

THE LIMITS OF EVIDENTIAL ARGUMENT FROM EVIL¹

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Delilci Kötülük Argümanının Sınırları

Kötülük probleminin monoteist Tanrı inancına karşı önemli bir meydan okuma olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Dünyada kötülüğün varlığının, Tanrı'nın yokluğunu isbatlamasa da, Tanrı'nın var olmadığı inancı için aklî bir dayanak tesis ettiği kabul edilir. Kötülüğün varlığından hareketle Tanrı'nın var olmadığını göstermek üzere William Rowe'un kurduğu argüman önemli tartışmaları tetiklemiştir. Rowe, daha büyük bir iyiliğe hizmet ettiği veya engellenmesi durumunda daha büyük bir iyiliğin kaybedileceğini veya daha beter bir kötülüğün meydana gelmesine neden olunacağını göremediğimiz, maksatsız, kötülüklerin var olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Varlığını meşrulaştıracak herhangi bir iyiye hizmet ettiği görülmeyen bu örneklerin Tanrı'nın varlığını reddetmeyi makul kıldığını iddia etmiştir. Bu makalede ben, William Rowe'un kurduğu bu argümanı ve Stephen J. Wykstra'nın bu argümana getirdiği idrak sınırlaması itirazını ele alacağım. Ne gibi bir iyiliğe hizmet ettiğini göremediğimiz kötülüklerin doğrudan doğruya Tanrı'nın varlığı aleyhine bir delil oluşturmayacağını, her iki filozofun yaklaşımını tahlil ederek göstermeye çalışacağım. Maksadını doğrudan doğruya göremediğimiz kötülükler karşısında bir kimsenin geliştireceği tavrın önemli ölçüde o kişinin önceden sahip olduğu dünya görüşü tarafından yönlendirildiğini iddia edeceğim. Kur'an'da anlatılan Eyüp peygamberin kıssasında, Eyüp peygamberin yaşadığı sıkıntılar karşısında gösterdiği tavrın da böyle bir bakışı desteklediğini göstermeye çalışacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Willam Rowe, Stephen J. Wykstra, Problem of Evil, the Story of Prophet Job, Evidential Argument.

It is well established that the existence of evil constitutes a serious challenge to monotheistic religions. If there is an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good God, how can the existence of terrible events and suffering in this world be explained? Obviously, the rational justification of any religion or worldview is closely connected to its success in explaining not only the existence of things, and the course of natural events at a broader philosophical level, but also in helping human beings make sense of what befalls human beings as well as any other animate creatures. Deliberations concerning the existence of evil, i.e., suffering as a harmful consequence either resulting from the "wicked actions of moral agents," or "from the operations of impersonal natural forces"² may perhaps be considered as part of this effort to make sense of the course of events in the world. The existence of evil is generally considered as the strongest foundation for any of the

¹ My discussion regarding the story of prophet Job in this paper is a revised version of my paper presented in the workshop, "Theology and Rationality VI: Job as a Challenge for the Rationality of Religion in Judaism, Christianity and Islam," International Workshop, Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften, Bad Homburg, at Goethe-University Frankfurt, October 8-10, 2018.

² Philip L. Quinn, "Philosophy of Religion," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 699.

arguments against the existence of God. These arguments are either constructed in such a way that demonstrates that there is a logical incoherence between the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good God, as conceived in the theistic terms, and the existence of evil.³ Or they are constructed as evidential arguments, intending to show that the existence of evil indicates the non-existence of an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good God. These arguments are intended to illustrate clearly that monotheistic conception of God cannot properly explain the course of events in the world.

It seems that we may identify two aspects with regard to the problem of evil. Firstly, there is suffering or evil as a fact. The world as a whole is not quite a place of enjoyment. Although each person has his/her specific conditions of existence, there seems to be no perfect situation that may last. Furthermore, suffering and being subject to terrible conditions do not have much to do with the moral conditions of people. That is, good and innocent human beings are not exempt from suffering. To the contrary, they seem to suffer more at times and many times due to the decisions and actions of other people who may turn out to be quite atrocious. In this context one may call to mind any war, and consider the well-being of those who decide to make war and those who are affected by the war. Secondly, we may identify interpretation of evil as something distinct from evil as a fact. How should one interpret or understand the fact of evil or suffering? Can the existence of evil be an independent ground by which one decides about the existence of God? That is, does the existence of evil guide and regulate one's conception of God and whether one believes in the existence of God or not. Or is it the other way around. That is, one's previous belief in the existence of God or his rejection thereof guide and regulate one's interpretation and understanding of evil.

