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**Theory of İwad as an Explanation for Gratuitous and Pointless Evils**  
*Gereksiz ve Anlamsız Kötülöklere Bir Açıklama Olarak İvaz Teorisi*

**İbrahim Yıldız**

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi, İslami İlimler Fakültesi, Din Felsefesi  
Ana Bilim Dalı – Dr., Muş Alparslan University, Faculty of Islamic Sciences,  
Department of Philosophy of Religion.  
i.yildiz@alparslan.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3139-2169>

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## Abstract

The evidential arguments from evil present some of the most compelling challenges to theism. Among these arguments, the ones centered around gratuitous and pointless evils are particularly significant. Edward H. Madden and Peter Hare formulated an argument based on gratuitous evil, while William Rowe advanced arguments based on pointless evil. Although Madden and Hare proposed their argument in the sixties and Rowe in the seventies, there is a theory within Islamic thought that can shed light on the concept of gratuitous and pointless evil. The theory proposed to elucidate these types of evil is the theory of *iwad* (compensation). In this article, I will delve into gratuitous and pointless evils are the kinds of pain and sufferings that requires *iwad*.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of Religion, Gratuitous Evil, Pointless Evil, Islamic Thought, *Iwad*.

## Öz

Delilci kötülük argümanları, teizme karşı sunulan en güçlü argümanların başında gelmektedir. Bu argümanlar, günümüze kadar en çok tartışılan mantıksal kötülük probleminde olduğu gibi, Tanrı'nın sıfatları ile kötülüğün varlığı arasında doğrudan bir çelişki olduğunu ileri sürmez. Nitekim delilci kötülük argümanlarının çoğu savunucusu, kötülük ile Tanrı'nın sıfatları arasında bir çelişki olmadığını kabul eder ve mantıksal kötülük probleminde karşı teistlerin sunduğu itirazların yeterli olduğunu düşünürler. Ancak kötülüğün Tanrı'nın var olma olasılığını azaltan bir delil olduğunu ileri sürerek kötülük temelinde yeni argümanlar kurarlar. Bu argümanlar arasında gereksiz ve anlamsız kötülük türlerini merkeze alan argümanlar özellikle önemlidir.

Edward H. Madden ve Peter Hare hiçbir amaca hizmet etmeyen veya zorunlu olmayan şekilde tanımladığı gereksiz kötülük kavramını kullanarak bir argüman ileri sürerler. Öte yandan William Rowe, her şeye gücü yeten ve mutlak iyi bir varlığın daha büyük bir iyiliği kaybetmeksizin veya eşit derecede kötü ya da daha fena kötülüklere izin vermeksizin önleyebileceği kötülük örneklerini anlamsız kötülük olarak tanımlayarak bu kavramı temel alan bir argüman ileri sürer. Bu tanımlardan da anlaşılacağı üzere, seçilen kavramlar ve bunların gerektirdiği tanımlar arasında önemli bir farklılık bulunmaktadır. Söz konusu argümanlar kapsamlı tartışmalara yol açtı ve Batı literatüründe önemli eleştiriler aldı. Bu eleştirilerin bir kısmı, gereksiz veya anlamsız türde kötülüklerin var olmadığını, Tanrı'nın söz konusu kötülüklere izin vermesi için bir sebebi varsa insanın epistemik sınırlılığı nedeniyle bu sebepleri görememesinin olağan olduğunu temellendirmeye çalışmaktadır. Diğer itirazlar ise gereksiz veya anlamsız kötülüklerin Tanrı'nın varlığıyla uyumlu olduğunu ortaya koyma çabasındadır.

