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## EXPLAINING EVIL IN THE BIOSPHERE: ASSESSING SOME EVOLUTIONARY THEODICIES FOR MUSLIM THEISTS

*by Safaruk Zaman Chowdhury*

*Abstract.* The problem of evil is one of the most difficult and protracted problems for the trio of Abrahamic faiths that uphold the classical conception of an "omni-competent God"—omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent. In its standard formulation in the literature, the existence or character of God is brought into direct contention with the existence of evil. One subset of this problem, reinvigorated by recent discussions within the intersection between the philosophy of religion and philosophy of science, is the evolutionary problem of evil or the "Darwinian problem of evil." This article analyzes this subset of the evolutionary problem of evil hitherto unexplored in any depth within contemporary Islamic theology and proposes some possible evolutionary theodicies that Muslim theists can utilize based on core doctrines and other precepts of the Qur'ān as well as ideas developed within contemporary evolutionary theism and environmental ethics. In this way, the article offers a contribution to the currently small but growing body of theodicy literature within contemporary Islamic ethics and environmentalism.

*Keywords:* Darwin; disvalue; evil; evolution; Islam; theodicy; value

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## Introduction

A number of excellent studies on the topic of theodicy within Islamic thought have substantiated our understanding of how Muslim theologians and philosophers sought to explain why God permits, causes, or creates (depending on one's theological view) the existence of evil and suffering in the world. Beginning with Eric Ormsby (1984) and then followed by Shams Inati (2000), Margaretha Heemskerk (2000), Jon Hoover (2003, 2010), Sherman Jackson (2009), and Muhsin Akbas (2013), the current foundational English academic literature on theodicy within Islamic studies was established. In the past two decades, this literature was enlarged by the significant contributions of two female scholars Nasreen Rouzati (2015) and Tubanur Ozkan (2015). The latest edition to the small catalogue of theodicy works is perhaps one of the most extensive treatments to date on the topic by Tallal Zeni (2020). The focus of all these studies primarily lay in explaining evil and pain in the context of human suffering. However, very little within the problem of evil literature in Islamic Studies has addressed animal theodicies and even less so directly tackling the evolutionary problem of evil, although just recently Shoaib Malik discusses evolution and the question of morality primarily through the lens of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) metaethics (Malik 2021, 237–263). A recent monograph by Chowdhury (2021) endeavored to redress this gap, which devoted nearly half of it to both issues of animal suffering and the evolutionary problem of evil. Chowdhury drew on the seminal "theodicy" works of predecessors in Islamic studies as well as authors writing within the neighboring field of Christian philosophical theology over the last two decades such as Robin Attfield (2006, 2017), Holmes Rolston III (Preston & Ouderkirk, 2007), Robert J. Russell (2008), Christopher Southgate (2008), Michael Murray (2008), Nicola Hoggard-Creegan (2013), Ronald Osborn (2014), Trent Dougherty (2014), Bethany Sollereder (2019), and others. In this article, I build on the contours of Chowdhury's larger study on evolutionary theodicy (ET) but offer a fresh cohort of theodicies that have been largely overlooked within the current Islamic theological and ethical literature that utilize additional insights, arguments, angles, and materials that draw on specifically Islamic theological and philosophical material.[2] After outlining some preliminaries, I describe what an ET is followed by an explanation of the evolutionary problem of evil. I then articulate my proposed cohort of theodicies concluding finally with a set of objections and some replies to them.

## The Meaning of Theodicy

Since G. W. Leibniz transliterated the fusion of two Greek words "Θεός" (God) and "δίκη" (justice) into French as *théodicée*, and used the term as a philosophical vindication of God, variations on this core sense have

developed over time broadly taking the meaning of defending God's power and justice in the face of evil. Often, in the contemporary philosophy of religion literature, a general distinction is made between a *defense* and a *theodicy* where the former is an argument establishing the logical compatibility between evil and God (however implausible that argument really is) and the latter is an overarching framework with which to make sense of and explain in general (or specific) terms the reasons behind the adverse material and experiential outcomes generated by evil in the world (Chowdhury 2021, pp. 22–24). Michael Murray and Michael Rea neatly explain the difference as follows:

> The difference between a "defense" (mentioned earlier) and a "theodicy" is roughly this: a theodicy aims to set out a believable and reasonably comprehensive theory about why God might have permitted evil of the amount and variety we find in our world, whereas a defense aims merely to provide a *possible* reason – without concern for its believability – why God might permit evil. A defense, in other words, aims just at demonstrating the *possibility* of God's coexisting with evil, whereas theodicy aims at something like a full justification for God's permission of evil. (Murray & Rea 2008, 170)

In light of this broad meaning of theodicy, the sense in which I am using "evolutionary theodicy" (ET) in the article is simply an extension of that broad meaning:

> (ET) An evolutionary theodicy is an account that attempts to adequately explain how the evolutionary problem of evil is compatible with 'God' as defined by a system of theology **T** where the account meets a set of doctrinal, hermeneutical, axiological and doxological (or other) criteria **C** as defined by, derived from and consistent with the axioms of that theology.

On the meaning of "evolutionary problem of evil" I am referring to in ET, see "The Evolutionary Problem of Evil" below. By "system of theology" I am broadly referring to a body of accepted and established beliefs and teachings considered to be internally consistent and coherent by an adherent either inferred via rational reflection (like logical entailments of certain beliefs) or derived from the agreed on authoritative sources of a theology (or a combination of both). By "criterion" I simply mean the set of relevant and significant derivatives like the doctrines, ideas, ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, hermeneutics, and so on that are derived from and are expressions of the underlying body of beliefs and teachings of the respective system of theology. I call an ET "thin" if C in T is *weakly* met and call it "thick" if C in T is *robustly* met. Let me briefly unpack this ET distinction of thin and thick. Suppose when it comes to disability theodicies (giving reasons why it is that God allows persons to be afflicted with specific mental and physical challenges) that I adopt a Sunnī theological system. Suppose as well that I offer divine retribution as an explanation for why it is that persons of disability suffer such challenges and then argue

that this explanation is consistent with Qur'ānic verses like Q. 4:79, "whatever good comes to you is from God but what comes to you of evil is from your own selves." Suppose further that I reason as follows: If God punishes people for doing bad acts like sins and my disability is clearly something bad, then my disability must be God's way of punishing me (Chowdhury 2021, 34–38). In this instance, I may be giving a general interpretation and a set of inferences that seems congruent with a specific theological doctrine or moral principle (like sins are punished by God); but it would not be a rigorous one as it fails to reflect other fundamental theological doctrines or moral principles like disability being explained as a test, or trial, or a means of enabling character-building, virtue-exemplification, attaining divine proximity, is cognitively therapeutic, serves a greater-good, is redemptive and a host of other possible explanations that have numerous Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic *ḥadīths* establishing them (Chowdhury 2021, 39–66). So, thin theodicies are reductively simplistic and fail to capture a broader ambit of doctrines, notions, principles, and other derivatives within the theological system. This is different from a thick theodicy that does meet more theological elements and components that is nuanced and complex as well as thorough in its explanation.

