

## **THEORY OF COMPENSATION AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL; A NEW DEFENSE**

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**Abstract.** All previous solutions to the problem of evil have attempted to resolve the issue by showing that God permits them in order for a greater good. However, some contest that there are some instances in which there is no greater good, while in other cases good and evil have been distributed unjustly. I intend, in this paper, to show that if God compensates the harms of evil in the afterlife, any sort of good is enough to resolve the problem of evil; even if the good is not greater than the evil nor distributed appropriately. To attain this end, I have divided the theory of compensation into a weak and a more effective account. The weak account alleges that the goodness of evils is merely based upon their compensation in the afterlife. I have proposed, in this article, a new, strong account of this theory, which considers both primary goods of evils and afterlife compensation as combined elements that can justify evils. After distinguishing the weak and strong versions of compensation, the idea is explained, and the advantages of the theory are pointed out. Finally, there are two chief objections raised against the validity of this theory, both have been mentioned and answered in this paper.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The problem of evil concerns how the existence of evil can be reconciled with the existence of God who is supposed to be all-good, all-knowing and all-powerful. It is contended that this problem is the main barrier to accepting the perfection of God and is also used to deny and void the divine attributes of perfection; for if God knows all evils and has the power to stop them, in addition to being all good, then there is no reason for evils to exist. In ancient Greece, Epicurus (342–270 B.C) put the problem as follows: is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence evil? (Hospers, 1997, 221, Hick, 1990, 40) Other atheist philosophers have even held that this problem is the main defeater for the existence of God. According to them, if God exists, he should stop evils, and if he does not stop the occurrence of evils, it follows that God does not exist (Mackie 1982, 160–162).

A significant point to be noted is that the term “evil” is not always a fitting term to indicate disliked, harmful or painful phenomena. The actions and occurrences considered painful and unpleasant can sometimes, in reality, be good and beneficial, such as vaccination or fatigue caused by exercise. So, the problem is how evils can be regarded as good.

Many attempts have been made to explain evils in the world, however, none have escaped critique. These attempts intended to show that all evils are a necessary component in the achieving a greater good, but even though most of the theodicies provide some good for evils, they failed to explain the following problems:

1. The problem of the greatness of evils: Most of the theodicies fail to explain how horrendous evils lead to a greater good; they might be necessary to attain some good, but don't lead to a greater good. There are, likewise, some evils that seem gratuitous and pointless. Several theistic philosophers have attempted to find a theodicy explaining the good of these evils, but the good they mentioned does not seem to be greater.

2. The problem of unjust distribution of evils: There are some evils that occur to animals or infants or the insane. For example, when someone slaughters an animal, it may be good for people using its meat, but there is no good for the animal, or disability of an infant may be a way to test its parents, but there is no good for the afflicted infant. If we assume that all evils generally lead to a greater good, it seems unjust that it has been distributed discriminatorily, that some people suffer more than others, that some are poor while others are wealthy, that some are sick while others are healthy. Even if we suppose that evils will amount to a greater good on the whole, it seems doubtful for it to amount to a greater good for all individuals.

I intend, in this paper, to use the “theory of compensation” and restructure it in a new, more effective manner as a complementary theodicy, as I will explain. Thereafter, delineating how it can cover the deficiencies of other theodicies.

Though this theory is not considered to be a profound solution for the problem of evil in contemporary philosophy of religion, it has been widely accepted by many Muslim Theologians (Al-Hilli 1382 A.H., 117, al-Hilli 1414 A.H., 110, al-Murtaza 1387 A.H., 34–35) and some medieval Christian theologians (Aquinas 2016). In this paper I aim to restructure this theodicy as a complementary one and refer to it as “the strong version of the theory of compensation”. This version considers both *compensation* and *primary good* necessary to justify evils and explains that:

- A: If evils will be compensated, the existence of some good is enough to justify them, even though there will be no resulted greater good.
- B: If evils will be compensated, it is not necessary for them to be distributed equally; even if an evil has no good for an individual, while has some good for others, it is reasonable for it to occur.

The strong version of the theory, in addition to possible objections that could be laid against it, will be expounded and analyzed in this paper.