İslam geleneğinde sunulan bir teorinin gereksiz ve anlamsız kötülüklerle bir açıklama sunup sunmadığını araştırmak da önemlidir. Bu çalışmada gereksiz ve anlamsız kötülüklerle ikna edici bir açıklama olarak hizmet edebileceğine inandığım bir teoriyi sunacağım. Söz konusu kötülükleri açıklamak için öne sürülen teori, *ıvaz* teorisidir. *İvaz* kelimesi karşılık ve bedel gibi anlamlara gelen Arapça kökenli bir kavramdır. Kelam terminolojisinde bu kavram, "övgüye layık olmayan, hak edilmiş fayda" olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Burada "övgüye layık olmayan" ifadesi, hak edilen menfaatin kişinin erdemli davranışları nedeniyle ortaya çıkmadığına işaret etmesi bakımından özel bir önem taşımaktadır. Ağırlıklı olarak Mutezili alimlerin savunduğu bu teoriye göre, her bireyin istem dışı ve hak edilmemiş acı ve ıstırapların telafi edileceği ve Allah'ın bu tür elemelerin karşılığını vermesi gerektiği savunulmaktadır. İstemsiz ve hak edilmemiş acı ve ıstırapların tazmin edilmesi gerektiği iddiası, Allah'ın zulmü dilemediği, yani İlahi iradenin yalnızca iyi olana yönelik olduğu varsayımına dayanmaktadır. Burada hak edilmemiş acı ve ıstırapın telafi edilmemesi zülüm olarak değerlendirileceği, dolayısıyla Allah'ın istemsiz ve hak edilmemiş acı ve ıstırapları telafi etmesi gerektiği savunulmaktadır.

Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi Madden ve Hare, gereksiz kötülüğü, zorunlu olmayan kötülükler olarak tanımlar. Bir kötülüğün gereksiz olması için kötülüğün bireyin iradesi dışında ortaya çıkması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca kötülüğe maruz kalan bireyin bu acıyı hak etmemiş olması şarttır. Bu iki unsura dayanarak, Madden ve Hare tarafından kullanılan gereksiz kötülüklerin, *ıvaz* gerektiren kötülükler olarak sınıflandırılabileceği ileri sürülebilir. Ancak *ıvaz* teorisinin önemli bir unsuru da bu tür acı ve ıstırapların bireylere ders veya uyarı niteliği taşımasıdır. Bu kötülükler bireylerin ders alması için gerekli görüldüğünden, zorunlu kötülükler olarak sınıflandırılabilir.

Peki, Rowe'un anlamsız kötülük kavramı için de aynı şey söylenebilir mi? Anlamsız kötülükler de ivaz gerektiren birer acı ve ıstırap türü olarak görülebilir mi? Bunu göstermek için, Rowe'un anlamsız kötülük kavramına yüklediği tanıma odaklanmak yerine, onun anlamsız olduğunu iddia ettiği belirli kötülük örneklerini analiz etmek daha etkili olacaktır. Rowe'un verdiği ilk örnek, 5 yaşındaki küçük bir kızın tecavüz ve darp sonucu çektiği acı ve ardından ölümüdür. Küçük kızın maruz kaldığı acıların iradesi dışında gerçekleştiği ortadadır ve bunu kesinlikle hak etmemiştir. Maruz kalınan acının istemsiz ve hak edilmemiş olması, ivazın gerekliliği için ikna edici bir gerçekçe oluşturmaktadır. Buradan ivazı gerektiren acı ve ıstırapların, anlamsız olduğu iddia edilen kötülüklerle benzer özellikleri paylaştığı sonucuna varılabilir. Ancak şunu da belirtmek gerekir ki, ivaz gerektiren her acı ve ıstırap, anlamsızlık kategorisine girmez. Çünkü bir kötülüğün anlamsız olup olmadığı tartışmalıdır. Yine de bu tür bir kötülüğün varlığını savunmak için sunulan örnekler, aslında ivaz gerektirmektedir.

Rowe'un diğer örneği ise şimşek çakması sonucunda çıkan bir orman yangınında günlerce yandıktan sonra ölen bir geyik yavrusuyla ilgilidir. Geyik yavrusu örneğiyle ilgili olarak önemli bir soru ortaya çıkmaktadır: "İvaz sadece insanlar için midir?" Mu'tezili düşünürlerin çoğunluğu, Allah'ın hayvanların çektiği acılara karşılık olarak ivaz vereceği görüşünü kabul etmektedir. Bu durumda söz konusu türde acı ve ıstırapların da ivaz gerektiren kötülükler kategorisine değerlendirilebileceği savunulabilir.