In this paper, I will focus on the use of the existence of evil as an evidence against the existence of God, and argue that the existence of evil does not by itself function as evidence against the existence of God. It could be maintained that it may function as evidence against the existence of God only as it is interpreted within the framework of one's broader metaphysical outlook, or worldview. By metaphysical outlook, I mean one's broader assumptions about the nature of reality, the place of the human being in the universe and the nature and limits of human knowledge. The existence of evil does not serve as an independent ground to reject the existence of God, but functions only within one's own metaphysical outlook. If we keep in mind that the existence of evil as a fact and the interpretation of evil are not identical; suffering of animals and human beings therefore seem not to immediately be reducible to bad intention or lack of goodness of the Creator. When it comes to making sense of what we experience, it seems that there is more than what the sense-perceptual data and immediate psychological reactions indicate. We relate what we experience in any particular case to our conception of the world, or worldview, in the general sense. This conception of the world, or worldview, includes metaphysical, or ontological, presuppositions about human beings, their life and the world in which we are located.

To demonstrate this, first, I will consider the philosophical exchange between William Rowe

³ See for the formulation of the argument from evil as logical problem J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," in *Problem of Evil*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 25-37. This article was first published in *Mind*, 64 (1955), pp. 200-12.

and Stephen Wykstra regarding the evidential argument based on evil. I am not going to examine all their writings, but a selection of their articles that sufficiently represent their position. These articles exemplify how the same data is interpreted by these two philosophers with different metaphysical outlooks. Rowe wrote an article whereby he formulated an evidential argument based on the existence of evil against the existence of God.⁴ Beside other responses, Stephen J. Wykstra examined Rowe's argument in an article⁵ and they exchanged responses.⁶ Trying to relate their perspective to each other, I am first going to introduce Rowe's argument, and then explore how they responded to each other's perspective. Thus, we will see the contrast between their metaphysical outlooks and how their respective metaphysical outlooks affect the way they interpret the existence of evil as a fact. Rowe's perspective seems to assume close correspondence between the scope and depth of divine knowledge and human knowledge, while Wykstra reminds us that God is transcendent, and human knowledge about what happens in the world is limited. So there is no neutral perspective to consider evil. The existence of evil is interpreted within the boundaries of a metaphysical background.

Secondly, I will examine the story of prophet Job, and argue that prophet Job's reaction vis à vis what he experienced can be explained with reference to his metaphysical outlook, i.e., his conception of God and the place of human beings in the world. I will focus on the version of the story of Job as it is recorded in the Qur'an and discuss how it may be understood with regard to the problem of evil as a philosophical problem. In my discussion, I will take into account the attitude of medieval Muslim commentators of the Qur'an. The general tendency among Muslim commentators is to interpret this story as an example of the broader Qur'anic teaching about the meaning of human life on earth. Human beings are given pleasant things as well as unpleasant things that allow people to suffer. As such, human life on earth is a period of test or examination. This is a test in order to see what they may make out of it. How may a person react against cases of evil, if one cannot identify the good that justifies the occurrence of any given case of suffering? The story of Job provides an example case that may suit Wykstra's approach to the interpretation of cases of suffering.

1. PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE LIMITS OF EVIL AS EVIDENCE

William Rowe formulated an evidential argument to show that God does not exist. His formulation of the argument triggered a lot of discussion. His argument includes one factual and one conceptual premise. Based on these two premises Rowe concluded that God does not exist.

⁴ William L. Rowe, 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism', first published in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 16 (1979), pp. 335-41. This article was included in many editions on this topic. The one I am going to use is included in a book edited by Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams. William Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," in *Problem of Evil*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.127-128.

⁵ Stephen J. Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," in *Problem of Evil*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.138-160.

⁶ William Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra," in Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams, *Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.161-167 and Stephen John Wykstra, "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil," in *Evidential Argument from Evil*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder (Indiana University Press, 1996), p.126-150.

Here is the argument:

(1) There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.

(2) An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.