Before beginning the discussion, it should be noted that evils have been divided into two categories: moral evils and natural evils. Moral evils are those which result from vice, either through intention or negligence, of moral agents, while, in contrast, natural evils are a result of natural processes and phenomena. In the discussion of moral evil, as theologians have explained, the requirement of God’s justice is to take the right of the oppressed from the oppressor and to punish the oppressor in proportion to his oppression (Al-Hilli 1382AH, 129). However, the following discussion concerns any person who has been harmed and afflicted by either natural or moral evil and will attempt to explain how a strong account of the theory of compensation can settle the problems associated with these two types of evils.

## II. WEAK AND STRONG ACCOUNTS OF THE THEORY OF COMPENSATION

The theory of compensation assumes that all evils encountered in this world will be compensated by God. With people facing many evils in this world, God will recompensate them with something that is equal or greater than the difficulties of the evils faced in this world. Compensation, which we understand, means that in return for the misfortune and evil that befalls man in this world, he will receive an equal or greater amount of good in the Hereafter to compensate for the loss and hardship of the evil experienced in this world. However, a question may be raised of how do we measure the amount of suffering experienced. and similarly, the amount of ‘pleasure’ required to compensate it? In order to answer this question, it must first be understood that God, with His Omniscience, has the ability to evaluate the amount of evil and pleasure. Secondly, it can be said that God, in Paradise, will give so much good to those who have suffered calamities that they themselves will attain inner satisfaction and will understand from within that the good that they have received in the Hereafter is equal to or more than the pain they have endured in this world. For instance, when a person dies of cancer, God gives him so much pleasure and bounties in Heaven that he feels that these pleasures and bounties are far greater than the pain and suffering he

endured in the world. These pleasures and bounties of Heaven are expansively greater and superior to the hardships and pains experienced in this world, and this superior pleasure will be experienced by the person who has suffered.

Among medieval philosophers, Thomas Aquinas resorted to the afterlife in order to solve the problem of evil. Aquinas's idea was that evil happenings to a person in this life can be justified only by reference to their state in the afterlife. Aquinas always maintained that the days of our earthly lives are short, while the afterlife is eternal. He therefore naturally supposes that matters concerning the afterlife are more important than those having to do with this life. Aquinas is proposing here a view familiar to contemporary Islamic discourses on the problem of evil i.e. God's reasons for allowing suffering are mysterious, and we don't know what sort of justification there is for God's allowing evil; but the immeasurable good of union with God in heaven recompenses all the finite evils we suffer here (Stump 1996, 57–58).

The explanation of the theory of compensation can be divided into two categories:

The first explanation holds that the mere compensation of evils in the afterlife is sufficient to justify occurring evils. I call this explanation the *weak version*. The weak version of this theory maintains that there are many evils in this world, which, initially, seems to be a defeater of the perfect nature of God; however, God compensates for these evils in the hereafter. So, there is no problem in allowing these evils to occur in this world, as they will all be compensated for.

However, this version, in my opinion, is lacking, because it ignores the question as to why God has 'created' these evils in the first place. The weak version maintains that God will compensate these evils, but the primary concern is that why God created these evils at all. It is futile for God to punish somebody by means of 'evils', and thereafter He compensates for these evils in the afterlife. The problem is the cause of these evils in this world, and the compensation of these evils does not address the main question. It is like a father who punishes his son without any reason, and then afterwards compensates the son for the punishment given. This is not reasonable and this type of compensation does not answer the primary problem.

Therefore, one can conclude that this version of the theory of compensation is not a reasonable resolution for the problem of evil, because it does not explain the initial reason of these evils.

Here I would like to suggest another account of the theory, which I term *the strong version*. This version of the theory of compensation is derived from the views of some Muslim theologians who claim that there are two conditions such that when both are satisfied, God is justified in bringing about evils:

The first condition is that evils must have a good in order for their creation to be justified, even though the good may not outweigh the evil; while the second being that God must compensate for the evils in the afterlife.

This theory can be considered as a consequential theory from the aspect that it allows for God to bring about that which has a good end. Additionally, this theory not only considers the good end, but also considers the primary good within evil.