Bununla birlikte, istemsiz ve hak edilmemiş acı ve ıstırapın Rowe'un anlamsız kötülük kavramıyla uyumlu olup olmadığı konusunda önemli bir tartışma ortaya çıkmaktadır. Aralarında benzerlikler olsa da Rowe'un anlamsız kötülük kavramının, istemsiz ve hak edilmemiş kötülüklerle tam olarak eşanlamlı olmadığını belirtmek önemlidir. Dolayısıyla Rowe'un anlattığı şekliyle anlamsız kötülüklerin dünyamızda bulunabileceği iddiası, ivaz teorisi çerçevesinde belirsizliğini korumaktadır. Ancak anlamsız kötülüğün bir göstergesi olarak sunulan kötülük örnekleri değerlendirildiğinde bunların tam da ivazın konusu olan acı ve ıstıraplara karşılık geldiği iddia edilebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Felsefesi, Gereksiz Kötülük, Anlamsız Kötülük, İslam Düşüncesi, İvaz.

## Introduction\*

Numerous arguments have been presented to claim that the existence of an all-powerful and perfectly good God is inherently contradictory or implausible.<sup>1</sup> Among these arguments, the problem of evil remains highly debated to this day. Various arguments have been formulated based on the existence of evil, including existential, logical, and evidential ones.<sup>2</sup>

Existential arguments from evil, although occasionally used to challenge the existence of God, are generally regarded as an expression of existential rebellion against God,<sup>3</sup> and thus have not gained significant traction in debates within the analytical philosophy of religion. On the other hand, the logical problem of evil, which has always been on the agenda of philosophers, is

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- 1 For more detailed information on atheism and atheistic arguments, see Mehmet Sait Reçber, "Ateizm ve Ateistik Deliller", *Din ve Ahlâk Felsefesi* (Ankara: Ankuzem Yayınları, 2006).
- 2 Rafiz Manafov, *John Hick'in Din Felsefesinde Kötülük Problemi ve Teodise* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2019), 41-52.
- 3 Cafer Sadık Yaran, *Kötülük ve Teodise* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1997), 35-37.

based on the idea that the existence of evil in the world contradicts the concept of an all-powerful and perfectly good God.<sup>4</sup> The evidential arguments from evil, however, do not directly posit a contradiction between God's attributes and the existence of evil. Most proponents of evidential arguments from evil acknowledge that there is no inherent contradiction between evil and God's attributes, and they consider the responses offered by theists to be satisfactory in countering logical arguments.<sup>5</sup> However, they do present various evidential arguments from evil, contending that evil serves as evidence that reduces the probability of God's existence.<sup>6</sup>

Evidential arguments from evil gained particular attention when philosophers focused on gratuitous and pointless evils. Edward H. Madden and Peter Hare put forth an argument centered around gratuitous evils, while William Rowe presents several arguments based on pointless evils. These arguments have sparked extensive debates and received substantial criticism within Western theistic literature. Some of these criticisms aim to justify the non-existence of the presented type of evil, while others seek to demonstrate the compatibility of the questioned evil with the existence of God. It is also crucial to explore whether Islam, as a theistic belief system, offers a theory that can effectively respond to these arguments. In this study, I will present a theory that I believe can serve as a compelling explanation to gratuitous and pointless evils.

The theory I propose, known as the theory of *iwad*, offers a partial explanation for gratuitous and pointless evil. To illustrate how this theory addresses gratuitous and pointless evils, I will first outline the arguments against the existence of God that are based on such evils. Subsequently, I will delve into the fundamental claims and principles of the *iwad* theory. Finally, I will discuss whether the attributed meanings and presented examples of gratuitous and pointless evils can be classified as evils that require *iwad* (compensation). This analysis aims to demonstrate the significance of the theory of *iwad* as an explanatory framework for the types of evils often deemed gratuitous and pointless.

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- 4 Ergin Erdem, "Kötülük Problemi", *Din Felsefesi* (Ankara: Ankuzem Yayınları, 2013), 304; Nesim Aslantatar, "Paul Draper, Agnostisizm ve Kötülük Problemi", *Dini Araştırmalar* 25/62 (2022), 173-196; Nesim Aslantatar, *Agnostisizm: Tanrı'nın Bilinemezliği Sorunu* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Doktora Tezi, 2022), 201-204.
- 5 İbrahim Yıldız, *Teizm ve Ateizm: Delilci Kötülük Problemi* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2021), 28.
- 6 Rahim Acar, "The Limits of Evidential Argument From Evil", *Din ve Felsefe Araştırmaları* 2/4 (December 2019), 114-116.