If we take ET and apply it to the case of my proposed evolutionary theodicies for Muslim theists discussed in detail below (section "Evolutionary Theodicies"), such that we could call them "Islamic" (the adjective to be explained shortly) evolutionary theodicies, it would be defined in general terms as: how it is that—given God's selection of evolution—a Muslim explains the possible reasons behind why or attempts to makes sense of the magnitude of inescapable suffering, pain, predation, death, waste, pestilence, parasitism, selfishness, disaster, blindness, and extinction inherent in nature are properly reconciled with the characterization of a transcendent, absolutely powerful, knowledgeable, loving, just, and compassionate Being[3] as represented or captured in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth—the foundational sources of Islam—and that reconciliation is consistent with the fundamental theological doctrines inferred from the revealed data of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. It is primarily because of this description that is behind the reason why I may add the adjective "Islamic" to qualify the theodicies I am proposing. Another reason for adding "Islamic" (albeit in a more loose way) is if a particular theodicy can be found in or derived from the ideas, precepts, beliefs, and arguments of a specific Muslim theologian, philosopher, or thinker. If this appellation of "Islamic" is seen as redundant or not entirely justified, dispensing with it would make no difference to the theodicies. My claim is only that the theodicies I am proposing have conceptual basis within or genealogy to the revelatory sources of Islam (my focus being on the Qur'ān) and the axioms of a system of theology based on these sources and *not* that they are necessarily *uniquely* Islamic because

other religious traditions may have identical or overlapping theodicies (cf. Akbas 2013).

Given this description of ET applied to the Islamic theological context, I am assuming—contrary to antitheodicists[4]—that theodicy is a viable theological enterprise and a positive undertaking. I am also assuming that theodicies must not be mere abstract philosophizing involving far-fetched logical thought-exercises; rather, they must be a body of explanations that restore coherence in the destabilizing face of evil in a way that is meaning-making. By "meaning-making" I broadly mean how some explanation—in this case theodicies—offers a framework by which to conceptualize and emotionally construe instances of evil and suffering so they are intelligible and congruent with on the one hand axiological principles espoused by a sacred scripture and human experience of the world. This complex process is referred to by Mark Scott as "navigation," a metaphor being a ship in a violent storm attempting to navigate the trying waters (Scott 2012, 8–22). In this context, the treacherous water is the evolutionary problem of evil, the ship is the religious tradition of Islam and the understanding that attempts to "navigate" the waters are the various theodicies based on its theological system. Arguably, to what extent meaning-making can be achieved by theodicies is a live debate and one that cannot be entertained here but it remains a desideratum.

## The Evolutionary Problem of Evil

With the definition of an ET thus outlined, it is necessary to explain the very issue at hand being addressed by the theodicy. The evolutionary problem of evil—sometimes dubbed the "Darwinian problem of evil" after Charles Darwin (1809–1882), or more generally the problem of *natural evil*—is a subset of the larger intractable and perplexing question of the Problem of Evil (Schneider 2020, 1–55). Broadly, philosophers and theologians have stated that the Problem of Evil (see the numerous articles in McBrayer & Howard-Snyder 2013) is an attempt to explain the alleged incompatibility between the following statements:

1. God is an absolutely powerful, all-knowing, and benevolent being.
2. Evil exists.

This formulation has its clear antecedent in Islamic theological discussions. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), for example, framed the problem as follows:

> Perhaps you will ask, "What is the meaning of God's being 'compassionate' (*raḥīm*) and 'the most compassionate of the compassionate' (*arḥam al-rāḥimīn*)? A compassionate person does not see someone afflicted, injured, tormented, and ill without rushing to remove that from him, if he is able to remove it. Now God is able to ward off every misfortune and to avert

> all poverty and grief and to remove every sickness and every injury. But the world overflows with sicknesses, tribulations, and calamities. He is able to remove all of them and yet, He leaves His servants in travail to disasters and misfortunes." (al-Ghazālī 2003, 64, translated in Ormsby 1984, 252; cf. al-Ghazālī 1992, 55)[5]

Although my aim here is neither to present nor assess how this alleged incompatibility of evil and suffering with core Divine attributes in its various logical formulations and polemical permutations has been addressed by Muslim scholars and contemporary theists alike, it is worth noting that philosophers (particularly atheist ones) have generally recognized that the logical (or formal) challenge of the problem of evil has been met with considerable sophistication and success by philosophical theists (owing to among others Plantinga 1974, 7–58; although on this, see Moore, 2017). This optimistic conclusion, many argue, is by no means automatically extendable to the Darwinian problem of evil that specifically charges the theist with explaining why God has allowed immense and continuous pain and suffering and much more in the biosphere through natural selection before there were any human beings (Stewart-Williams 2010, 103–27). It must be noted, however, that Darwin's anguish and outrage had antecedent echoes within early Islamic literature. The fifth-century Hijrī/eleventh-century CE Syrian poet and sceptic Abū 'l-Aʿlā al-Maʿarrī (d. 449/1057), for example, raised the problem of God's lack of apparent compassion and mercy in failing to intervene in the predatory acts of stronger animals over weaker ones. He decries:

> Since it is stated that the creator is merciful and compassionate, why does the lion spring to attack gentle creatures that are neither harmful nor robust? And how many have perished through snakebite, including many famous people! (Why) do hawk and falcon swoop upon the grain-gleaning bird? The grouse leaves her thirsting chicks and sets out early to reach water which she would carry to them in her craw, but a hawk finds her far from them and devours her. So her chicks perish of thirst. (Yāqūt 1993, 1:343-344, and translated in Ormsby 1984, 26)[6]