Therefore,

(3) There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being.⁷

If one accepts the premises in Rowe's argument, one must accept the conclusion, since it follows on from the premises. Are the premises true? The second premise may be considered as spelling out the theistic, or monotheistic, conception of God. God is conceived in theism as omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good. These three properties are considered to imply the second premise.⁸ The crucial premise of the argument seems to be the first premise. Are there instances of intense suffering for which there is no good that justifies God's allowance of them? Rowe's discussion includes three elements to show that (1) is a rationally acceptable belief.⁹ One of them is the waste amount of human and animal suffering that appears to be pointless. He gives the example of a fawn suffering because of a fire in a forest and asks if there can be any reason justifying the fawn's suffering:

Suppose in some distant forest lightning strikes a dead tree, resulting in a forest fire. In the fire a fawn is trapped, horribly burnt, and lies in terrible agony for several days before death relieves its suffering. So far as we can see, the fawn's intense suffering is pointless. For there does not appear to be any greater good such that the prevention of the fawn's suffering would require either the loss of that good or the occurrence of an evil equally bad or worse.¹⁰

Even if we may be erroneous in assessing a definite case of suffering, whether it has any point justifying God's allowance to it, we cannot be wrong with regards to all such cases of suffering. The second element imbedded in Rowe's discussion is that we can detect the good that exists, or that may come to exist, in a given situation, because there must be an intimate connection between the suffering and the good that justifies God allowing it.¹¹ The third element is implicit. It is the assumption that given the conception of an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God, we can judge what kind of situations would be allowed by such a God, as conceived in theism. At first sight, all three elements in Rowe's support to accept (1) appears quite relevant and acceptable elements in this regard. In order to see the import and value of these three elements, let's now have

⁷ Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," pp.127-128.

⁸ Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.142. This implication may be inferred only if we assume that theological language is univocal. That is, only if we predicate terms, which we predicate in the literal sense, of God and creation univocally. In modern literature on divine perfection properties and theological language, this seems to be the common assumption.

⁹ Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," p.129-132.

¹⁰ Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," p.129.

¹¹ Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," pp.131-132, footnote number 5.

a look at Stephen J. Wykstra's examination of Rowe's argument.

Stephen J. Wykstra responded to William Rowe's argument and provided a detailed examination of his argument. Wykstra granted the validity of Rowe's argument and the truth of the second premise. However, he objected to the first premise and debated whether there are good reasons to accept the first premise. Wykstra states that there are two parts of (1). While the first part simply acknowledges the existence of cases of suffering, the second part states that at least one of these instances provide no adequate and good justification for why God allows it.¹² To support the second part of (1) Rowe examines the case of the fawn, which is burnt by the fire in the forest, and highlights how we reach the pointlessness of an individual case of suffering on the basis of appearances. Rowe argued that fawn's suffering is 'apparently pointless'. We can make such a judgement because, "there does not appear to be any greater good such that the prevention of the fawn's suffering would require either the loss of that good or the occurrence of an evil equally bad or worse."¹³ Wykstra states that for Rowe, even if we may be mistaken in any given case in deciding if it is pointless or not, given the fact that there is large amount of cases of suffering, at least some of them must be pointless. Wykstra reminds us of Rowe's expectation about the power of his argument. Rowe thinks that his argument on the basis of multitude of cases of suffering, which appear pointless, does not prove the truth of the (1), but it makes it reasonable to accept (1).¹⁴ If it is reasonable to accept (1) since the premise two (2) was already granted, the conclusion must be accepted.

Wykstra underlines the important part played by 'appearance' or 'to appear' in Rowe's argument. Based on the fact that certain cases of suffering are 'apparently pointless,' Rowe concludes that certain cases of suffering are pointless. The fact that certain cases of suffering are considered to be pointless is based on the fact that we cannot identify reasons justifying why God allows those cases of suffering. There seems to be no disagreement about the fact that we are not able to identify the good that justifies God's allowance of certain cases of suffering. However, moving from that 'the case of suffering (a) is apparently pointless' to that '(a) is in fact pointless' is the issue of debate.

The question is whether a person is justified in making a judgement about reality on the basis of an "appearance," i.e., how things appear to him. Richard Swinburne's principle of credulity may be appealed to at this point. Although Swinburne applies his principle of credulity to only positive propositions, Wykstra does not see any difficulty in applying them to negatively formulated statements.¹⁵ On his interpretation, if some situation "s" appears as "-p," then one can take that it is "-p," as long as there is no reason to doubt about the appearance-data, just as its positive

¹² Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.142.