This theory, in effect, asserts that bringing about evils must not be *futile* and *unjust*. God's justice establishes the necessity of compensation in the Hereafter, while His wisdom dictates the primary good within evils. When there is both "hereafter compensation" and "primary good", the creation of evil by God is neither unjust nor futile (al-Halabi 1984, 135).

The difference between the strong version and the weak is that the weak version holds that compensation in the afterlife is sufficient to justify evils, while the strong version asserts that evils must have some good in this world, in addition to the compensation in the afterlife.

Furthermore, the differences of the strong version of the theory of compensation with other theodicies is that:

- A. Other theodicies hold that God is only permitted to allow evils when their goods in this world are greater than their harm, while the theory of compensation contends that if the harms of evils will be compensated in the afterlife, then even the existence of some good, not necessarily greater, is enough to nullify them being unjust.

As there are two conditions for an evil to be rationally justified, namely, there must be a reason justifying its existence and explaining why it is not futile and secondly, it must be explained in a manner that shows its existence to be just and fair. If there were no compensations in the afterlife, these conditions would only be satisfied when an evil results in a greater good; but by taking it into consideration, both conditions are fulfilled, even if the primary good of an evil does not outweigh the evil itself. Compensation in the afterlife renders evils just and any sort of good (even if not greater) is sufficient to consider evils purposeful.

B: Other theodicies maintain that God is permitted to allow evils only when the good within evils return to the same man suffered, but this subsequent theory asserts that even if the good of an evil return to another, God is permitted to bring it about, since the divine action in question is neither futile, since there is a good returning to others, nor unjust since evils will be duly compensated.

### III. ELEMENTS OF THE STRONG VERSION OF THE THEORY OF COMPENSATION

The strong version of the theory of compensation is composed of the following premises:

1. Evils have some good, and the existence of these evils is necessary to attain these goods; thus, these evils are not futile, even if the good within evils do not outweigh evils.
2. Since the suffering and harms of evils will be compensated in the afterlife, they are just and fair.
3. Since evils are neither futile nor unjust, they are good and beneficial for all humans.

We can elaborate on these premises as follows:

1. The existence of evils is required for some goods. These goods have been expounded as independent theodicies by theist philosophers. Here I attempt to explain them very briefly only as an introduction to the strong theory of compensation. Some of the goods that require the existence of evil are:
  - One of the most important goods of these evils is soul making, as an actual moral achievement of mankind, that can be attained by meeting and eventually mastering temptation, and thus by rightly making responsible choices in concrete situations (Hick 2017).
  - Another valuable good is free will. Some philosophers contend that how valuable free will is depends upon the degree of actions open to us. Thus, the more we are free, the more value we can attain (Swinburne 2017).
  - People are categorized into several groups: some are vicious, and some are good-doers and pious. If somebody is a vicious and sinful man, these evils, difficulties, and calamities render his sins removed. And if a man is a good-doer, these evils, difficulties, and calamities make him attain more perfection, and achieve his happiness in this world and the afterlife. If, however, someone is a mixture of both categories, i.e., both good and bad, the evil can either be a means for the elimination of his sins, or the attainment of further perfection. The good within evils for righteous people is the enhancement of their status before God, and consequently, attainment of the bounties and the grace of God. The good within evils for sinful people is the removal of their sins, and consequently, their deliverance. Therefore, evil is good for both evil- and good-doers (Majlesi 1983, 196–258).
  - Evils are a good way to test how much people obey God by their free will through calamities, pains, and sufferings. Many people claim that they obey God, and they are really pious and faithful, but the extent they obey the commands of God will become clear through examinations and tests (Majlesi 1983, 196–258).

- Evils awaken people from the ignorance of God and the afterlife. Sometimes, humans forget God and the afterlife and do anything they desire. When God inflicts suffering on humans, He awakens them, and then they feel the existence of God and notices the presence of Him in their lives. It is an important good that can be achieved through evils (al-Kulaynī 1987, 47).

