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To the classical theist God is beyond physics, the ultimate being. They believe that such a being would possess these characteristics: impassible, immutable, omniscient, omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and to be outside of time, having no beginning and no end. A God of such power does not come without its non-believers and the problems they say, destroy the idea of such a being. To understand such an being, we must break down each part and determine their purpose and why they must be present in order for us to believe in a God. Along with some apparent issue that could hinder the existence of such a being.

God's impassibility is defined in the reader as , “The view that God cannot be affected by human beings or other creatures, God cannot suffer or undergo negative emotions of any kind.”¹ A good one to put with this is the idea of his immutability, which is defined as unchanging. These two are important in that they show how God is already in a state of being and has no need to further his progression, he has no potentiel. More precisely it explains that God is in a state that no emotional or physical force will change his being. This creates a God that possess the ultimate outcome for humans, he is the potentiel we strive to become.

The idea that God is eternal(timeless) is an interesting topic, one that is sometimes confused with everlasting. Everlasting is understood to be something that

¹ Michael L. Peterson. *Reason and Religious Belief an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Page 376

exist at every moment in time.² Whereas eternal is the exists outside of time. This being must exist, but his view of past, present, and future are in unison. Boethius describes this beings exists as being “outside of time, in a changeless eternal now that contains all of time within itself.”³ This is an important distinction which gives light to a more realistic God, one that can’t be completely blamed for the evil that persists in our world. This is do to the fact that his present exist at the same time our past, present, and future is happening. Preventing this being from intervening rarely, if ever.

Omnipotence is probably the most exciting of all the characteristic God would have. Being “perfect in power”⁴ would be one of the most compelling reasons to worship someone. If it was not fear that drove you to worship them, than it would be the sheer amazement of such a being that would bring you to them. When discussing such a being it is important to distinguish what it means to be “perfect” in power. Thomas Aquinas defined God's omnipotence as “being able to do all things that are possible absolutely”.⁵ Meaning that such a being has the ability to do anything that is compatible with that being. God in respect could not/ would not create a “stone” to heavy for him to lift, this would be a contradiction. Since it is a contradiction it would say nothing about his true characteristic of omnipotence.

² Michael L. Peterson. *Reason and Religious Belief an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Page 375

³ Peterson, Michael L. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Page 256

⁴ Michael L. Peterson. *Reason and Religious Belief an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Page 378

⁵ Peterson, Michael L. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Page 245

The Idea of an omnibenevolent God is an interesting one. It is the idea of an all loving or infinitely good⁶ being. In thought it seems logical, but the moment you look around you see reasons it could be wrong. Most religions today believe God to be omnibenevolent, for why else would he expect goodness from us if he, himself is not good. The classical theist see God as being omnibenevolent and prove their point with the solutions given by Peter Kreeft(discussed later). The main point he seemed to be trying to make was that we may not know God's will and why should we expect to.

For God to be omniscient means he is all knowing or as the reader puts it “perfect in knowledge”⁷. There is plenty of dispute on what this truly means but for the classic theist it means that God knows everything there is to know about himself and all things. An interesting point was brought up in the readings that an omniscient being would have to be infallible, incapable of being wrong. This was interesting because it means that even if this beings understanding, to us seems wrong, this being would be right regardless. It is understandable that this characteristic is so important for such a being, for why would one worship a being whose knowledge cannot trump their own.

To have an all knowing God creates an interesting question, the question of free will. If such a being existed, having the knowledge of everything, do humans have free will? Free will, in the libertarian sense, is the ability for the agent to make a decision in

⁶ “Omnibenevolent.” *Omnibenevolent Dictionary Definition* | *Omnibenevolent Defined*, www.yourdictionary.com/omnibenevolent.

⁷ Michael L. Peterson. *Reason and Religious Belief an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Page 378

two or more ways that isn't influenced by any outside force.⁸ A principle that falls in these same lines is the principle of alternate possibilities, which is that an action is free only if the agent could have chosen otherwise. Some would argue that such a reality couldn't exist, even without the existence of God. Hard determinist believe that all events can be traced back to past events, insomuch that whatever has happened would have happened no matter what. Another interesting point that could be made is why, if such a being exist, would the knowledge he possesses effect your free will. Just because someone knows the outcome doesn't mean they cause the outcome. If you stood on a mountain top and looked down into a valley, seeing a man about to be ambushed, but was unable to notify him. This does not imply you had anything to do with the situation, you only had the knowledge that the situation would soon happen.

These characteristic, particularly God's omnipotence, omnibenevolence, and omniscience, bring up an interesting problem; the problem of evil. How can a God be worthy of our worship, if they would allow such evil to exist in the world. Such a God would be powerful and knowledgeable enough to stop the evil, his benevolence would even be his driving force; so why is it so prevalent. To solve this problem Peter Kreeft came up with four possible solutions. The first being that evil is not a thing. He later states that, "evil is not a thing but a wrong choice."⁹ Since it is a choice and not a thing, Kreeft reasons that God cannot be blamed for evil. Second is that evil wasn't created by the creator, rather it was a by product of his kindness in granting us free will. We just

⁸ Michael L. Peterson. *Reason and Religious Belief an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Page 376

⁹ "The Problem of Evil." *The Problem of Evil by Peter Kreeft*, www.peterkreeft.com/topics/evil.htm. Follow link

chose to be selfish and sin instead of following his guidance. Thirdly, evil exists so that Jesus Christ could be sacrificed so that we may repent of our sins. This shows God as being willing to give up his beloved son so that we could “fight off evil by the power of love.”¹⁰ Lastly, is a few reasons that fall under the same issue. Why do bad things happen to good people? He discusses the fact that we don’t really know we are good people, or why is suffering bad, or why do we even need to know the reasons God places evil. The one true fact that can be said is there is evil out there and maybe instead of pointing a finger at God for letting it be there, we should instead look at what we are doing and try to fix the problem ourselves.

A God worthy of worship is one who possesses the attributes we deem most valuable. If history has shown us anything it is that, for the most part, we desire a God that falls in line with these characteristics. We want a God that is everything that we are not, a God that illuminates the best possible potential we have. The problem of evil is mainly about perspective. If you see it as a barrier, than it will hold you back and challenge your faith. But if you are willing to see it as a pivot point that’s meant to raise you higher, than you will find yourself that much closer to God.

¹⁰ “The Problem of Evil.” *The Problem of Evil by Peter Kreeft*, www.peterkreeft.com/topics/evil.htm. Follow link

Citations

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Reflective Writing

As I was writing this paper my knowledge of what God is to many theist has increased. He is the ultimate Being, one full of power and has reached his full potential. This essay improved my understanding of the difference in timeless and eternal, they are seemingly the same until you break them down to their true meaning. Doing this completely changes the idea of God, it makes him more personal and understanding. He becomes a part of the journey, one who is with us along the way. Another interesting thing I found out as I was writing this paper is God's infallibility, the idea that God could be seemingly wrong but isn't. Rather he has such perfect knowledge that it trumps our own understanding, even that of evil. This writing helped me understand the importance of the little parts associated with Gods traits. God could be more personal and we can be wrong even if we believe ourselves to be right. Or not, that's why philosophy is so great.