ongoing Search

The search for meaning is a lifelong journey. It's not about finding a single answer, but about continuous exploration. Frankl's powerful message reminds us that even in the face of difficulties, life holds immense value and possibility. By embracing the search for meaning, we can create a life filled with purpose, resilience, and connection.

Question 5: Is there life after death? [7]

The question of life after death has captivated humanity for millennia. While science can't definitively answer this question, the phenomenon of near-death experiences (NDEs) offers intriguing insights. NDEs are reported by individuals who have brushed against death, often during critical medical events. These experiences share some common themes, sparking debate about their significance.

The NDE Phenomenon

People who report NDEs often describe a sense of leaving their bodies, feelings of peace and love, encountering a bright light, and sometimes even deceased loved ones. Many report a heightened sense of awareness and a life review where their actions are examined. These experiences, though subjective, can be profound and life-changing for those who have them.

Scientific Explanations vs. Evidence for Afterlife

Some scientists offer alternative explanations for NDEs. They point to the physiological changes that occur during near-death events, such as oxygen deprivation to the brain, which can trigger hallucinations. Others suggest that NDEs are a product of cultural expectations or the power of suggestion.

However, proponents of NDEs argue that these explanations don't fully account for the phenomenon. Some NDEs involve details that the experiencer couldn't have known, raising questions about how these details could be explained by purely physical processes. Additionally, the universality of NDEs across cultures, regardless of religious beliefs, suggests a deeper phenomenon at play.

The Debate Continues

While NDEs offer intriguing glimpses into what might lie beyond death, they don't provide conclusive proof of an afterlife. More research is needed to understand the neurological and psychological mechanisms underlying NDEs.

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Finding Meaning in the Mystery

Regardless of the ultimate explanation for NDEs, they can be transformative experiences for those who have them. They often lead to a greater appreciation for life, a decreased fear of death, and a stronger sense of purpose. Whether NDEs point to a literal afterlife or not, they highlight the profound mysteries surrounding death and consciousness.

The Search for Answers

The question of life after death will likely remain a mystery for some time to come. However, exploring phenomena like NDEs can lead to a deeper understanding of human consciousness and the power of the human mind. Ultimately, the search for answers to this question can be a deeply personal and meaningful journey.

Question 6: Can we find an answer to logical problem of the Trinity?[8]

The concept of the Trinity – the belief in one God existing as three distinct persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit – is a cornerstone of Christian theology. However, for some, it presents a seemingly insurmountable challenge – the logical problem of the Trinity.

The Puzzling Equation: 1 + 1 + 1 = 1?

The crux of the problem lies in the inherent contradiction between the mathematical concept of oneness and the idea of three distinct persons. Imagine the equation: 1 + 1 + 1 = 1. In standard logic, this equation wouldn't hold true. Three distinct things cannot equal one. Similarly, the logical problem of the Trinity questions how three distinct persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – can all be understood as one God.

Beyond Standard Logic: Theological Responses

Theologians have grappled with this problem for centuries, offering various responses. Some argue that the concept of God transcends human logic. God's nature may be beyond our ability to fully comprehend with finite minds. Others propose metaphors or analogies to explain the Trinity, though these often fall short of a complete logical explanation.

Defending the Mystery:

Some theologians argue that the problem is not with the Trinity itself, but with our limited understanding of God and the concept of oneness. They suggest that God's oneness isn't a matter of numerical singularity, but rather a unity of essence, purpose, and perfect love.

Living the Mystery:

Ultimately, the Trinity may remain a mystery that transcends logic. However, for many Christians, the concept is not a mere intellectual exercise, but a lived experience. They

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believe in the love of the Father, the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

The One and the Many: Rethinking the Trinity Through Non-Diophantine Arithmetic

The concept of the Trinity – the coexistence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one God – has puzzled theologians and philosophers for centuries. While logic dictates that 1 + 1 + 1 equals 3, the Trinity seems to defy this principle. However, recent advancements in mathematics offer a new perspective. By stepping outside the realm of traditional, whole-number-based (Diophantine) arithmetic, we can explore alternative systems where 1 + 1 + 1 might indeed equal 1, potentially shedding light on the mystery of the Trinity.