Al-Maʿarrī is known to have abandoned eating meat for forty years and defended at length the prohibition of causing nonhuman animals pain and suffering, arguing that it defied divine wisdom (*ḥikma*) to permit their consumption or to treat them unethically (Yāqūt 1993, 1:295-357). Thus, the problem was acutely felt even within discussions during the classical period of Islamic theology and literature.[7] When Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859, in it he characterized the natural world as replete with the struggle for existence (echoing al-Maʿarrī's observation) that included waste, predation, selfishness, suffering, death, and even extinction of species. He suggested that the progressive development from brute man to intelligent creatures occurred in the wake of a long antecedent arc of

supposedly meaningless death and suffering in nature. This conclusion came in the context of a picture of the natural world drawn up by geologists and biologists of the nineteenth century that increasingly challenged the depiction of a God who designed creation held in the prior two centuries (Chowdhury 2021, 100–1). This emerging shift in the natural sciences led Darwin himself to eventually question not the existence of God *per se* but the idea of God as wise Creator (Attfield 2006, 121–22; Stewart-Williams 2010, 54–72). He wrote to a friend the Harvard botanist Asa Gray (d. 1888) shortly after going public with his theory:

> There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Icheumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that the cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. (Darwin 1985, 8 and 224 cited in Ruse 2017, 89. On the correspondence between Darwin and Gray see Sollereder 2010, 417–32)

Darwin could not fathom why a wise and benevolent being would factor into His providential plan a process that was so destructive and wasteful.[8] Elsewhere in his autobiography he bemoans, "a being so powerful and so full of knowledge as a God who could create the universe, is to our finite minds omnipotent and omniscient, and it revolts our understanding to suppose that his benevolence is not unbounded, for what advantage can there be in the sufferings of millions of the lower animals throughout almost endless time?" (Barlow 1958, 90). Darwin as a result descended into a form of skeptical deism relegating God's role in the cosmos to the periphery (Corey 2000, 79; Guessoum 2011, 287). Darwin's maneuver to distance God from the evil in nature was an inevitable outcome of his alienation from the notion of a wise, providential and intelligent God. Cornelius Hunter explains how "positing natural selection operating in an unguided fashion on natural biological diversity was Darwin's unique solution." Thus, "Darwin's theory of evolution was very much a solution to the problem of natural evil - a theodicy." In other words, "Darwin solved the problem by coming up with a natural law that he argued could account for evil. Natural selection, operating blindly on a pool of biological diversity, according to Darwin, could produce nature's carnage and waste." This, "theodicy" however, was to have an implication like "God was unnecessary," that is, "one could still believe in God, but not in God's providence." By "separating God from creation and its evils meant that God could have no direct influence or control over the world." He may have created the world, but since its creation, it "has run according to impersonal natural laws that may now and then produce natural evil" (Hunter 2001, 11–18). Given this, committed theists who believe in evolution as a fact about the world (evolutionary theists) are challenged by the

Darwinian problem of evil in terms of why a benevolent God would allow so much pain, suffering, and death to nonhuman sentient creatures in nature and whether the biological evolutionary processes were necessary to serve the wise purposes God had for these creatures and indeed human beings when they finally emerged because of the incredible waste and horror that arises from it (Keltz 2020, 1–33; Schneider 2020, 1–47; Southgate 2008, 1–17). Philosopher of biology David Hull succinctly captures the problem in this way:

> The problem that biological evolution poses for natural theologians is the sort of God that a darwinian version of evolution implies . . . The evolutionary process is rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain and horror . . . Whatever the God implied by evolutionary theory and the data of natural history may be like, He is not the Protestant God of waste not, want not. He is also not a loving God who cares about His productions. He is not even the awful God portrayed in the book of Job. The God of the Galápagos is careless, wasteful, indifferent, almost diabolical. He is certainly not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray. (1991, 485–86)

If this is the case, then what ultimate restitution is there for this suffering, death and waste? Hull's remark highlights a core cluster of charges that bring out a deep tension between God as a benevolent, powerful, wise, and just Creator with the reality of Darwinian evolution. In the next section, I will formulate two arguments to formally frame the evolutionary problem of evil for the Muslim theist and then propose responses to them in the section "Evolutionary Theodicies." Let me first turn to the arguments.

## Two Arguments for the Evolutionary Problem of Evil

Having set out the broad thrust of the evolutionary problem of evil in the previous section, I will state two deductive arguments that attempt to undermine the compatibility between God as absolutely powerful, loving, all-knowing, merciful, wise, and just with the existence of evolutionary evil. They are:

1. The Argument from No Disvalues (AND):

    1. If God is a benevolent and value-loving Creator, He would not create a world containing E-disvalues.
    2. This world contains immense E-disvalue.
    3. Therefore, God is not a benevolent and value-loving Creator.

2. The Argument from Outweighing Values (AOV):

    1. If God is a benevolent and value-loving Creator, He would desire to create a world outweighed by value.

2. This world contains immense E-disvalue that outweighs any value.
3. Therefore, God is not a benevolent and value-loving Creator.

According to both arguments, specific disvalues arise from God's creation of the world and His selection of evolution through natural selection. By "disvalues" it is generally meant perceived negative facts, a lack of good or bad consequence arising from something or a depreciated state of affairs. In this evolutionary context, it includes facts such as mass extinction, predation, death, pestilence, selfishness, suffering, parasitism, and unnecessary waste. I have called these facts "evolutionary disvalues" or "E-disvalues" for short. These E-disvalues seem incompatible with a characterization of a deity worthy of total worship—especially a deity who desires *value* (contrary to disvalue defined above) such as beauty, goodness, ingenuity (aesthetic values), flourishing, complexity, diversity, efficiency, and order (systemic values) or instruction, inspiration, guidance, and illumination (pedagogical values). AND makes the categorical claim that God would not have any reason to create a world with E-disvalues and so when we observe the natural world and do find a huge distribution of such disvalues, it must mean God is not a value-loving Creator of the world. Thus, it would perhaps have been better for God *not* to have created the world at all via evolution than to have created it as there would not be any justifiable reason for why He would. We could state the additional premise to AND as:

(2a) There would be no justifiable reason a benevolent and value-loving Creator would have for allowing E-disvalues in the world.

Assumption (2a) is about divine motives. God's action must not be guided by anything that would result in bad but the natural world appears replete with bad states of affairs for creatures. AOV on the other hand makes less of a categorical claim; it states that God in creating the world, would *desire* to enable values to outweigh disvalues but by observing the natural world we can only infer and conclude that the quantity, profusion, and intensity of E-disvalues far outweigh any values. Thus, if God really did want good for all His creatures in nature, He would also want to create a world where more of that good was procured. We could state the assumption for this argument as follows:

(1b) A benevolent and value-loving Creator would want to prefer a world with outweighing values in order to optimize the goods for creatures than a world that does not.