¹³ Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," p.130.

¹⁴ Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.143.

¹⁵ Wykstra provided detailed discussion about the applicability of Swinburne's principle of credulity. In this context, I do not need to go into details of these discussions. For Wykstra's discussions, see Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," pp.150-154. See also Wykstra's response to Rowe's response. Stephen John Wykstra, "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil," in *Evidential Argument from Evil*, p.128.

formulation requires. If one applies Swinburne's principle of credulity to cases of suffering, one could say: a situation of suffering "s" appears to a person "p" that 'it does not have any reason justifying for God to allow it,' then 's does not have any reason justifying God's allowing it.' Thus the simple application of the principle of credulity, to negatively formulated propositions as it is accepted by Wykstra, one may get the impression that Rowe's argument is successful.

Although Swinburne's principle of credulity is closely connected to the "sensory epistemic sense of appearing" "i.e., belief-inclinations triggered by 'sensory experiences'," ¹⁶ Wykstra wants to define a different epistemic sense of appearance that might be applicable to Rowe's example of a fawn's suffering. Wykstra states that

this seems to be the way Rowe uses the term: in appealing to the fawn's suffering he is, after all, appealing not to a 'sensory experience', but to a 'cognized situation' ... which he takes to be un-controversially instantiated in the real world, and which produces (via a range of other considerations) a strong inclination to believe a proposition about such suffering (viz., that it serves no God-justifying purpose).¹⁷

Wykstra argues that "appears-claims" of the cognitive-epistemic sense are subject to 'the Condition of Reasonable Epistemic Access', (CORNEA), just as sensory-epistemic "appears-claims" are. In order for a person to move from the appearance to make a claim about reality, one has to meet the CORNEA. At this point, we should ask if we can grant (1), on the bases of certain cases of evil that are apparently pointless, since we cannot identify the reason that may justify why God allows them. Wykstra questions if the fact that we cannot identify the reasons why God allows certain cases of suffering requires that those cases are in fact pointless. If we can make such a move, then together with the second premise, one would conclude that there does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God. Wykstra argues that the principle of credulity include necessary conditions but is not sufficient to justify inferences from the appearance to judgement about the real situation.¹⁸ Swinburne's principle of credulity seems to take into account (a) a person's inclination to believe that something is the case, and (b) the sense-perceptual data causing this person to have such an inclination.¹⁹ To these two conditions of the principle of credulity, Wykstra argues, CORNEA must be added. In order for one to be justified in making a judgement about the real situation, on the basis of appearance, one must also have reasonable epistemic access to the case in question. If a person "p" does not have reasonable epistemic access regarding a certain situation, one cannot accept a belief regarding that situation, even if one has certain inclination and certain sense-perceptual data causing this person to have such an inclination. A good example might be Wykstra's example of a doctor, who is looking at "a used hypodermic needle and seeing no germs" on it.²⁰ Looking at the needle the doctor may first infer "that the needle

¹⁶ Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.154.

¹⁷ Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.154.

¹⁸ Wykstra produced counter-examples to show that principle of credulity is not sufficient to accept the epistemic value of appearances. See see Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," pp.151-152.

¹⁹ Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 295.

²⁰ Wykstra, "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil," p.128.

does not appear to have any germs on it (i.e., that it appears germless), and from this, that it does not have any germs on it (that it is germless)."²¹

Having established that in order for a person to be justified in accepting a belief on the basis of "appearance" one has to meet CORNEA, Wykstra applies CORNEA to Rowe's case and argues that Rowe's argument for believing (1), which is based on the appearance claim, does not satisfy it.²² To justify his claim, Wykstra emphasized the huge distance between our knowledge and God's purposes, so that we cannot comprehend the good that justifies God allowing the cases of suffering that may not be grasped by us. He gave the example of an infant and his parents. Just as we do not expect an infant to understand all what his parents do, e.g., why his parents give him certain medicine, we do not expect to have reasonable epistemic access to identify God's purposes to allow instances of suffering. Wykstra does not categorically deny that we can never know God's reasons justifying His permission to cases of suffering. It is possible that one may understand reasons justifying God's allowance to suffering. But Wykstra objects that one can never be sure that one may meet CORNEA, i.e., one has reasonable epistemic access in any given case.²³