So, there is much good in the existence of evils. These goods have been extensively explained by different philosophers, like John Hick (Hick 2017), Alvin Plantinga (Plantinga 2012), and Richard Swinburne (Swinburne 2017). However, the important point to be noted here is that, as per my opinion, these goods are not sufficient justification for making some types of evils appear in the world, unless we add that all of them will be compensated. It is because these goods do not seem greater in some cases, particularly horrendous evils or animal suffering, yet since they are not unjust because of the compensation of the afterlife, God is permitted to bring them about.

The normal theodicies can explain some good within evils, but it is too difficult, and maybe impossible, to explain how they are greater in all evils, but the strong theory of compensation fills this gap, illustrating how God is morally permitted to cause these evils. As I will explain, the existence of any sort of good, even though not greater, is sufficient for an evil not to be futile. Yet the problem of justice remains, and it would be solved by compensation in the afterlife.

2. It has been explained above that there is much good within evils. However, undoubtedly there is also much harm besides this good, and it is here where the problem of evil arises. Other theodicies would face many problems, they must prove that the good within evils are greater than their harms; they must prove that creating a world with these evils is better than not creating it. However, the solution of compensation does not encounter these problems. It is enough for this theory to prove that evils have some good requiring their existence, and as the harms of evils will be compensated in the afterlife, the existence of some good is enough to bring about these evils.

However, it must be noted that the existence of some evil is necessary to attain some good, that is, the world could not have had those goods without evils. These goods might not lead to a greater good, yet they are good due to the compensation in the afterlife.

3. Therefore, it can be concluded that all evils can be good and beneficial. Since the harms of evils will be compensated, only the good within evils remains, and therefore the bringing about of evils is not unjust.

Considering both primary good within evils and their compensation in the afterlife, it would be asserted that evils are only bad when looked at from the limited worldly perspective, but if we look at evils by considering their compensation and primary goods, all evils would seem good and beneficial.

In reality, there is no evil in this world, but I do not mean that all evils are illusions, as some philosophers have held, rather I want to assert that although evil seems bad *prima facie*, but if we consider the compensation of evils and the primary good within them in this world, they are both beneficial and good.

#### IV. ADVANTAGES OF THIS THEORY COMPARED TO OTHERS

The advantages of this theory are that:

1. It can explain those evils whose goodness does not outweigh the evil, like horrendous evils and the large scale evils, as it can best explain that there are no meaningless evils.
2. It can explain that if evils are not distributed equally, and even if, in some cases, evils have no good for an individual, they are, nevertheless, neither unjust nor futile.

Let me explain these two advantages as follows:

1. The Problem of the Greatness of Evils

As has been previously explained, several theodicies explain the good involved in evils. In many cases, it is clear that good is greater than evil, but in some cases, evil seems to be greater than good. Of course, in these cases, it cannot be said that these evils are definitely greater than good, for there may be an ambiguity in these cases with regard to how they outweigh evils. It seems, in these cases, that there is no greater good to which evils lead. In his outstanding article, *William Rowe* mentioned two examples:

A: A fawn is horribly burned in a forest fire caused by lightning. It lies on the forest floor suffering terribly for five days before death relieves it of its suffering.

B: A five-year-old girl is brutally beaten, raped, and strangled in Flint, Michigan, on New Year's Day a few years ago.

*Rowe* holds that in light of our knowledge of the scale of human and animal suffering occurring daily in our world, the idea that none of those instances of suffering could have been prevented by an all-powerful being without the loss of a greater good must strike us as an extraordinary idea, quite beyond our belief (*Rowe* 2004, 6).

It must be noted that *Rowe* does not contend that there is no good in either example, but rather he asserts that with respect to each, any good that we consider, may not be reason enough to justify God in permitting that evil (*Rowe* 2004, 6). For example, being free is a good that enables one to produce evils, but, as *Rowe* contends, no responsible person thinks that the good of human freedom is so great as to require that no steps be taken to prevent some of the more flagrant abuses of free choice that result in massive, undeserved suffering by humans and animals. Any moral person who had power to do so would have intervened to prevent the evil free choices that resulted in the torture and death of a large number of people. We commonly act to restrict egregious abuses of human freedom that result in massive, undeserved human and animal suffering. Any moral being, including God, would likely do the same (*Rowe* 2004, 13).