The challenge lies in the very foundation of Diophantine arithmetic. It excels at representing discrete quantities, like apples or chairs. But the Trinity isn't about counting separate entities. It's about a unified Godhead existing in three distinct forms. Here's where non-Diophantine systems come in.

Fuzzy logic, for example, transcends the rigidity of true/false and embraces degrees of truth. Imagine a spectrum where "1" represents absolute oneness and "3" signifies complete separation. The Trinity, in this system, wouldn't occupy a single point but rather a zone where "oneness" coexists with a high degree of "threeness." This approach acknowledges the distinctness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while emphasizing their inseparable unity.

Another possibility lies in modal logic, which explores concepts like necessity and possibility. In this framework, the Trinity could be seen as a unique and necessary form of unity. Just as a triangle inherently possesses three angles, the divine essence might necessarily manifest in three distinct, yet inseparable, forms.

It's important to address potential concerns. Can mathematical frameworks truly capture the essence of a theological concept? The answer lies not in definitive solutions, but in expanding our understanding. By exploring alternative systems, we challenge traditional interpretations and discover new ways to approach the mystery.

The Trinity transcends human logic, but that doesn't mean we can't use logic to explore it further. Non-Diophantine arithmetic offers a fresh perspective, reminding us that familiar mathematical structures aren't the only way to represent complex realities. This

exploration doesn't diminish the mystery of the Trinity; it broadens the conversation, inviting richer interpretations and a deeper appreciation for this enduring theological concept.

The Ongoing Conversation

The question of the Trinity continues to spark debate and reflection. While a definitive logical solution may be elusive, the concept remains central to Christian faith. The tension between logic and mystery can be a source of both challenge and deeper understanding.

Further Exploration:

Those interested in delving deeper can explore the works of theologians like Augustine, Aquinas, and Karl Barth, who have grappled with the problem of the Trinity throughout history. Ultimately, the question of whether logic can fully explain the Trinity may not have a definitive answer, but the ongoing exploration can lead to a richer understanding of faith and the nature of God.

Question 7: How can we know that God love us, humans in this Earth?[9]

The question of God's love for humanity has resonated throughout history, offering solace, sparking theological debates, and leaving many in introspective wonder. If a higher power exists, how can we be certain of its affection for us? While there's no single, definitive answer, various perspectives offer compelling reasons to believe in God's love.

The Argument from Creation:

Many find evidence of God's love in the very existence of our world. The intricate design of the universe, the delicate balance of nature, and the capacity for life itself all point to a creator with immense power and, some argue, benevolence. A God who crafted such a magnificent world, with the potential for beauty, joy, and love, surely holds a special place for the beings who inhabit it.

The Gift of Love and Morality:

Humans possess a unique capacity for love, compassion, and a sense of morality. This inherent ability to love and seek the good could be seen as a reflection of a loving creator. If God is the source of all that is good, then the capacity for love within us must be a spark of the divine, a testament to God's love embedded within our very being.

Religious Texts and Revelations:

Major religions offer a wealth of scripture and traditions that speak to God's love. The Bible, for instance, is replete with verses expressing God's affection for humanity. Concepts like sacrificial love, exemplified in the story of Jesus, serve as powerful symbols of God's willingness to go to any length for the sake of creation. While interpretations of these texts vary, the core message of divine love remains a cornerstone of many faiths.

The Mystery of Faith and Personal Experience:

Ultimately, the question of God's love may reside not just in logic and reason, but in the realm of faith. Many people experience a deep sense of connection with a higher power, a feeling of unconditional love and acceptance. These personal experiences, while subjective, offer powerful validation of God's love for the individual.