## The Arguments from Gratuitous and Pointless Evil

In the literature, numerous arguments have been presented that rely on gratuitous and pointless evils to argue against the existence of God. However, two of these arguments share significant structural similarities while differing in their choice of concepts and the meanings ascribed to them. These are Edward H. Madden's argument with Peter Hare and William Rowe's. Despite their similar argumentative form, they diverge in terms of concept selection and the interpretations they assign to these concepts. Madden and Hare employ the term "gratuitous evil" to characterize evils that serve no purpose or are deemed unnecessary.<sup>7</sup> Rowe, on the other hand, favors the concept of "pointless evil", which he defines as "instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some equally bad or worse."<sup>8</sup> As evident from these definitions, there exists a significant disparity in the chosen concepts and the corresponding definitions they entail.

While Madden and Hare acknowledge the existence of countless gratuitous evils in the world, they do not provide specific instances to illustrate this concept. In contrast, Rowe endeavors to substantiate his argument by presenting explicit cases of evil that he considers to be pointless. One such case involves a fawn that endured days of suffering after being burned in a forest fire caused by a lightning strike.<sup>9</sup> Another case is the pain and anguish endured by a 5-year-old girl who was brutally murdered after being raped by her mother's boyfriend.<sup>10</sup> Rowe contends that in both cases, there is no equally bad or worse evil that God would have to permit if He intervened, nor is there any greater good that God can achieve by allowing these evils. Rowe argues that the ease with which God could prevent these evils suggests their pointlessness. Apart from the varying definitions and examples provided, the argument rooted in gratuitous and pointless evils can be succinctly summarized as follows:

1. If an all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly benevolent God existed, He would intervene to prevent gratuitous or pointless evils.
2. It is highly probable that our world is plagued by innumerable instances of gratuitous or pointless evils.
3. Therefore, the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly benevolent God is highly improbable.

7 Edward H. Madden - Peter H. Hare, *Evil and the Concept of God* (Illinois and Florida: Charles C. Thomas, 1968), 3.

8 William L. Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16/4 (1979), 336.

9 Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism", 337.

10 William L. Rowe, "Evil and Theodicy", *Philosophical Topics* 16/2 (1988), 120.

The argument presented is structurally valid, and there appear to be two ways to refute it. The first is to challenge the assertion that there is gratuitous or pointless evil in the world. Although no explicit objection against Madden and Hare's argument denying the existence of gratuitous evil can be found in the literature, skeptical theists challenge the concept of pointless evil to refute Rowe's argument.<sup>11</sup> Skeptical theists argue that if God has a reason for not preventing aforementioned instances of evil, it is reasonable to assume that human beings, due to their limited conception, are unable to perceive God's reasons. Therefore, they contend that the absence of information about why an evil is allowed does not discount the possibility that God has a reason. Notable skeptical theists include Stephan Wykstra,<sup>12</sup> Alvin Plantinga,<sup>13</sup> and Michael Bergman<sup>14</sup>.

The second response aims to argue that there is, in fact, gratuitous or pointless evil in our world, but that it can still be compatible with the existence of God. Scholars like Michael Peterson<sup>15</sup>, William Hasker,<sup>16</sup> and Peter van Inwagen<sup>17</sup> put forth diverse arguments to advocate for the compatibility of God's existence with the presence of gratuitous or pointless evil.

As can be observed, the arguments presented have elicited numerous responses within Western literature, addressing various facets of the discourse. But is there an explanation for the evils that are allegedly gratuitous or pointless within Islamic thought? I believe there is, and it lies in the theory of *iwad*. To understand the explanatory power of this theory, a brief overview of the theory's main tenets will be provided. Subsequently, how *iwad* explains gratuitous or pointless evils can be explored.

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11 Michael Bergmann, "Skeptical Theism and Rowe's New Evidential Argument from Evil", *Noûs* 35/2 (2001), 278-296.

12 For more on Wykstra's objection, see Stephen J. Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 16/2 (1984), 73-93.

13 For more on Plantinga's objection, see Alvin Plantinga, "Epistemic Probability and Evil", *The Evidential Argument from Evil*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 69-96.

14 For more on Bergman's objection, see Bergmann, "Skeptical Theism and Rowe's New Evidential Argument from Evil".

15 For more on Peterson's objection, see Michael L. Peterson, *Evil and The Christian God* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982).

16 For more on Hasker's objection, see William Hasker, "The Necessity of Gratuitous Evil", *Faith and Philosophy* 9/1 (1992), 23-44.