Indeed, (1b) assumes a welfare model of divine action in that God's actions are guided by optimization of welfare or goods in creatures. Hence, if creaturely goods are procured by systemic, aesthetic, and pedagogical values, then preferring more of those values must mean more goods are optimized for creatures. Yet, it is the contrary that appears to be observed in nature. Therefore, both arguments bring into question divine goodness and fairness on the basis of the observed reality of disvalue brought about in the natural world.[9] Undoubtedly, in addition to (2a) and (1′b) there can be (and are) other plausible assumptions to both arguments but it will not be possible to survey the entire scope of these assumptions as that would require a monograph in itself. For the purposes of this article, I will restrict by responses both with their respective assumptions (2a) and (1′b).

## Typology of Theodicies

Both AND and AOV formulated above attempt to undermine God's goodness and fairness by making specific claims about His actions and motives. These claims not only rest on further arguments but embedded assumptions about how God ought to act and what normative directives ought to guide His motives. These claims and assumptions will emerge a little more as I proceed to analyze a number of possible responses to both these arguments with my proposed evolutionary theodicies. Before that, it is worth mentioning the rationale behind my selection of theodicies. First, the most common (and many consider the strongest) explanations for evil and suffering are (1) the *free will defense* (evil is brought about through human choice) and (2) the *soul-making* approach (evil is the best way for humans to develop). However, these explanations do not apply easily to the nonhuman world because the world was replete with the E-disvalues long before there were any humans around to transgress against God's commandments and sin. Nor, as far as most scholars (Muslims and non-Muslims) are concerned, are nonhuman animals even spiritual creatures possessing a soul that will enable them to be formed, augmented and improved through the suffering they encounter (Tlili 2012, 138–220). Nonhuman animals therefore "cannot draw near to God in consequence of suffering, and do not (so far as we know) have the conscious decision to respond to suffering in the complex and redemptive ways that a human might" (Sollereder 2019, 2). Therefore, nonhuman animal pain in evolutionary processes is excluded from these strong theodicies.

Second, my selection is mainly guided by where I have felt there was either oversight or little emphasis within the theodicy typologies found in major Islamic thinkers. Thus, a notable contribution of this article is in its redressing this oversight and lack of emphasis. In a manner of speaking, my proposed cohort of theodicies are an "augmenting act" to the

already existing "cast" of theodicies. Let me first mention the various typologies and then explain my point further. There are some responses to the problem of evil in general that constitute the conceptual models with which Islamic thinkers addressed the general challenge of accounting for the evil of pain and suffering with a specific set of God's attributes. These typologies contain examples that I also utilize albeit via inflection and modification and therefore are helpful for understanding in comparative terms the sources and genealogy of my own thinking. In doing this, I am implicitly assuming that the various ways Islamic thinkers thought and addressed the general problem of evil have sufficient theoretical resources to be applied to the evolutionary problem of evil. One typology then of responses can be inferred from the theological writings of the Muʿtazilī thinker al-Qaḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) who explains that evils like harm, pain, and suffering may be permitted if such adverse states of affairs: (1) serves some greater good or benefit, that is, they do not result in a deficit of goods; (2) they are not gratuitous in nature; (3) they do not lead to a consequence where a greater good is either blocked or circumvented; and (4) the patient does not deserve to be afflicted, meaning it is *unmerited* (Heemskerk 2000, 112–91). Another typology is that of Inati (2000, 169–74), who, for example, reconstructs and clarifies Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) seven theses on the problem of evil: (1) evil is not willed voluntarily by God but it is a secondary result (*per accidens*) from the necessity of creation; (2) good outweighs evil in the world; (3) evil is a necessary (i.e., an inevitable) corollary of that which is good; (4) evil is a necessary means for a greater good; (5) evil is a necessary part of existence that God cannot undo; (6) evil is mere privation and not a positive entity of being; and (7) evil is caused by the free acts of moral agents. Ormsby (1984, 253–58) before concluding his study presents a typology specifically drawn from the works of al-Ghazālī and is sufficiently broad to serve as a framework: (1) evils like suffering is remedial, that is it serves a positive (and sometimes necessary) purpose for the ultimate good of human beings even if the remedy is not immediately discernible; (2) suffering engenders gratitude in that it is a mode of juxtaposition whereby the believer judges the fortunes of one person in light of the calamities and misfortunes of others; (3) evil is only apparent and not real, that is there ultimately is no evil as it in the end transpires to be a disguised good; and finally (4) evil is extraneous not intrinsic. This means that God's permission of evil is not for its sake (*per se*) but for the greater good it secures. Finally, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) who extensively discussed the aetiology, nature, and purpose behind evil offers a plethora of reasons or wise purposes God may have for permitting evil. Some of these are: (1) evil is required for virtue-building or character-building, (2) evil can serve as a preventive warning or admonition, (3) evil allows for justly and wisely manifesting God's perfection and attributes, (4) evil enables contrastive knowledge, for example,

appreciating something good in light of its opposite, (5) greater goods are established through evil, (6) evil causes good and righteous people to emerge, and (7) ultimately there is no evil although proximately there may be (al-Jawziyya 2017, 130–63; Hoover 2010).[10]

Given the theodicy typologies of each of the major thinkers stated above, the motivation behind the cohort of evolutionary theodicies that I propose will become clearer. (To avoid repetition, I leave the details of the three theodicies here and defer to the reader to the next section). The salient theodicy running through all the above typologies is a greater-good theodicy that involves balancing good and harm. The ecological theodicy I propose is of that type and falls under all four of the thinkers. However, what is significantly less stressed from the reviewed typologies are educative ones (i.e., where evil is pedagogical in its function) or aesthetic explanations for evil (where value and goodness cannot be appreciated except through their contraries disvalue and evilness, respectively). Due to this, my theodicy proposals will bring forward these two types in more detail in order to add to the overall typology of responses.

## Evolutionary Theodicies

I will propose three evolutionary theodicies addressing the evolutionary problem of evil.[11] These theodicies arguably may not be robust enough as stand-alone responses to address the evolutionary problem of evil, but taken cumulatively they go some way into offering a cogent response congruent with Islamic theology that make evil intelligible. The three theodicies I will propose overlap somewhat and so can be seen as a small cohort of complementary arguments overlapping in focus, ideas, and aims.