Consequently, *Rowe* accepts that free will is good; and he may agree that the freer our will, the more good we may enjoy. However, he maintains that the good of free will, or anything else, does not outweigh horrendous evils. I agree with *Rowe* that this problem will undermine the free will theodicy, or any other such individual theodicy; but I think if we complement it, or other theodicies, with the compensation of the afterlife, then God is permitted to bring out horrendous evils. Evils, as *Rowe* agrees, enjoy some good, but the important point is that we do not need to prove that the good within evils are greater, when we are certain that evils will be compensated in afterlife it renders them just and fair, while free will or other goods ensures they are not futile.

In other words, although horrendous evils may seem useless at first glance, as we have already explained, there are some general goods in them, as also explained, and if, in addition to these goods, the afterlife compensation is considered, they become beneficial. So, when we consider some good within horrendous evils, it allows for three possible options for God:

- 1) God does not eliminate horrendous evils, since they lead to a greater good. This option requires the finding of a greater good which justifies horrendous evils. But in some cases, there seems to be no greater good.
- 2) God allows horrendous evils due to the goal of acquiring some good, and then compensates the harms of the evils in the afterlife. This is the most reasonable choice.
- 3) God eliminates horrendous evils. This option is not reasonable, since it requires the elimination of some good, while the harms of these evils will be compensated for.

It is possible that one may object to this in the following manner. Suppose there are two possible worlds. In *W1* there is a supreme being (*SBW1*) who creates a world with a very high degree of horrendous evil. It is not futile, because it contains good. It is also not unjust, because it will all be compensated. Next consider *SBW2* who is just like *SBW1*, except that *W2*, His creation, contains no horrendous evils. It

seems that SBW2 would be more beneficent than SBW1. The atheist could argue that God either lacks the power to create SBW2 or he is not good enough to do so. He may ask “Why does an almighty God allow the occurrence of more evil than necessary for his benevolent purposes?” He might say that in these cases God has no plausible reason, since God chose to bring about more evil than he had to. Compensation only has a point if the excess evil is unavoidable.

In response to this objection, I accept that the theory of compensation works only when severe and horrendous evils are unavoidable, but I believe that there is this inevitability and necessity. The basic point is that more evils are necessary to achieve more goods. More evils cause the goods that have been explained before (such as cultivating the human soul, attaining perfection, testing humans, realizing the freedom of will) to be more. Therefore, it can be said that more evils are necessary to achieve more goods. Let me explain this further. One of the horrendous evils was the example of animal suffering. Many philosophers have explained why the existence of this horrendous evil is necessary and unavoidable. For example, Swinburne explains that it is good that there be animals who show courage in the face of pain, to secure food and to find and rescue their mates and their young, and sympathetic concern for other animals. An animal cannot intentionally avoid the danger of a forest fire or guide its offspring away from one unless the danger exists objectively. And that cannot be unless some animals get caught in forest fires (Swinburne 1998, 176). But the problem is that although the existence of evil here is necessary to bring about some good, in some cases the evil of the animal is so great that it does not lead to an overall greater good. Here the theory of compensations works. W2 contains 30% of evil (without horrendous evils) resulting in 20% of good, and W1 contains 60% of evil (including horrendous evils) resulting in more goods, i.e., 40% of good. The question arises here as to whether God is justified to create evil just because more evils (in the case of horrendous evils) cause more goods? Given other theodicies, God does not seem to be morally permitted to create either of these two worlds, because although more evils were necessary to achieve more goods, evil did not lead to a greater overall good in either. However, according to the theory of compensation, as explained, God is morally permitted to create either of them, but then the question arises as to which one is better? Taking the compensation of the afterlife into consideration, creating W1 (including horrendous evils) is more beneficent, since W1 produces more good, and all of its harms will be compensated for. It provides a suggestion as to how the compensation of the afterlife can explain the existence of horrendous evils. Thus, the plausible reason for God to bring about horrendous evil is that the more horrendous the evil, the more good will be produced (even if this evil does not lead to the greater good as a whole), and the harms of evil will be compensated for in the afterlife.

However, two significant points should be noted:

Firstly, I do not contend that horrendous evils do not necessarily lead to a greater good, but I hold that, as a conditional proposition, even if they did not lead to a greater good, God would be morally permitted to create them.