17 For more on van Inwagen's objection, see Peter Van Inwagen, "The Argument from Particular Horrendous Evils", *American Catholic Philosophical Association, ACPA Proceedings* 74 (2001), 65-80.

## The Theory of İwad

The term “iwad” originates from Arabic and encompasses meanings such as compensation, cost, alternative, change, replacement, and payment.<sup>18</sup> Within the realm of Kalam terminology, this concept is defined as a “benefit not worthy of praise but deserved.”<sup>19</sup> The phrase “not worthy of praise” holds particular significance here, as it signifies that the deserved benefit does not arise because of a person’s virtuous actions that necessitate compensation. Indeed, there exist benefits that are both praiseworthy and well-deserved, known as good deeds. The absence of worthiness for praise serves as a crucial distinguishing factor between the two concepts.<sup>20</sup> According to this theory, predominantly advocated by Mu’tazilite scholars, it is argued that any individual’s involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering will be compensated,<sup>21</sup> and Allah must recompense such afflictions.<sup>22</sup>

The assertion that there should be compensation for involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering rests on the premise that Allah does not will oppression, meaning that the Divine will is aligned solely with what is good.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the absence of reparation for pain and suffering unjustly inflicted would be considered oppressive. Consequently, it follows that Allah should

18 For linguistic details of the concept, see İbn Manzūr, *Lisānu’l-‘Arab*, critical ed. Abdullāh ‘Aliyyu’l-Kebīr et al. (Kāhīre: Dāru’l-Ma‘ārif, n.d.), 3170.

19 Muhammed b. Abdülkerim eş-Şehristānî, *El-Müel Ne’n-Nihal Dinler Mezhepler ve Felsefi Sistemler Tarihi*, trans. Mustafa Öz (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2015), 98. In fact, a theory in Western literature argues that the pain and suffering that an individual is exposed to should be compensated. It is known as *Theodical individualism*. For both the basic claims of this theory and its comprehensive evaluation, see Jeff Jordan, “Divine Love and Human Suffering”, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56/2/3 (2004), 169-178. Also, for a comparison of iwad theory with *Theodical individualism*, see. Nesim Aslantatar - İbrahim Yıldız, “Teodik Bireyciliğe Karşı İwad Teorisi”, *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 33/2 (2022), 423-433.

20 İlyas Çelebi, *İslâm İnanç Sisteminde Akılcılık ve Kadı Abdulcebbar* (İstanbul: Rağbet Yayınları, 2002), 307-308.

21 Hüseyin Maraz, “Mu’tazile Kelamında Bir Hak Ediş Olarak Kelamın İlahi ve İnsani Yönü”, *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 47 (2018), 101-102.

22 It is important to acknowledge that this theory was advocated by Mu’tazilite scholars, while it was largely rejected by most Ash’aris. Those who oppose this theory typically argue that nothing can be imposed as an obligation on God and that He possesses the freedom to do as He pleases and decrees as He wills. For perspectives supporting this viewpoint, see Seyyid Şerif Cürçânî, *Şerhu’l-Mevâkıf*, trans. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2021), 3/342-344. Similarly, al-Ghazali, in his argument, asserts that Allah possesses the power to inflict pain upon an individual who bears no guilt while also maintaining that there is no necessity for Him to provide compensation for that person’s suffering. Gazzâlî, *İtikatta Orta Yol*, trans. Osman Demir (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012), 152.

23 Mahsum Aytepe, “Lütuf Teorisi Çerçevesinde Allah-İnsan İlişkinin Mu’tazilî Yorumu”, *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 17/3 (2017), 243; Bayram Çınar, “Kelam’da Salah-Aslah Tartışmaları”, *Mevzu – Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5 (2021), 223.

compensate for the specific type of pain and suffering. These thoughts can be delineated through the following propositions:

1. Allah is inherently averse to oppression, meaning that the Divine will is fundamentally aligned with justice and goodness.
2. Involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering, which lacks compensation, can be regarded as acts of oppression or injustice.
3. Therefore, it follows that Allah compensates individuals' involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering, as not doing so would be considered oppressive and contrary to Allah's nature.