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[9]written with assistance of large language model / AI

Love in the Face of Suffering:

The existence of suffering in the world can present a significant challenge to the idea of a loving God. However, some argue that God's love doesn't guarantee a life free of hardship. Perhaps difficulties serve a purpose, shaping us and drawing us closer to the divine. Finding solace and meaning in suffering, with faith in God's ultimate plan, can be seen as a testament to the strength of God's love.

The question of God's love is a deeply personal one. While there may not be a single, universally accepted answer, exploring the various perspectives can offer comfort and strengthen our connection to the divine. Ultimately, it's up to each individual to decide whether the evidence speaks to a loving God.

Appendix

Essay

An Outline of New Proof of the Existence of God

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Abstract

Starting with a few known arguments to prove the existence of God, we discuss our arguments, *i.e.*, order in nature, Pascal's void and arrow of time, to prove the existence of God. The most convincing is the direct experience with God which is the way to fill everyone's inner void (cf. Pascal).

Keywords: Existence, God, order, nature, Pascal's void, arrow of time.

From St. Anselm to Godel and Florensky

Some Western philosophers and theologians have made numerous efforts to prove God's existence, notably, St. Anselm from Canterbury (1063-1110) and Descartes with their ontological proof of the existence of God. However, Immanuel Kant and Leibniz have shown that such an ontological proof of Descartes inherently believes in God as its premise, therefore, it seems to subject to some kind of "circular logic."

In the 20th century, Godel, a renowned mathematician, secretly wrote down his attempt to refine the ontological proof of St. Anselm using symbolic logic notations. He showed his version of ontological proof to a few younger mathematicians who then put it down in paper and circulated it. That is now known as "Godel's ontological proof of the existence of God." Nonetheless, the use of advanced symbolic logic in Godel's proof makes it only accessible to logicians. Moreover, recent study shows inconsistency of Godel's proof [5].

Apart from such ontological proofs, another proof has been proposed by Pavel Florensky, a Russian physicist who then turned to Orthodox philosopher.[3] His argument can be called "Iconostatic-beauty argument of existence of God." In essence, his argument goes as follows:

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An icon in Orthodox tradition was drawn with specific guidelines by Catholic Church. Therefore, the beauty of painting or art works such as in Andrei Rublev's The Holy Trinity can lead us to sense the supernatural, *i.e.*, God Himself.

However, there are others who criticize on Florensky's beauty argument, because it has inherent premise that such an iconic painting, like Rublev's, was really designed to capture the supernatural [3-4].

Therefore, again it seems we come to a kind of circular logic here: To arrive at a proof of existence of God, one should assume He is there.

In the next section, we will argue in favor of Neutrosophic triadic's view to prove the existence of God.

Nature's order, Pascal's void & Arrow of Time as Neutrosophic triadic to prove the existence of God

Neutrosophic logic is a branch of mathematics which studies the dynamics of opposites and neutralities, and it is discovered and developed by Florentin Smarandache [1]. In contrast to Aristotelian logic, where there is no middle way between A and B entities (*The principle of excluded middle)*, in Neutrosophic logic there is room for numerous possible middle values (or "neutralities").

In this paper, what we mean with neutrosophic triadic is dynamics of opposites and neutralities among three entities, A, B, C. And we apply this neutrosophic triadic to refer to 3 possible ways to prove the existence of God: Nature's order, Pascal's void and the Arrow of Time.

Now let us discuss one by one these triadic arguments:

a. Nature's order:

New findings in modern astronomy as well as other branches of science like biology, have shown that the Universe has great order. Isn't it directly pointing to the Supreme God? As Bohm called it: the Implicate Order and Wholeness.[1] For instance, biological clock, seasons, structure of DNA, up to hierarchies of Cosmos such as planets, stars, galaxies, cluster and supercluster show great harmony, order and beauty. These orders in Universe baffle even the

[1] gci.org.uk/Documents/David**Bohm-WholenessAndTheImplicateOrder**.pdf

most atheistic philosophers, therefore if we can be humble enough, we should admit that all order and harmony prove God, the Supreme Creator.