### Educative Theodicy

The first of the three theodicies is a type of *educative theodicy*. This kind of theodicy explains how evils such as pain and suffering are permitted by God in order to allow understandings to be acquired by human beings that they would not have otherwise gained. In the context of the evolutionary problem of evil, God's justification for creating a world permitting E-disvalues is for specific theologically educative ends like allowing human beings to attain a better understanding of God's "beautiful names" (*asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*) so that they can have an enriched and informed appreciation of His character and better realisation of His greatness and worthiness of worship leading to Him being properly praised and glorified and His commandments implemented. Proper love, worship, obedience, and submission to God is—according to the Qur'ān—the *raison dētre* for human beings existing (Q. 51:56 and al-Māwardī 1992, 5:375). As an example, in order for human beings to better understand dimensions of God's names like *al-bāri'* (the Producer), *al-ḥakīm* (the Wise),

*al-khāliq* (the Creator), *al-muḥyī* (the Life-giver), *al-mumīt* (the Life-taker), *al-muṣawwir* (the Fashioner), and *al-razzāq* (the Sustainer) and how they are interrelated (on these names see al-Ghazālī 1992, index), they require exemplifications of those names. E-disvalues may be a means by which glimpses or facets of these names of God are brought to light. The exemplification (and thereby appreciation) is captured through disvalues securing *theological* values (Zeni 2020, 219–22, 333–38). So long as this is a plausible reason, the claim in AND above that God would not want to create a world with E-disvalues and the assumption that He would have no justifying reason to is just too strong to rule out any counterexamples. Let me take the example of the E-disvalue of biological death to explain the point further. God created the world *ex nihilo* and set up its ecological systems based on a plan and originated the evolutionary processes for life to emerge and end. Each item of creation has been determined according to specifically endowed forms, properties, and configurations based on unimaginable ingenuity and aesthetic inventiveness with an overall wise purpose governing this creative and sustaining activity. These realities and phenomena provoke utter wonder, awe, and admiration in us and when linked to contemplating how God's names relate meaningfully to them, we gain a deeper understanding of their significance and how they point toward and provide for the conceptual apparatus to construct an idea of God's character so we can understand Him and come to know Him. When we examine death within the evolutionary purview, for example, we can appreciate God's wisdom, power, and imagination in how His knowledge and judgment conceives of a specific natural process to occur with its intended effects and ends and His power enables it. Biological species have evolved anatomically (in their organs, instincts, and structures) to consume other creatures. This cycle involving predators nourishing themselves and their offspring upholds the system in nature for the prolongation and diversification of life. Rolston famously described how "the cougar's fang has carved the limbs of the fleet-footed deer, and vice versa" (2006, 134). Each creature in the biosphere not only contributes energy and resources to the entire ecosystem when it perishes, it in fact helps enable its species to reach greater levels of adaptive peak. Rolston suggests that "there are sorts of creation that cannot occur without death, and these include the highest created goods. Death can be meaningfully put into the biological processes as a necessary counterpart to the advancing of life" (2015, 49). Details of this point are further elaborated in the next theodicy. As a point to note here, the understanding that biological behavior is integral to the overall systemic functioning of nonhuman species based on wise-purposes in God's creation is not an entirely novel idea. Muslim scholars in the past have long acknowledged and wondered at the exquisite and exacting balance in nature and specifically the animal kingdom with all its operational activities

(Chowdhury 2021, 92–97). They understood as well how evil may be accounted for by a kind of "theodicy of divine names," that is, perceived adverse states of affairs are illustrations of or manifestly point toward any number of divine epithets. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya has written extensively on this notion of evil as purposeful and revealing of God's beautiful names (see al-Jawziyya 2017, 130–63; Hoover 2010). One statement in his book *al-Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl* for example it reads:

> Among [these wise purposes] is that among His names is the Wise (*al Ḥakīm*). Wise purpose (*ḥikma*) is among His attributes - Glory be to Him. His wise purpose necessarily entails putting everything in its place, which [place] is not befitting for anything else. [His wise purpose] required creating the opposites and singling out rulings, attributes and particularities for each one of them that were not befitting for any other. Can wise purpose be completed in any other way?! The existence of this kind belongs to the completion of wise purpose just as it belongs to the perfection of power. (Translation from Hoover 2010, 130)

The opposite of life is death and so their complement belongs to God's proper placement of things in the natural world. I will return to Ibn Qayyim below when expounding my aesthetic theodicy. Therefore, it is not valid to claim that God ought not to create a world with E-disvalues because He could not possibly have any justifying reason to permit them because a counterexample to that is E-disvalues could be theologically pedagogical—human beings can come to learn and appreciate a relevant set of God's names and thereby come to know Him better and thereby worship Him in a more enriched way.

## Ecological Theodicy

The second of the three cohort of theodicies is an *ecological* theodicy (Attfield 2017, 84–89; Tokarski 2019, 157–74; Wynn 1999, 106–55). On this theodicy model, naturalness (the state of nature "red in tooth and claw") is ultimately holistically good. E-disvalues are in fact disguised values. According to the second premise of AOV, E-disvalues in the world outweigh any values and thus ought not to be created by God with the assumption (1′b) that God would prefer a world with outweighing goods over any other. This may be too hasty. It is arguable that value in fact, predominates nature. The Qurʾān explicitly states how God has set up the "balance" (*mīzān*) in the heavens and the earth—including nature and the environment—and warns human beings not to disrupt this balance (Q.55:7-9) because it is vulnerable to the adverse consequences arising from human choices, actions, and interventions. The ecological theodicy foregrounds wholes like ecosystems, animal populations, and biotic communities and insists on their balance and proper functioning as overall values served by particular disvalues. The disvalues arising out of the millions

of years from evolutionary processes are actually disguised or transmuted values or they are a necessary part of a greater or higher system of value. Extinction, for example, is actually a good. Given the system of natural selection, extinction is necessary in order to enable new species to evolve and for biodiversity in the environment to properly develop. Thus, from the arc of geological history, more than 3.5 billion years, there has been more species arrival than departures (Attfield 2017, 80–81). Parasitism, as another example is widely acknowledged as having an immense human, economic, and conservation toll, but nevertheless their eradication would not be entirely beneficial. For one, parasites account for approximately half or more of the diversity of all living things. Second, there would be highly altered community and ecosystem stability. Third, there would likely be many species' extinctions. Fourth, there would be a diminished diversity of species traits brought about by sexual reproduction and fifth, there would be loss of transferal of genetic material between species important for facilitating evolutionary change (Holt 2010). Waste is a third example. It might seem from merely a local perspective that most species producing surplus offspring is wasteful. However, this might be a short-sighted judgment. The surplus offspring when viewed from an ecosystemic context may be a necessary condition for mutational advancement. Another way surplus of the young in species is not wasteful is how the excess margin becomes a sustenance stream for other creatures. The surplus of the rabbit young become food for the coyote. Nature's abundance sustains populations of creatures enabling them to evolve and flourish in their environments (Wynn 1999, 106–7). As a related note, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya remarked how excess was in fact a sign of God's magnanimity. He comments:

> Since His magnanimity and grace are vaster than the needs of the creation, it is inevitable that much of what is existent remains unused. For instance, consider the light of the sun: the well-being of animals cannot occur without it, yet it shines in many places in excess of where humans and animals are in need of it. It is likewise for the rain, plants and the rest of His blessings. Nevertheless, the presence of even these [excesses] is not devoid of wisdoms, benefits, lessons and proofs. (al-Jawziyya 2017, 127)

Finally, to recall the problem of predation, death, and suffering are necessary elements in the development of life, that is, its progress and advancement (Kowalsky 2017, 7–9). When a wolf hunts a deer, on one level this is a negative outcome for the deer (death) but on another positive level, it is nourishment for the wolf, keeping it alive. Nothing in this species interaction is lost because the nutrients and energy are transferred from the deer to the wolf. Scaling up a little to the species level, the selective pressures involved in predation arising from the evolutionary mechanism contributes to species development because their interaction in predation helps them acquire skills and techniques contributing to higher values such as species

adaptation and prolongation. The deer, for example, may become faster and more agile and in response, the wolf may become more intelligent and cooperative. Scaling up even further, predation may lift the pressure of deer on the environment like allowing plants to regenerate and grow and thereby allow for forms of life to emerge (Tokarski 2019, 158–60). In this way, Rolston describes how evils can be reappreciated as elements in procuring the production of ever greater goods or value like species augmentation, prolongation, or biodiversity (Kowalksi 2006, 145–50). He states:

> Overall the myriad individual passages through life and death upgrade the system. Value has to be something more, something opposed to what any individual actor likes or selects, since even struggle and death which are never approved, are ingredients used instrumentally to produce still higher intrinsic values. […] This can seem in morally wild disregard for their individuality, treating each as a means to an end. But the whole system in turn generates more and higher individuality. Problem solving is a function of the system too as it recycles, pulls conflicts into harmony, and redeems life from an ever-pressing death. (Rolston 1983, 197–98)

Therefore, although there is a perceptible experience of E-disvalues in the natural world, on reappraisal, there is a greater or holistic good that is ensured based on higher systemic scales, for example, order, stability, and harmony and this broader systemic perspective offers an explanation for such disvalues. A world then with E-disvalues may be that which is preferred by God because on the higher systemic scales, it secures greater (or perhaps optimal) good for biological creatures (al-Jawziyya 2017, 125–26).

### Aesthetic Theodicy

The final member of the cohort of theodicies I propose is a type of *aesthetic* theodicy (cf. Tallon 2013; Schneider 2020, 137–63). This kind of theodicy utilizes authors, ideas, works, categories, and values within the discipline of philosophical aesthetics to shed light on evil and God's providence. More specifically, it considers how artistic works (e.g., plays or paintings) and their genres (like tragedy or horror) can illuminate the problem of evil question and enhance and enrich the theodicy discussion (Tallon 2013, 5–14 and 23–28). Aesthetic theodicies foreground aesthetic categories for consideration over moral categories; the latter more generally dominating our discussion, examination, assessment, and resolution of evils. Aesthetic theodicies then demand us to rethink and perceive differently suffering and its place and role and in the context of theology and cause us to *see* things in a different light. God on this view is analogous to an artist and the world He created is akin to an artefact governed by consideration of the aesthetic. The sense in which I am utilising "aesthetic" for this theodicy (cognizant of the aesthetic theodicy just described) is by taking my cue

from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's theological deliberations and the aesthetic theory of the ugly of the German philosopher and critical theorist Theodor Adorno (1903–1969). Turning to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya first, he is perhaps the first pre-modern Muslim scholar who explicitly and extensively expounds on the possible wise-purposes behind God creating Iblīs (Satan) and his army (Ibn Qayyim offers 15 arguments) and why that serves *moral* purposes, that is, it is *value*-oriented (al-Jawziyya 2017, 130–38; Hoover 2010, 127–34). Due to the need for space, I cannot elaborate on the details of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's account (for which see Hoover 2010, 113–27). However, the point here to be taken from him is that even with God's creation of Iblīs as a type of metaphysical fulcrum of evil, darkness, ugliness, and accursedness, there are latent goods because Iblīs is integrated into the scope of God's providence for humanity that includes His masterplan of how evil will be ultimately defeated. Ibn Qayyim argues that God's wisdom reveals itself in His creating and enabling value polarity like good and bad, heaven, and hell and light and darkness. This also includes beauty and ugliness (al-Jawziyya 2017, 131–32; Hoover 2010, 129). Picking up this insight, God's creation of the world, nature and the environment therefore would be like a "double helix" of aesthetic polarities. Each aesthetic "strand"—beauty and ugliness—is intertwined and held together by God's powerful and imaginative decree. The idea of there being duality, pairing, and contrast are clear motifs in the Qur'ān (Q. 36:36). Moving on to Adorno, and again noting that space does not permit me to set out the complex strands of his aesthetic theory, his reflections on the ugly help mediate some insights on the theodicy issue. Adorno in his *Aesthetic Theory*, attempts at a reconstruction of the European modern art movement. Although his study of beauty prominently figures in his analysis, he also devotes attention to negative aesthetics that includes exploration of the aetiology, function, and significance of the ugly (nonbeautiful) in art. An important strand in Adorno's aesthetic *violence* of the ugly is that he sees it as something *oppositional*, that is, either resistant to and a dissent from the notion of manufactured standards of the beautiful or enhancing the beautiful in some respect. One angle of his analysis on twentieth-century social structures of power and the "culture industry" arising from it is that this industry attempts to regulate aesthetic tastes and taboos of the people by constructing a "status quo"—the social order—about what is beautiful by sublimating the ugly to a secondary consideration. What is ugly is reasoned to be disruptive and dangerous to this regulated status quo. According to Adorno, it was the task of modern art to oppose the culture industry and defy the sublimation of the non-beautiful, to allow it to remain as it is (Hohendahl 2013, 79–100). Telescoping now to the evolutionary problem of evil, we could say that: (1) the natural world is analogous to "musical harmony" and "consonance" of a musical score and (2) all E-disvalues are analogous to "dissonance" or "discord" in that

musical score—but nonetheless a necessary one—because it foregrounds the apparent antibeautiful (the ugly) for theological consideration in its own right. In God configuring E-disvalues as an oppositional part of nature's life course, He is perhaps seeking to break the uncritical conceptual hegemony of the beautiful that human beings impose when making their aesthetic assessment of nature and the environment and thereby suffer from aesthetic blindsight. The beautiful is a component of God's artistry and so is the apparent nonbeautiful. The latter is neither disruptive of nor a threat to the artistry of God and ought not to be excised from the linguistic categories we use to frame and explicate our understanding of God and the world. In E-disvalues then there is the aesthetic capture of the nonhuman world and ought to be embraced by the Muslim theist for what it is.