The claim that Allah should provide compensation for undeserved pain and suffering, which occurs independently of the person's will, finds its basis in the Mu'tazilite theory known as Aslah (the most beneficial). According to this theory, the welfare of individuals was considered in the creation of everything. Since there is no inherent benefit for the person who experiences involuntary and undeserved suffering it is believed that compensation should be provided for these types of suffering.<sup>24</sup>

The claim that God must respond to involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering does not imply that every suffering experienced by individuals will be compensated. To highlight this distinction, Qadi Abdulcebbar (d. 415/1025) categorized the pain and suffering that befall a person into three different classes, each with varying implications regarding the need for compensation.

The first category includes pain and suffering that arise from the free will of the individual. In such cases, compensation is not required, as the suffering is a consequence of the person's own wrongful choices. The second category encompasses the suffering caused by another human being, while the third category involves the pain and suffering that occurs to acquire a benefit or serve as a lesson or a warning for the sufferer or for someone else. The pain and suffering due to these last two require *iwad*.<sup>25</sup> For suffering endured due to these two categories, compensation is either granted by Allah directly or arrangements are made for compensation to be given. When individuals experience suffering because of Allah's action, whether it serves as a warning or lesson or for any other purpose, Allah provides compensation for the pain and suffering. On the other hand, if the cause of the suffering is another person, the person responsible for inflicting the suffering is obliged to pay the price to the person who suffered.<sup>26</sup> Hence, it is important to acknowledge that compensation for all types of suffering is not exclusively given by Allah.

24 Mahsum Aytepe, "Mu'tezile'nin Aslah Teorisi ve Basra Mu'tezile'sinin Aslah Anlayışının Tahlili", *Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi İslam Tetkikleri Merkezi Dergisi* 5 (2019), 85-104.

25 Ebü'l-Hasen Kâdî Abdulcebbar, *Şerhu'l-Uşûli'l-ḥamse: Mu'tezile'nin Beş İlkesi*, trans. İlyas Çelebi (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2013), 2/294-332.

26 Cürcânî, *Şerhu'l-Mevâkıf*, 3/342.



When the theory is interpreted in this manner, it raises several significant questions for discussion. For instance, when and how is iwad granted? Is iwad exclusively reserved for the afterlife? Does it involve an exact equivalency of the suffered pain, or can it exceed the harm? Is it justifiable to inflict torment on someone for them to earn compensation? Is iwad permanent in nature? Is God obligated to provide iwad? Is iwad applicable only to humans, or can it extend to animals as well? If animals are to receive compensation for their suffering, would they be aware of this compensation? If so, would this awareness be enduring? While these are crucial aspects of the iwad theory, we will refrain from exploring them further to maintain focus on our subject. With a general understanding of the iwad theory established, we can now proceed to examine whether gratuitous and pointless evils fall in the category of pain and sufferings that require iwad.

### **The Application of the Iwad in Evaluating Arguments Concerning Gratuitous and Pointless Evil**

Before delving into the assessment of whether gratuitous and pointless evils necessitate iwad, it is important to acknowledge the ongoing controversy surrounding the nature of evil being categorized as gratuitous or pointless. Due to the inherent limitations of human understanding, it is natural for individuals to be unable to perceive or comprehend the underlying reasons behind instances of pain or suffering. Thus, proving the assertion that an instance of evil is gratuitous or pointless becomes a challenging task. However, instead of engaging in a debate regarding the existence of evils that are purportedly gratuitous and pointless, this article will focus on evaluating whether these evils align with the nature of pain and suffering that necessitate iwad. In this evaluation, it is crucial to consider that the suffering under scrutiny, which is the subject of iwad, is both involuntary and undeserved. With this in mind, let's first consider the concept of gratuitous evil.

As mentioned earlier, Madden and Hare defined gratuitous evil as an unnecessary form of evil. When considering the unnecessary nature of evil solely from the perspective of the sufferer, it becomes essential for gratuitous evil to transpire against the individual's will. It becomes futile to debate the unnecessary nature of suffering that people willingly inflict upon themselves since they knowingly and willingly bear the pain in question. Therefore, justifying voluntarily self-inflicted pain as an unnecessary evil becomes challenging once the individual's agency is recognized. Moreover, it is imperative that the individual subjected to the pains does not deserve such suffering. Because one could argue that if the person already deserves the suffering, he or she is experiencing, it becomes necessary (for the sake of justice) rather than gratuitous.