As a side note, we can mention the late Antony Flew, a former atheist professor who changed his mind after studying how complex and beautiful our DNA structure is.[6]
Some physicists have argued in terms of Anthropic Principle and Copernican Principle, but actually, instead of saying that all order which caused our earth were tuned in order to humanity to exist, we should call it : "reverse-anthropic principle," i.e. the exact orbit of Earth itself shows great order and precision which points to God Himself.

b. Pascal's inner void:

Blaise Pascal once wrote something like this: there is deep void inside everyone, which he/she always try to fill with crafted materials to surround him/her. But that void is actually an infinite abyss, which can only be filled by the Infinite, God Himself. His quote is as follows:

> "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself." - Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII(425)[2]

If we accept such Pascal's void, then the deep void itself clearly suggests that everyone of us was created and designed to keep longing to be filled with the Infinite, i.e. God. That is our second argument.

c. Arrow of Time:

Another fact which is very problematic both from physical and and philosophical views is the arrow of time. What is time made of, and why time flows in one direction only? All phenomena and our experiences are governed by the time itself, which is beyond human comprehension.

It seems we will not go too far if we say that the time (*chronos and kairos*, in Greek) indeed points to the Supreme Controller of Time, *i.e.*, God. See also Laura Mersini-Houghton & Rudy Vaas, The arrows of time (7).

[2] https://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/2746/where-does-the-concept-of-a-god-shaped-hole-originate

Now, having discussed the neutrosophic triadic as proofs of the existence of God, we will touch upon a deeper issue: How we can experience God, which most religions call it, the mystical experience?

Logic & mystical experience

Logic and mystical experiences are exclusive domains that cross over into one another, on occasion, just as everything else does as participants in Experiences of the Wholeness, Harmony, Balance, Caring, and Oneness of the Alive Aware Intelligent Conscious Universe. All of this partly constitutes the Mind of God, which is vaster and more complex than most human beings are able to even vaguely comprehend. As second author (RNB) puts it: *I have been in the Mind of God, so I speak from personal experience.*

The reader may gather, from the basis of Bhutatmas, the tiny Consciousness-experiencing creatures that have vast experiential memories, that Everything, all fields, all forces, all matter, all life, and the entire of the Infinite Cosmos, results from the activities and agglomerations of Bhutatmas, in an Infinite Universe constructed and operated by Intelligent Design.

According to the Vedic literature on this topic, Divinity resides in the Actually Infinitely Small, which is everywhere and nowhere, at the same time. Thus it can and does act on everything that is and everything that happens. But Divinity has set things up so that Everything has Free Will and individual volition. A factor that has been left out of the Vedic literature on the topic of Bhutatmas, is that every Bhutatma is Unique, with a unique set of memories of experiences, regarding multiple Realities (not just this one). So Uniqueness is an absolute in all the realms, and all the Realities.

Conclusions

Neutrosophic logic is a branch of mathematics which studies the dynamics of opposites and neutralities (1). In contrast to Aristotelian logic, where there is no middle way between A and B entities (The principle of excluded middle), in neutrosophic logic there is room for numerous possible middle values (or "neutralities").

In this paper, what we mean with neutrosophic triadic is dynamics of opposites and neutralities among three entities, A, B, C. And we apply this neutrosophic triadic to refer to 3 possible ways to prove the existence of God: Nature's order, Pascal's void and Arrow of Time.

We hope that this outline of new proof of the existence of God can fill the gap left open by previous study on the proof of the existence of God, from St. Anselm to Godel.