The conception of God is at the center of the debate between Rowe and Wykstra. Can we apprehend God's purposes or not? Rowe's argument requires that we can apprehend God's purposes. Just as we can understand the natural causal nexus which displays intimate causal connection between causes and effects. The good that justifies God's allowing instances of evil, similarly, would be intimately connected to the relevant cases of suffering. Hence, we should be able to identify them. As opposed to Rowe's position, Wykstra emphasizes the limits of human knowledge with regard to God's plans, by arguing that in order to identify the good justifying God's allowance to instances of suffering, we have to have reasonable epistemic access to God's purposes, ultimately to God's knowledge. In a sense, we must know what God knows. From Wykstra's perspective, even if we may happen to understand God's reasons, in a given case, we cannot claim to know them.

In response to Wykstra's CORNEA condition, Rowe argues that his argument properly meets Wykstra's condition of CORNEA. For him, "If someone claims that it appears that S is not P, that person is entitled to that claim only if she has no reason to think that if S were P things would strike us pretty much the same."²⁴ Rowe grants that God can comprehend the good that falls beyond our understanding. This good is, however, not realized good, but he argues that when some good is realized, and which is known by God, we would not be ignorant of it. Rowe claims that the disparity between God's vision and human vision, is "no reason whatever" to conclude that God's purposes in allowing cases of suffering may not be understood by human beings.²⁵ Rowe argues that the gap between the reasons justifying God's allowance of suffering, and the human knowledge of them may not be accepted on the basis of the restrictive standard theism. Rowe makes a distinction

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," pp.155-156.

²³ Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: on Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance'," p.156.

²⁴ Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra," p.163.

²⁵ Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra," pp.164-165.

between restrictive standard theism (RST) and expanded standard theism (EST). A theist in the narrow sense, i.e., RST, is “someone who believes in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, supremely good being who created the world.”²⁶ When specific beliefs of a monotheistic religion, e.g., Christianity or Islam, is added to the RST, then we have EST. For Rowe a specific religion may teach something whereby we will understand the good that justifies God’s permission of allowing suffering “at the end of the world,”²⁷ but this does not follow from standard theism.

There seems to be two interrelated issues between Rowe’s and Wykstra’s arguments: (1) Whether Rowe’s argument meets CORNEA, and (2) whether Wykstra’s position is based on RST or EST. And if it is based on EST, whether there could be a big difference between the two, so that Rowe’s argument would be successful and Wykstra’s response is not. Obviously Rowe grants that CORNEA is a reasonable epistemic criterion in justifying judgements on the basis of an “appearance.” And he claims that his argument meets this criterion. But he objects to Wykstra’s objection that Rowe’s argument does not meet CORNEA and argues that it is based upon a confusion between RST and EST. Thus, Rowe thinks that his argument is successful in showing that there does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God.

In his article responding to Rowe’s clarification of his position, Wykstra states that Rowe incorrectly depicts CORNEA. According to CORNEA, “we can argue from “we see no X” to “there is no X” only when X has “reasonable seeability,” that is, if we *can reasonably expect* to see”²⁸ it, when it existed. Thus one may ask: can we grant that the good that justifies God allowing evil have the needed “seeability.”²⁹ Wykstra responds to this question negatively. To show why Rowe’s claim that his argument meets CORNEA is false, Wykstra explains the structure of CORNEA. He argues that CORNEA is a strategy to evaluate “appears” claims and its application has three stages. The stage A is the postulation of CORNEA itself, “a situation of seeing no X justifies one’s claiming “it appears there is no X” only if it is reasonable for one to believe that X is something to which we would likely have “epistemic access” in the situation.”³⁰ Thus CORNEA requires for Rowe “that Rowe’s noseem situation justifies his appears claim only if *it is reasonable for Rowe to believe that a God-justifying good for the fawn’s suffering would likely be “seeable.”*”³¹ Wykstra calls this “the reasonable seeability requirement.” The stage B concerns whether one can be sure that CORNEA is met. This is called the adjunct principle. It basically says that if one has good reasons to think that we cannot see the good that justifies God’s allowing cases of evil, then it will not be reasonable to accept that one can be sure to meet CORNEA—unless one defeats those reasons. As the stage C of the application of CORNEA, Wykstra emphasizes that CORNEA is not likely to be met because of the disparity between God’s vision and ours.³²

²⁶ Rowe, “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,” p.126; see also Rowe, “Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra,” p.165.