In the theory of *iwad*, the sufferings that necessitate *iwad* are characterized as involuntary and undeserved, stemming not from any sin committed by an individual. Building upon the above explanation, one could argue that gratuitous evils can be classified as the kind of suffering that requires *iwad*. However, an additional crucial element within the *iwad* theory is that such pain and suffering serve as lessons or warning for individuals. Since these evils are deemed necessary for individuals to learn from, they can be categorized as necessary evils. Therefore, it becomes challenging to label the evils that require *iwad* as gratuitous. Nevertheless, if we accept the possibility that even if an instance of evil is gratuitous for the person undergoing it, it may still serve as a necessary lesson for others, it can be postulated that gratuitous evils are indeed forms of pain and suffering that necessitate *iwad*.

Building upon the notion that gratuitous evils are intertwined with the concept of individuals learning a lesson, it can also be acknowledged that gratuitous evils are necessary for the attainment of a greater good. Consequently, it can be inferred based on *iwad* theory that gratuitous evils do exist in our world, yet they are compatible with the existence of God. However, since Madden and Hare do not provide explicit examples of evil to illustrate gratuitous evil, it becomes challenging to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the correlation between involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering and gratuitous evils.

Let us now turn our attention to Rowe's concept of pointless evil. Does it align with the type of pain and suffering that necessitates *iwad*? To demonstrate this, it is more effective to analyze the specific instances of evil that Rowe cites as being pointless rather than solely focusing on the concept of pointless evil itself. The first instance Rowe gives is the suffering and subsequent death of a 5-years-old little girl. It is evident that the suffering endured by the little girl was inflicted against her will, and she certainly did not deserve such pain. These two crucial factors, the involuntary nature of the suffering and the girl's undeserved fate, make a compelling case for the requirement of *iwad*. Hence, it can be inferred that the pain and suffering that necessitate *iwad* share similar characteristics with the purportedly pointless evils discussed by Rowe. However, it should be noted that not every instance of pain and suffering that requires *iwad* automatically falls into the category of being pointless. Even though it is controversial whether there is pointless evil, the instance presented to defend the existence of such evil indeed requires *iwad*.

Still, when considering the specific case of the evil in question, one can argue that the evil appears pointless solely for the person who experiences it. This is because the evil was imposed against the victim's will, and the suffering endured was undeserved. However, as previously mentioned, another element within the *iwad* theory is that suffering is not prevented to serve as an

example or warning for others. This implies that the suffering in question is necessary for the realization of a greater good. Based on the above information, it can be concluded that the pain and suffering may appear pointless to those who directly endure it, but in the broader context, it serves as an integral part of a greater purpose. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the suffering experienced by the little girl was undeserved and occurred against her will, categorizing it as the type of pain and suffering that requires iwad.

One objection that may arise at this point is that the iwad theory could potentially justify the intentional infliction of pain upon someone, which would be highly unfair. To illustrate this concern, Bruce R. Reichenbach presents a compelling example:

Suppose that A kidnaps B, subjecting B to painful torture and other forms of degradation. At the same time, A promises B that when A releases B, A will compensate B for B's pain and suffering. One surely cannot contend that A's treatment of B is just and fair on the grounds that A compensates B for the evil done to B. No matter how A compensates B, the actions of A are morally unjustified.<sup>27</sup>

In Reichenbach's example, A arbitrarily inflicts torture upon B, without any underlying purpose or lesson for either B or others. This scenario highlights an inconsistency between the example and the theory of iwad. According to the iwad theory, the suffering caused by Allah is not unjust. However, in the above instance, the torture represents an immoral act, driven solely by the infliction of pain for pleasure. As a result, it would be inaccurate to associate the iwad theory with the example presented here, as they fundamentally differ in their basic principles.

Regarding the fawn case, an important question arises: "Does iwad apply solely to humans?" Some Muslim scholars have put forth the argument that iwad can also extend to animals.<sup>28</sup> The majority of Mu'tazilite thinkers accept the notion that Allah will provide iwad in response to the sufferings experienced by animals.<sup>29</sup> In this context, the pain and suffering endured by animals, even if considered unnecessary or devoid of meaning in themselves, would be compensated. This perspective supports the claim that iwad will be granted in exchange for the pain and suffering endured by animals.