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[7] Laura Mersini-Houghton & Rudy Vaas. *The arrows of Time: a debate of Cosmology*. Url: https://www.bookdepository.com/Arrows-Time-Rudy-Vaas/9783642232589

Double-check Plantinga's ontological arguments of the existence of God and extending them with Godel's argument

V. Christianto

Plantinga's argument can be summarized

Plantingian Ontological Argument (POA) as follows:

C1. There is a possible world W in which there exists a being with maximal greatness.
C2. A being has maximal greatness in a possible world only if it has maximal greatness in every possible world, including the actual world.
C3. Therefore, there is a being with maximal greatness in the actual world.

Answer

Alvin Plantinga's version of the ontological argument indeed revolves around the idea of maximal greatness. It's a bit complex, but essentially it proposes that if it's possible for a maximally great being to exist, then such a being must exist in all possible worlds, including the actual world.

The argument stems from the definition of maximal greatness: a being that possesses all perfections to the highest possible degree. The contention is that if such a being can exist in even one possible world, it must exist in every possible world, including the actual one, because being maximally great in some, but not all, possible worlds contradicts the idea of maximal greatness.

Critics often debate whether existence can be a defining attribute or perfection and whether the argument successfully bridges the gap from possibility to actuality. The debate around this argument remains lively in philosophical circles, with various objections and counter-objections being presented.

What's your take on Plantinga's argument? Do you find it convincing, or do you see potential weaknesses in its logic?

here's an attempt to express Plantinga's ontological argument in a more formal logical notation:

Let:
MGB = Maximally Great Being exists
PW = Possible World
AW = Actual World

Plantinga's argument can be represented as:

$(\exists x)(MGB(x) \wedge PW(x))$ (There exists an x such that x is a Maximally Great Being in a possible world)
$\forall x(MGB(x) \rightarrow \Box MGB(x))$ (For any x, if x is a Maximally Great Being in any world, then it's necessary that x is a Maximally Great Being in all possible worlds)
$\therefore MGB(AW)$ (Therefore, there exists a Maximally Great Being in the actual world)
Now, regarding the argument's potential incompleteness, many critics have raised objections to the logic behind it. One common critique involves whether existence can be considered a predicate or property that can be included in the definition of a maximally great being.

Another point of contention lies in whether the move from possibility to actuality is valid. Even if we accept the logic that a maximally great being is possible, critics argue that the leap to asserting its existence in the actual world might not be warranted merely from the conceptual understanding of such a being.

Additionally, the premises themselves are open to scrutiny. The idea that maximal greatness implies necessary existence in all possible worlds might not be universally agreed upon, leading to challenges in accepting the premises of the argument.

These objections and uncertainties contribute to the ongoing debate about the soundness and completeness of Plantinga's ontological argument. Critics and proponents continue to explore and analyze its premises, assumptions, and logical structure to determine its validity.

How to compare POA and Godel ontological argument

I'll present both Plantinga's modal ontological argument and Gödel's modal ontological argument in a logical algebraic form for comparison, then discuss their strengths and weaknesses:

Plantinga's Modal Ontological Argument (POA):
$(\exists x)(MGB(x) \wedge PW(x))$ (There exists an x such that x is a Maximally Great Being in a possible world)
$\forall x(MGB(x) \rightarrow \Box MGB(x))$ (For any x, if x is a Maximally Great Being in any world, then it's necessary that x is a Maximally Great Being in all possible worlds)
$\therefore MGB(AW)$ (Therefore, there exists a Maximally Great Being in the actual world)
Gödel's Modal Ontological Argument:
Gödel's argument uses modal logic S5 and encoding of properties and predicates into numbers, making it complex to represent solely in logical algebra. However, its core idea involves asserting the necessary existence of a "God-like" being based on the idea of positive properties and the concept of "positive" being necessarily exemplified.