### Summary Claims

The evolutionary theodicies proposed above explain why God may permit E-disvalues and establish how He is a value-loving Creator. The summary claims of those proposals are:

1. Although the biological realm is a place of disvalues such as pain, death, extinction, geological evil, suffering, and distress, these disvalues in the world are a means by which specific attributes or names of God like being Creator and Sustainer are manifested in order to cognitively illuminate appreciation of God in human beings.
2. The evil of pain, suffering, and death through the evolutionary process of nonhuman animals in the prehuman and posthuman eras serve a greater good whether that is having a value-seeded world, biodiversity, ecological balance, species flourishing (or any other value-added reason like free will).
3. The fact of the evolutionary behavior of nonhuman animals over time is a part of the overall aesthetics of God's creation and therefore part of His imaginative and creative production reflecting such attributes as power, knowledge, wisdom, mercy, imagination, majesty, and greatness.

Table 1 below summarizes the three proposed theodicies.

## Objections

There are possible objections that can be raised against the package of theodicies I have proposed. I will restrict myself to briefly mentioning just a few. An objection directed against the educative theodicy is that it is *anthropocentric* (see Kowalsky 2006, 85–134). The E-disvalues serve some particular ends for the human species and not nonhuman species.

**Table 1.** Theodicy summary

| E-disvalues (Death, parasitism, pestilence, predation, waste, etc.) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Educative theodicy: E-disvalues exemplify glimpses of specific beautiful names of God in order to deepen realisation and knowledge of Him so that human beings better love and strongly worship Him. | Ecological theodicy: E-disvalues are necessary for securing wholistic goods like proper functioning of ecosystems in the environment and thus are integrated into a larger systematic framework of good. | Aesthetic theodicy: E-disvalues are part of the overall beauty and artistry of God's creation and are to be appreciated for what it is—even if this artistry is constituted of both beauty (predominantly) and nonbeauty. |

Realities like predation are intended by God to be instrumentalized for the theologically pedagogical value they may realize for human beings. Hence, one species becomes a means for the gain of another species. A pair of objections against the ecological theodicy might be that first the coupling of wholistic goods with individual harm of particular creatures might not be so tight in the manner that I have claimed and second, explaining individual loss and suffering of creaturely life in this big-picture way may actually lead to humans being indifferent to that loss and suffering (Tokarski 2019, 157–74). Finally, and along similar lines to the objection against the ecological theodicy, the aesthetic theodicy may be criticized for being immoral in character because the value of the personal, the particular, and the specific is subsumed under the impersonal, general, and overall cosmic beauty.

These objections are valid but some responses can be made. Regarding the first objection, which raises the anthropocentric nature of the educative theodicy, this is acknowledged. Despite the rich details on animal themes in the Qur'ān (Tlili 2012, 70–73), it does not appear to espouse nonhuman animals as creatures with significant moral freedom as they lack the relevant moral properties for enabling that kind of freedom. There is a clear positioning in the Qur'ān of human beings at the center of moral focus and so the Qur'ānic directives are explicitly addressed to them. Animals in many places of the Qur'ān are mentioned as facilitating the maturity, material development, spiritual and aesthetic quality of human life and thus have an instrumental function (Tlili 2012, 74–91). This does not mean they are mistreated or that they are mere toys in the hands of human technology and power to be abused for unethically imaginative ends. The high view of animals in Islam strongly prohibits that (Chowdhury 2021, 67–76). It just means their function is different. They complement the function of human beings who have a higher terrestrial purpose of stewarding God's creation toward His chosen ends. However, whether nonhu-

man animals are part of a redemptive narrative is something that requires further theological investigation and speculation. The Qur'ān suggests a *world-bound* redemption (if we take "redemption" to mean compensating for some adverse outcome) and upholds the resurrection of all nonhuman creatures; but the received interpretation of that resurrection has been that after each creature has been compensated and has its scores settled, God will then annihilate them and so redemption is not carried over into the afterlife (Chowdhury 2021, 72–73; Tlili 2012, 196–202). Muslim theology though, I think, would be open to a kind of "ecological redemption" as an entailment of the ecological theodicy that I proposed where pain and suffering in biological life will be redeemed because of their contribution to the ongoing evolutionary process. Sollereder explains this as follows:

> For example, the second white pelican chick lives a short life full of neglect, but, because it does, white pelicans as a species continue to exist since they are almost always able to raise a chick into adulthood. More than that, the body of the chick who dies is not wasted: it is eaten by a passing predator, or decomposed by a variety of insects and microorganisms that then go on to feed other organisms. Its death allows the evolutionary process to continue. (Sollereder 2019, 159)

This may go some way in addressing the objection of anthropocentricism. When translated into theological terms then, the evils suffered by nonhuman animals are redeemed by the ongoing story of evolution. On the objections to the remaining two theodicies, I will address them in turn. The first part of the objection to the ecological theodicy raises the worry about how my coupling of wholistic goods with individual harm of particular creatures might not be so fixed and fastened. Even if this may seem to be the case, it would be difficult to deny that there is an overall system in operation where "myriads of living organisms" display "complex and exquisite sets of internal relations" and "networks of biological and ecological relationships" that have developed in the course of time "that make the life and flourishing of the different kinds of creatures possible" and thus without this "great system of life, individual creatures could neither thrive nor live" (Attfield 2017, 57, 59). So long as this observable system is present, there is a way to make an overall explanation for how elements within the system contribute to its overall functioning. However—and this leads onto the second part of the objection—such a birds-eye-view or big-picture view of nature's function does not necessarily mean that human beings will be insensitive and indifferent toward individual instances of creaturely suffering and pain by cultivating a kind of pious apathy thinking that their interventions will disrupt the overall good of the system. The ecological theodicy is a theoretical consideration about explaining in a theologically consistent way the set of E-disvalues and not a consideration about ethically informed and guided practice. That is the realm of