At this juncture, the question arises as to why a significant amount of pain and suffering is allowed if God provides compensation for the suffering of animals. It can be argued that since we lack knowledge about the extent to

27 Bruce R. Reichenbach, "Assessing a Revised Compensation Theodicy", *Religions* 13/1080 (2022), 4.

28 Ebû Muhammed 'Alî b. Aḥmed el-Endelusî İbn Ḥazm, *el-Faṣl fi'l-milel ve'l-'ehvâ'i ve'n-nihâl* (Kâhîre: Mektebetu'l-Ḥâncî, n.d.), 64, 67.

29 Ebû'l-Ḥasan 'Abdülcebbâr b. Aḥmed Kâḍî 'Abdülcebbâr, *el-Muḡnî fi ebvâbi't-tevhîd ve'l-'adl: el-Lütf*, critical ed. Ebû'l-A'lâ 'Affî (Kâhîre: ed-Dârü'l-Miṣriyye, 1963), 452.

which these evils are integral to the whole, we are unable to determine their worth. Moreover, the nature and mechanism of *iwad* are also critical considerations. The ignorance about the exact nature of *iwad* to be granted in response to momentary pain and suffering leads to doubts regarding the assertion that *iwad* will not fully compensate for the pain and suffering endured. Claiming that something unknown will lack sufficient value ultimately remains a mere assumption. Even so, while the precise nature of compensation to be provided in response to immediate pain remains uncertain, Mu'tazilite scholars suggest that it will exceed the magnitude of the suffering.

Nonetheless, a crucial debate emerges regarding whether involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering align with Rowe's concept of pointless evils. While there are similarities between them, as previously discussed, it is important to note that Rowe's notion of pointless evils is not precisely synonymous with involuntary and undeserved evils. Consequently, the claim that pointless evils, as understood by Rowe, can be found in our world remains unclear within the framework of the *iwad* theory. However, when evaluating the specific instances of the evil that Rowe presents as a demonstration of pointless evil it can be claimed that Rowe's examples correspond to the very pain and suffering that are the subject of *iwad*.

Based on these analyses, it can be seen that the types of evils put forward to ground the evidential arguments from evil were taken into consideration long before the arguments were put forward, and various explanations were offered for why there are such evils. Considering that such evils may exist to serve as a lesson or warning (test), they will not be evidence that can be used to deny the existence of God. Therefore, it seems reasonable that such evils are evils that require compensation rather than being evidence against the existence of God. The reasons why such evils exist in our world are brought to attention, and it is stated that those who are exposed to them will be compensated. Considering all this, it can be argued that it is possible for such evils to exist in our world and that they are compatible with the existence of God.

In conclusion, if we consider involuntary and undeserved pain and suffering as a compromise with pointless evils, an important distinction emerges between the explanation of gratuitous and pointless evil within the theory of *iwad* and the claims of skeptical theists. The key difference lies in the acknowledgment, within the theory of *iwad*, that gratuitous or pointless evils can indeed be found in our world. Instead of denying their existence, the *iwad* theory argues that God has a reason for allowing such pain and suffering to occur, with the assurance that compensation will be provided by God in due course.

Furthermore, the *iwad* theory appears to align with the perspectives of Peterson, Hasker, and van Inwagen, who posit the existence of gratuitous and

pointless evils in our world while maintaining compatibility with the existence of God. However, the iwad theory diverges from their views by emphasizing that the recompense for such pain and suffering will be granted by God later to the individuals who have endured them.

## Conclusion

In this article, an examination of whether gratuitous and pointless evils are the kinds of pain and sufferings that requires iwad has been conducted. Considering the interpretation given by Madden and Hare to the concept of gratuitous evil in their arguments, it led to the conclusion that these evils can be identified as the pain and suffering that necessitate compensation (iwad). This conclusion arises from the fact that the pain and suffering, which are the focus of compensation, are likewise involuntary and undeserved. However, it was challenging to delve deeply into the subject, as no specific examples of gratuitous evils were provided by Madden and Hare. On the other hand, Rowe has provided specific examples in his assessment of pointless evils. Upon careful examination of his illustrations, it becomes evident that these instances of evil can indeed be classified as pain and suffering that warrant compensation (iwad). Based on all this, it can be argued that gratuitous evil and pointless can be found in our world and that these are compatible with the existence of God.

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## Theory of Iwad as an Explanation for Gratuitous and Pointless Evils

**İbrahim Yıldız**

Muş Alparslan Üni.,  
İlahiyat Fakültesi,  
Din Felsefesi Ana Bilim Dalı

i.yildiz@alparslan.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3139-2169>

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