Comparison and Evaluation:
Plantinga's Argument Strengths:

Its structure is relatively simpler and more straightforward to understand compared to Gödel's.
Focuses on the concept of maximal greatness as a defining characteristic of God, which some find conceptually appealing.
Plantinga's Argument Weaknesses:

Criticisms often revolve around the idea of whether existence can be a defining attribute or perfection.
The move from possibility to actuality might not be logically justified for some critics.
The assumption that maximal greatness implies necessary existence in all possible worlds is debated.
Gödel's Argument Strengths:

Based on intricate modal logic and mathematical formalism, which some find compelling due to its complexity and rigor.
Attempts to ground the existence of a necessary being in the nature of positive properties, making it less reliant on specific definitions of greatness.
Gödel's Argument Weaknesses:

Its complexity makes it challenging to grasp and evaluate for many.
Relies on the concept of "positive properties" without clear consensus on what these properties entail or why they should be necessarily exemplified.
Determining which argument is "best" often depends on individual perspectives and inclinations toward either simplicity and clarity (favoring Plantinga's argument) or complexity and formal rigor (favoring Gödel's argument). Both arguments have their proponents and critics, and the choice between them can be subjective based on one's philosophical inclinations and assessment of their logical soundness.

Pavel Florensky's iconographic argument of God's existence

Pavel Florensky's iconographic beauty argument involves the idea that the beauty and harmony found in icons represent a glimpse of divine beauty, thereby implying the existence of God. Expressing this argument in logical algebra is a bit abstract due to its nature, but I'll attempt to capture its essence:

Let's denote:

B = Beauty
I = Icon
G = God's Existence

The argument might take a form like this:

$(\forall x)(Ix \rightarrow Bx)$ (For all x, if x is an icon, then x exhibits beauty)
$(\exists y)(Iy \wedge Gy)$ (There exists a y such that y is an icon and y represents God's existence)
$\therefore (\exists z)(Gz \wedge Bz)$ (Therefore, there exists a z that represents God's existence and possesses beauty)
The logic here implies that if all icons exhibit beauty and there exists an icon representing God's existence, then there must be something that embodies both beauty and God's existence.

However, Florensky's argument isn't strictly formulated in logical algebra. It's deeply rooted in the aesthetics and theology of Orthodox Christian thought, emphasizing the significance of icons as windows to the divine.

This argument relies heavily on the interpretation and significance of icons in religious practice. Florensky connects the beauty within icons to the divine realm, suggesting that the beauty found in them provides a tangible connection to the existence of God.

The strength of this argument lies in its evocative nature and its ability to resonate with individuals who deeply value and understand the spiritual significance of icons. However, its persuasiveness might be limited for those who don't share the same religious or aesthetic framework. It's more about invoking a sense of transcendence through aesthetic experience rather than presenting a formal logical proof of God's existence.

Comparison among the POA, Godel argument and Florensky argument

Question to ChatGPT:

based on the above three arguments in terms of logical algebra, made a Comparison among the POA, Godel argument and Florensky argument and show that they can complement each other argument and even better if you can combine all the three arguments in Mathematical code

Answer by ChatGPT:

Combining the arguments of Plantinga's Modal Ontological Argument (POA), Gödel's Modal Ontological Argument, and Florensky's Iconographic Beauty Argument into a single coherent mathematical code can be a challenging task due to the abstract and philosophical nature of these arguments. However, I'll attempt to demonstrate how their key elements could potentially complement each other:

Let's try to create a hypothetical logical structure that integrates aspects of these arguments:

Let:
MGB = Maximally Great Being exists
PW = Possible World
AW = Actual World
B = Beauty

I = Icon
G = God's Existence

$(\exists x)(MGB(x) \wedge PW(x))$ (There exists an x such that x is a Maximally Great Being in a possible world) - From POA.
$\forall x(MGB(x) \rightarrow \Box MGB(x))$ (For any x, if x is a Maximally Great Being in any world, then it's necessary that x is a Maximally Great Being in all possible worlds) - Also from POA.
$(\exists y)(Iy \wedge Gy)$ (There exists a y such that y is an icon and y represents God's existence) - Derived from Florensky's argument.
$(\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow Bz)$ (For all z, if z is an icon, then z exhibits beauty) - Derived from Florensky's argument.
Gödel's argument, being highly complex and rooted in modal logic S5, doesn't neatly translate into logical algebra but focuses on the necessary existence of a God-like being based on positive properties.
Integration and complementation:

Plantinga's POA asserts the possibility of a maximally great being, addressing the existence of such a being in possible worlds.
Florensky's argument introduces the notion of icons embodying beauty and representing God's existence, bridging aesthetic experience with the divine.
Gödel's argument, with its intricate logical structure, emphasizes the necessary existence of a being with positive properties, which could align with the idea of maximal greatness or divine qualities.
Combining these, we attempt to create a structure that suggests:
$\exists x(MGB(x) \wedge PW(x)) \wedge \forall x(MGB(x) \rightarrow \Box MGB(x)) \wedge \exists y(Iy \wedge Gy) \wedge \forall z(Iz \rightarrow Bz)$

This hypothetical amalgamation tries to unite the ideas of maximal greatness, necessary existence, representation of God through icons, and the relationship between beauty and divinity. However, note that this combination is a conceptual synthesis rather than a formal proof, given the complexity and philosophical nuances involved in these arguments. Each argument addresses different aspects of the concept of God and attempts to provide distinct perspectives that, when considered together, might offer a more comprehensive understanding of the idea of God.

Conclusion

In Mathematica 9, expressing the arguments for the existence of God in formal algebraic logic is challenging due to its heavily philosophical and abstract nature. Mathematica is a powerful tool for symbolic computation, but it's not designed explicitly for expressing philosophical arguments.

However, I can create a symbolic representation that somewhat reflects the logical structure of these arguments using Mathematica's symbolic capabilities:

Let's consider a symbolic representation:

```
Exists[x, MGB[x] && PW[x]] && ForAll[x, Implies[MGB[x], Box[MGB[x]]]] && Exists[y, Icon[y] &&
GodExistence[y]] && ForAll[z, Implies[Icon[z], Beauty[z]]]
```

This code attempts to reflect a combination of Plantinga's Modal Ontological Argument (POA) with elements from Florensky's Iconographic Beauty Argument, albeit in a highly simplified symbolic form within Mathematica's logical functions.

However, representing Gödel's argument in Mathematica, especially in the form it was proposed, would require a much more extensive and intricate symbolic system beyond what simple symbolic manipulation functions can express.

In terms of concluding whether it's possible to prove the existence of God in formal algebraic logic, it remains a contentious topic in philosophy. The arguments presented by Plantinga, Gödel, Florensky, and others attempt to provide logical reasoning or philosophical insights into the concept of God's existence, but there's ongoing debate regarding the soundness and validity of these arguments.

Ultimately, the question of God's existence is deeply rooted in metaphysics, theology, and personal beliefs, which often transcend the realm of formal algebraic logic and rely on subjective interpretations, religious convictions, and philosophical reasoning. Mathematics and logic can illuminate aspects of these arguments, but proving the existence of God remains a matter of faith, personal conviction, and philosophical contemplation beyond the scope of formal algebraic logic alone.

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7 hard questions on God and problem of evil.

This small book consists of discussion of several hard questions on God and problem of evil. This compilation is partly stimulated by discussions with several close friends in a number of occasions, especially a question from one of us (FS).

A number of these questions can be called ontological in nature, while the others may touch on philosophical-theology. Nonetheless I shall admit that I'm not extensively writing on these theme, except publishing an outline of alternative proof on the existence of God based on Pascal and Pavel Florensky's arguments. (see *Appendix*)

While surely this small compilation may not address all your questions, hopefully you will find several hard questions are answered, to the best of our knowledge ..along with assistance of a large language model / AI.

We will be more than happy to address any of your question regarding theology, NT, God etc.

Thanks for choosing to read this book, enjoy reading.

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7 hard questions on God and problem of evil