law (for Muslims in this case, the *sharī'a*) and not, strictly speaking, the burden of a theodicy to bear. The religious requirement of Muslims for example to ensure the proper protection, preservation, and prolongation of the great system of life is thus a separate domain of consideration and attention, namely, that which falls under the legal and ethical directives of law underpinned by the broader doctrine of terrestrial stewardship (*riʿāya*) and viceregency (*khilāfa*). Related to this last point is the final objection regarding the aesthetic theodicy and its alleged morally improper consequences. The charge is that under the overall cosmic beauty that includes the E-disvalues as ugly/nonbeautiful, individual instances of horrors are ignored or fall out of focus and that is morally improper. Similar to the previous response, the aesthetic theodicy is a conceptual account of perceiving the world differently from how we might uncritically perceive it. It also attempts to show how in our moral considerations dominating our explanations of E-disvalues we exclude seeing aesthetic goods in the natural world. Aesthetic categories then have always or largely been subordinated by our moral categories. An aesthetic perception of creation is something not Islamically pernicious (as far as I can see) but supports the Islamic proclamation of God's artistry and wisdom. On its own, the aesthetic theodicy may not appear theoretically sufficient but in combination with the educative and ecological theodicy, it is a fuller and more resourceful explanation. The palpable ugly/nonbeauty arising from E-disvalues are not only a part of God's artistic production and wisdom, but play into an overall systemic value of nature and pedagogical value for human beings and these values justify God's permission of them.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, when humans reflect on the stretch of geologic history, they wonder and admire with awe and reverence at such phenomena as biological death (and the various ways it occurs like extinction or predation) and its place in a process that precedes them by millions of years revealing the creativity, productivity, imagination, aesthetic consideration, and wisdom of God engendering in them magnified praise, glory, love, and worship of Him. Humans also come to realize that God is the Lord of deep time and not only of the comparatively short history of the human species. Moreover, they realize that the Darwinian problem of evil isolates the pixel from the picture, that is, it focuses on the micro instances of E-disvalues in specific creatures while failing to bring into focus the macro value significant for meaningfully situating those disvalues. In this way perspective is lost. E-disvalues are not merely a heterogeneous collection of events without there being a totality to grasp. The cohort of theodicies I proposed reveal a Creator who loves value in packages. The presence of disvalues in nature though jarring and discomforting (aesthetically *violent*) are

nevertheless ultimately for delivering (among other packages of value) pedagogical, structural, and aesthetic value.

## Notes

1. A phrase I borrow from Robert Audi.
2. I have also appropriated the discussions on what is called the "new problem of evil" generated within environmental ethics and ecology of the 1990s. Environmentalist philosophers offered a number of frameworks of reference about understanding evil in nature. For a thorough account of these frameworks and the major environmentalist thinkers who have proposed them, refer to the study by Kowalski (2006, 1–104).
3. Perhaps an alternative way of framing the problem is by saying that some of the "names" from the set of 99 beautiful Names of God (*asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*) like "The Most Beneficent" (*al-raḥmān*), "The Most Merciful" (*al-raḥīm*), and "The most Loving" (*al-wadūd*) for example, are incompatible with the existence of evil.
4. The term "anti-theodicy" is explained by Toby Betenson (2016, 56–57) as follows:

> Anti-theodicy rejects, often on moral grounds, the process of justifying God's ways or God's existence in light of the evil of the world [. . .] Recent years have seen a resurgence and development of the anti-theodical reaction. The modern expression of anti-theodicy, in general terms, argues that the ways in which the problem of evil is both presented and solved, and the foundational conceptual and moral assumptions upon which such a discussion is grounded, are erroneous. As such, anti-theodicy might be better understood as a kind of meta-critique of the discussion concerning the problem of evil; it is a criticism of the discussion, rather than a criticism within the discussion. Most of the anti-theodical objections, though not all, have a distinctively moral tone. Most anti-theodicists have focused on the morally dubious status of theodicy, arguing that the problem of evil is only solved at the cost of mortgaging what are seen as undeniable moral realities.

In the Islamic theological context, antitheodicy is the view that eschews any justification to offer theodicies as a proper and appropriate theological enterprise. This is because God is utterly distinct from creatures and this makes His motives ultimately inscrutable. Therefore, attempting to vindicate divine motives and actions is an improper form of questioning them (Chowdhury 2021, 24–27).

5. The Arabic text reads (al-Ghazālī 2003, 64):

> لَعَلَّك تَقول مَا معنى كَونه تَعَالَى رحِيما وَكَونه أرْحم الرَّاحِمِينَ والرحِيم لَا يرى مبتلى ومضرورا ومعذبا ومريضا وَهُوَ يقدر على إمَاطَة مَا بهم إِلَّا ويبادر إِلَى إماطته والرب سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى قَادر على كِفَايَة كل بلية وَدفع كل فقر وغمة وإماطة كل مرض وَإِزَالَة كل ضَرَر وَالدُّنْيَا طافحة بالأمراض والمحن والبلايا وَهُوَ قَادر على إِزَالَة جَمِيعهَا وتارك عباده ممتحنين بالرزايا والمحن.

6. The Arabic text reads (Yāqūt 1993, 1:434):

> إذا قيل إن البارىء رؤوف رحيم فلم سلّط الأسد على افتراس نسمة إنسية، ليست بالمفسدة ولا القسيّة؟ وكم مات بلدغ الحيات جماعة مشهورة، وسلّط على الطير الراضية بلقط الحبة البازي والصقر، وإن القطاة لتدع فراخها ظماء وتبتكر لترد ماء تحمله إليها في حوصلتها، فيصادفها دونهنّ أجدل فيأكلها فيهلك فراخها عطشا.

7. Even the great philosopher Abū ʿAlī al-Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) when asked by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) what justifies the suffering of children and non-human animals, unsatisfactorily swerves in his answer (Vasalou & Montgomery 2021, 337–338).

8. This is sometimes referred to as "providential evolution," which consists of God's will determining the direction of evolution toward evermore complexity. Thus, divine will exercises itself on the biological world. On this concept, see Elder (1996).

9. The broader stimulation for formulating both the Arguments and some of my responses to it are from the works of Rolston (2006, 2015) and the argument from *intrinsic value* developed a few decades ago by Keith Ward (1982, 89–120) and then refined by Attfield (2006. 151–171, 2017, 55–90).

10. For other typologies within the Islamic theological tradition, refer to Hoover (2003. 83–92) and Zeni (2020, 218–263, 333–395).

11. In the contemporary literature, a number of evolutionary theodicies have been proposed that overlap with the typologies I surveyed in the section "Typology of Theodicies." One convenient typology discussed by Stewart-Williams (2010, 102–127) that overlaps with those include (with minor modifications): (1) Evil is illusory. (2) Evil is a privation. (3) Good is only meaningful in relation to evil. (4) Evil is a token of divine punishment. (5) Evil is the work of Satan. (6) Good ultimately outweighs evil. (7) Evil is necessary. (8) Evil is a warning. (9) Evil is a means to a better end. (10) Evil is due to free will. (11) Evil is required for moral development. (12) Evil is a by-product of the law-like nature of the world. (13) Evil is a mystery (cf. as well Kowalsky, 2006; Schneider, 2020).

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