Secondly, I do not deny the necessity of proportion between good and evil, but I claim that in the proportion between good and evil, only good in this world should not be solely considered. Some horrendous evils may not lead to a greater good in this world, but when the degree of their goodness in this world and the compensation of the Hereafter are considered together, on the whole, their creation seems moral and good for God. The allowing of horrendous evils must be considered by taking into account both the amount of worldly good and the compensation in the afterlife, not just the amount of their good in this world.

Considering what has been explained, the same line of argument applies to the large scale of evil. I accept that sometimes the scale of evils might not lead to a greater good, but I think that they contain their own goods, even if these goods are not greater than the evils they accompany, and it is reasonable to bring them about when their harms will be compensated for.

Correspondingly, the problem of meaningless evils can be answered. There is, in fact, no meaningless evil, since all evils contain some good, and by considering the compensation of the afterlife, it is not necessary for them to result in a greater good.

## 2. The Problem of Unjust Distribution of Evils

Consider the following examples:

- A: The occurrence of an evil has some good for the majority, but it brings about harm and suffering for the minority.
- B: A man uses an animal for his own purposes. It seems good for the man to use the animal, but it is difficult for the animal to tolerate.
- C: God creates a disabled infant for a parent to be tested and spiritually perfected through their free will.
- D: Laws of nature, alongside all goods they have, might occasionally cause horrendous evils for some people. Some philosophers contend that normal theodicies provided by philosophers are merely directed to the global dimension of evils by suggesting possible strategies for the global defeat of evil, but establishing God's excellence as a producer of global goods does not automatically solve the problem of evil in the context of an individual person's life (Adams 2012, 385). The question is whether God is permitted to cause horrendous evils for individuals merely for the global goods involved in the laws of nature.

In these cases, the problem in question is that if evils are necessary for some good, then why are they distributed unjustly? Why must a minority be harmed for the sake of a majority? Why must an animal tolerate difficulties for human beings? Why must an infant suffer for its parents?

All theodicies, except the theory of compensation, fail to explain this problem. Even if one can assume the good within evils are on the whole greater, it seems unjust and unfair that one suffers more for the greater good that others may have. Considering other theodicies, even if the goodness of evils is greater for a group as a whole, evil entails cruelty and oppression for a minority within the group.

However, the theory of compensation can solve this problem, since the compensation in the afterlife renders all evils just and fair. The only problem remaining is the problem of futility, and it can be solved by regarding any sort of good, even if returned to others, as being beneficial. So, if God harms the minority for the good of the majority, and then does not compensate them, it would be considered a kind of injustice on the minority and will have no moral justification; as the ends do not justify the means. But if God performs an action for the good of the majority and also compensates the minority for their pain and suffering, then this act can be said to be just and reasonable.

Taking this into account, let us rephrase the above scenarios:

- A: Bringing about a horrendous evil for a minority is neither unjust, since it will be compensated, nor futile, since it has some good for the majority.
- B: Using animals for various purposes by human beings is useful for humans, and since the animal suffering will be compensated, it is not unjust for the afflicted animals.<sup>1</sup>
- C: God may test the faith of a parent by creating a disabled infant or God might consider another sort of good for the parent. Yet, it is not cruel to the infant, since God will compensate all of its hardships and sufferings.
- D: Considering both the goods of the laws of nature and the compensation of their evils, the wisdom of God demands their creation. Not only are they useful for global goods, but they are also good for individuals.

<sup>1</sup> This argument has been used by Muslim theologians as an independent argument for animal afterlife (al-Saduq 1993, 292, Al-Mufid 1993, 110).



## V. THEORY OF COMPENSATION, A REPLY TO OBJECTIONS

Let us now consider two objections to the theory of compensation, along with their responses and rebuttals.