²⁷ Rowe, “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,” p.165.

²⁸ Wykstra, “Rowe’s Noseem Arguments from Evil,” p.126.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Wykstra, “Rowe’s Noseem Arguments from Evil,” p.128.

³¹ Wykstra *idem*, 129. Wykstra calls Rowe’s argument a “noseem argument” with reference to the way people talk about the tiny flies with a painful bite. They called it “noseem” because although they feel the pain because of the bite of those tiny flies, they do not see them. Wykstra, “Rowe’s Noseem Arguments from Evil,” p.126.

³² Wykstra *idem*, 129.

Wykstra argues that neither the old formulation, nor the newer one, the inductive formulation, of Rowe's argument meets CORNEA.³³ Rowe's argument is that the fact that we do not see a good justifying why God allows for cases of suffering is sufficient to conclude that there is no good justifying why God allows those cases of suffering. However, for Wykstra we can move from (P) 'we see no good justifying God's allowance of an instance of suffering' to (Q) 'there is no good justifying God's allowance of an instance of suffering,' only if the proponent of such an argument "has reason to believe that *if Q were not true, P would likely be different than it is.*"³⁴ For Wykstra this is closer to what CORNEA requires. Instead of this, Rowe interprets CORNEA's requirement as following: we can move from (P) to (Q) only if the proponent of the argument "lacks reason to believe that *if Q were not true, P would likely be the same as it is.*"³⁵ For Wykstra, CORNEA puts the burden of responsibility on the person who makes the claim. That is, one may make an inference on the basis of appearance only if one has reasonable epistemic access. Thus, one may say that there are cases of evil which lack any good that justifies God's allowance of them, on the basis of the fact that they appear so, only if one has reasonable epistemic access to God's knowledge and will to allow those cases of evil. Thus for Wykstra, in his treatment of the issue, Rowe seems to misrepresent CORNEA, and does not fulfill the responsibility required by it.³⁶

Given the fact that there are cases of evil, for which we cannot identify any good explaining why God allows them, does one have to infer that there is no God? One important question at this point concerns the power of the existence of evil. Does the fact that there are cases of evil for which we cannot identify the good justifying God's allowing them require one to move from the state of believing in God to simply rejecting the existence of God? Wykstra acknowledges that the appearance of many cases of evil may affect a person. The feeling that one would get if one were able to identify the good behind God's allowing cases of evil in the world will be different from the feeling one gets when one is not able to see the reasons justifying God's allowing cases of evil in the world. Wykstra questions, if this difference would make an important difference, in the sense that it would be reasonable to change one's position regarding the existence of God. Wykstra distinguishes three major positions in this regard: "the state of square belief (that God exists), the state of "nonbelief" (i.e., of being "agnostic" on the matter); and the state of square "disbelief" (i.e., of squarely believing that God does not exist)."³⁷ Wykstra grants that one may explain the existence of evil without reference to an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God at first sight. The first option that comes to mind is naturalism. However, the existence of evil, which we cannot identify the good it serves, does not require one to move from the state of square belief to the state of square disbelief.³⁸

Another question that needs addressing in this regard concerns the replacement of RST with EST. Does Wykstra replace RST with EST? And if he does, is there a big difference between these

³³ Wykstra, "Rowe's Noseum Arguments from Evil," pp.127-130.

³⁴ Wykstra, *idem*, p.133.

³⁵ Wykstra, *idem*, p.133. See also, Rowe, Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra," pp. 163-164.

³⁶ Wykstra discusses further how Rowe misportays CORNEA by discussing under what conditions his argument could be defeated and if it could be acceptable. See *idem*, pp.133-136. To follow the details of his discussion falls beyond the scope of this article.

³⁷ Wykstra, *idem*, pp.130-131.

³⁸ Wykstra, *idem*, pp. 145-147.

two conceptions of God regarding the scope of human knowledge about God and creation? Rowe's attempt to show that Wykstra replaces RST in Rowe's argument with EST may be considered as part of his metaphysical outlook. That is, it reflects his conception of God in relation to his conception of man. While Rowe seems to emphasize a close match between the divine knowledge and human knowledge with regard to scope and depth, Wykstra wants to affirm the limited character of human knowledge about God's reasons to allow instances of evil in the world. Rowe obviously grants that we do not have access to divine knowledge in Himself. But he argues that when God created something, we must be able to have full understanding of what happened and what will happen. As opposed to this, Wykstra acknowledges that our knowledge of any actually existing situation may also be limited, in the sense that we may not be able to identify the good that justifies God's allowing that case of suffering. Rowe thinks that his position regarding the scope and depth human knowledge in relation to the divine knowledge conforms to the conception of God in RST. Thus he argues that Wykstra's position does not conform to RST. For him, Wykstra replaces RST with EST by his claim that we do not know the good that justifies God's allowing to certain cases of suffering.

To clarify if Rowe's rejection of Wykstra's argument is successful we may consider two options. The first option is, (1) to reject that the conception of God in RST and EST are different enough. This would justify Wykstra's objection saying that Rowe's argument does not meet CORNEA. The second option is (2) to accept that the conception of God in RST and EST are different enough such that Rowe's argument in fact meets CORNEA. The first option seems to be reasonable, in the sense that the conception of God in RST and EST are in conformity such that RST insures that we cannot know everything that God knows, just as EST insures it. That is, it requires that we cannot claim to comprehend all kinds of good that is intended by God who is perfectly good. It seems difficult to accept Rowe's interpretation of Wykstra's position in this regard. Hence Rowe's interpretation of the difference between the conception of God in RST and EST such that it makes an important difference regarding the problem of evil may be read as revealing his implicit acknowledgement that the way one understands the existence of evil depends on one's conception of God and man. One may say that Rowe's strategy violates the divine transcendence, i.e., divine knowledge transcends human knowledge in scope and depth. Obviously, Rowe may claim that the difference between divine omniscience and limited human knowledge does not justify this kind of transcendence. Accordingly, without reference to the EST, the RST would not allow the kind of epistemic distance between what God knows and does, and the human knowledge about it.

For the sake of argument, one may grant Rowe's claim that his argument is successful in the sense that the existence of pointless evil shows the non-existence of God as depicted in RST. This leads us to the second option: it is (2) to accept that the conception of God in RST and EST are different enough such that Rowe's argument in fact meets CORNEA. However, Rowe's claim 'that Wykstra's conception of God may be found in the version of EST, but it is not the conception of God that is granted by RST' does not seem to be acceptable, because there does not seem to exist theists who simply accept RST. In order to make sense of William Rowe's argument, it may be a good idea to ask if there are people who are simply theists, who do not follow any religion. Such people could be simply accepting RST clearly distancing themselves from any form of EST, as understood by Rowe. Such a conception of God would require a close connection to human knowledge in such a way that we should be able to know all the good intended by God in allowing cases of suffering in the world.

If there were such people, then one could say that Rowe was arguing against them, and his argument might be successful. However, if we carefully exclude deists, can we say that there are simply theists? The simple answer is no. If there is not any person, or there are not many people claiming simply to be theists, then Rowe's argument would not make much sense. It simply would be a thought experiment, but not an argument targeting core belief of monotheistic religions, which share the belief that there is an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God.

One may ask how we should decide which conception of God is the proper conception of God that needs to be taken into account in these discussions, and if God's transcendence is violated or not. Rowe's and Wykstra's positions in understanding the divine transcendence and the limits of human knowledge in this regard seem to reflect their metaphysical outlook. Rowe's definition of RST may be taken to imply that it is the common core of divergent versions of EST, e.g., Christian or Islamic versions. It would imply a close connection between RST and EST. If there is a close connection between RST and EST, it would be such that any argument showing that RST is false would also be showing that EST is also false. Then it would make sense, for Rowe to argue that RST is false. However, if there is such a close connection between RST and EST, then following Wykstra, one may argue that we cannot claim to have reasonable epistemic access to the good that justifies God to allow suffering. Hence Rowe's argument does not meet CORNEA. Thus their respective positions seem to be closely connected to their metaphysical outlook. Rowe's interpretation of the existence of evil as reasonable evidence against the existence of God reflects his conception of the transcendence of God and the scope and depth of human knowledge about God. Similarly, Wykstra's position reflects his conception of God and human knowledge about Him.