### 1. Compensation and Justification

It is alleged that the theory of compensation cannot justify the existence of evils. Since the theory of compensation seeks to make evils good by appealing to compensation, but it is flawed and even an absurd theodicy. It is like saying that I may beat my dog at will provided that I later give him a dish of his favorite liver chowder. What happens after death, no matter how welcome, does not make present evil good. (Jantzen 1984, 40)

In other words, it is contended that this argument has confused compensation and justification. While there may be greater future goods to which present evils are connected, it is far from clear how such future goods *justify* the present occurrence of those evils. How could the promised bliss and beatitude of heaven justify the excruciating suffering of a cancer victim during earthly life? It is quite a conceptual jump from the notion of a good outweighing an evil to the notion of compensating the existence of an evil. The future goods never can justify present evils (Michael Peterson 1991, 106). "Such reasoning wars with ordinary morality because it conflates compensation and justification." (Maitzen 2009, 123) G. L. Mackie puts this problem in this way:

*Even if there were a future life in comparison with which the evils of this one would seem negligible, that still would not explain, compatibly with theism, the occurrence of those evils themselves. (Mackie 1982, 156)*

This objection, as explained previously, can be easily answered if we distinguish between the weak and the strong rendition of this theory. If we hold, given the weak account, that God causes evils merely for future bliss, the future bliss cannot justify the present evils, but if we say, given the strong account, that evils provide goods in the present world, though they might not be greater, this objection will be resolved.

If one considers the compensation of the afterlife as an independent theodicy, this issue may appear; but, if one considers it, as the strong version maintains, as a complementary solution considering both primary good and future compensation, then this issue can be explained. Although future bliss cannot justify evils, future compensation can justify present evils if they have some primary good, even if it is not greater from the outset.

If God brings about evils for their present goods and if He then compensates for the harms of evils, these two components together make evils rationally acceptable and reasonable.

### 2. Is the Theory of Compensation Circular?

It is claimed that the theory of compensation is circular, since it relies on the existence of an afterlife where the harms of evils will be compensated, but the problem is that the existence of the afterlife relies on the existence of God who has created the afterlife, but the existence of evils refutes the existence of such a God; and thus, it is not permissible to settle the problem of evil by reliance on the theory of compensation. G.L. Mackie puts this problem in this way:

*But these are 'arbitrary suppositions'; we cannot rely on them when the issue whether there is a just, benevolent, and all-powerful deity is still in doubt. And even if the pain and misery in man were compatible, with infinite power and goodness in the Deity (on the supposition that it will all be put right somehow, somewhere, sometime), this is useless if we are still at the stage of trying to infer the existence and the attributes of a God from what we independently know. (Mackie 1982, 156)*

This objection is flawed, since the theory of compensation does not rely necessarily on the existence of God and hereafter, rather it has a form of a conditional proposition, that is:

*If there were a God, the existence of evil would not be incompatible with his omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence.*

In this proposition, neither the existence of God is presupposed nor the existence of the afterlife; the only issue is that if the existence of God and the afterlife were proven, the existence of evils would not be incompatible with his omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence; since this argument is based on a conditional proposition, not a descriptive one.

To put it in simpler terms, suppose that your friend tells you that A is a generous man. Immediately, a question that may arise in your mind is that if A were a generous man, why would he not give money to B. Your friend may reply to you that although A does not give money to B, he is quite generous, since A knows that giving money to B is not advisable for him now, but A will compensate for it and will give him extra money in the future to compensate for it. Considering this answer given by your friend, you may get convinced, and accept that not giving money to B does not negate the generosity of A. The matter is not about the reason for his generosity, nor even about the reason to prove that A may be compensated in the future, but that if he is generous, not giving money to somebody does not negate this attribute.

In the same way, the reason for the existence of God and the afterlife is not in question here, but rather, the matter at hand is whether that if there were a God and the afterlife, the existence of evil would not contradict with His divine attributes or even make them improbable.

## VI. CONCLUSION

There are two elements that when considered together, the problem of evil can be solved:

- A: The primary good within evil, even though it may not be greater than the evil itself or even return to the same inflicted individual. This element solves the problem of the futility of evils.
- B: The compensation in the afterlife. This element, as a complementary factor, can explain how the justice of God is compatible with evils.

The combination of these two elements establishes a new version of the theory of compensation, which I term the 'strong account of the theory of compensation', that seems to provide rationally acceptability for the allowing of all current evils.<sup>2</sup>

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