2. THE STORY OF JOB AS PRESENTED IN THE QUR'AN

The story of Job provides an example indicating how one's metaphysical outlook governs one's perception of evil. The simple fact that the story is recorded in the holy books eliminates certain strategies that may be used to defend monotheistic religions worldviews. In the Qur'an, it is confirmed that Job is a prophet and that he suffered. Given the story of Job, from a theistic perspective, one cannot deny the existence of evil and suffering. Since prophet Job is recognized as a prophet in Islam, it would be incorrect to think that he did something wrong to deserve the amount of suffering he went through, since prophets in Islam are deemed innocent and protected from sin. Thus, it seems quite difficult to explain all kinds of suffering by arguing that God makes people suffer as a punishment for their wrongdoing.³⁹ The story of prophet Job has two aspects. One of them concerns identification of the good for which God allowed prophet Job to suffer. The second aspect is the reaction of prophet Job to the suffering that he experienced.

In the Qur'an, the information about prophet Job is quite limited. He is explicitly referred to eight times. These references to prophet Job may be divided into two groups. (a) there are verses where prophet Job is identified as a prophet among other prophets. In two verses in the Qur'an, he

³⁹ My discussion here is based on the story of prophet Job as related in the Qur'an. It may not quite fit the image of prophet Job, as depicted in the Old Testament. Generally speaking, prophet Job's attitude in the Qur'an is to submit God and ask for help to remove his suffering. In the Old Testament version of the story, prophet Job asks why God make him suffer, even though he is a good man. There are statements implying that Job claims that God treats him unfairly. See, The Book of Job, especially, 9: 15-20, 28-35; 21: 6-15; 38: 2-20 and 40: 6-14.

is simply mentioned among other prophets, al-Nisā' 4: 163 al-An'ām 6: 84.⁴⁰ (b) there are also verses that specifically state the conditions that distinguish him from other prophets. In six verses, one may find the reference to the fact that prophet Job suffered. So let's have a closer look at the verses where his suffering is related.

In the chapter, "The Prophets" (al-Anbiyā' 21) in the Qur'an there are two verses giving very limited information about what happened to the prophet Job:

83 And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord, "Truly distress has seized me, but You are the most merciful of those that are merciful." **84** So We listened to him: We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his people to him, and doubled their number, as a grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who serve Us. (al-Anbiyā' 21: 83-84).

The information given in the verse al-Anbiyā' 21: 83 is only that "distress seized" prophet Job, and as a believer he prayed to God to help him with the distress. In the following verse, more information is given about the situation of the prophet Job. It is stated that God removed his distress, and restored him to his people (*a'taynāhu ahlahu*), and doubled their number. It is implied that prophet Job somehow also lost the people affiliated with him. In any case we do not have detailed information about what happened exactly. God responded to the prayer of prophet Job and restored to him what he had lost. God did not only give equal amount of what he lost, but gave him the double amount. All this is considered to be indicating God's grace. The whole story is meant to teach a lesson for those who serve God. Therefore, those who believe in and worship God may benefit from the remembrance of the story. In the following verse, with the addition of some other prophets, prophet Job seems to be referred to be one of the constantly patient (*sābir*) men. (al-Anbiyā' 21: 85).

Now let us have look at the second group of the Qur'anic verses, where the specific properties of prophet Job are stated:

41 Commemorate Our servant Job. Behold he cried to his Lord: "The evil one has afflicted me with distress and suffering!" **42** (The command was given:) "Strike with your foot: here is (water) wherein to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink." **43** And We gave him (back) his people, and doubled their number, as a grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who have understanding. **44** "And take in your hand a little grass, and strike therewith: and break not (your oath)." Truly We found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent in Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)! (Şād 38: 41-44).

In these verses, we find more detailed information about what happened to prophet Job. Prophet Job pleaded to God by stating how he felt. He identified the cause of what happened to

⁴⁰ Here are the two verses in the Qur'an, where it is simply confirmed that Job is a prophet among other prophets. al-Nisā' 4: 163 "We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him; We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismā'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms." al-An'ām 6: 84: "We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) we guided; and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron; thus do We reward those who do good." English translation of the Qur'anic verses are taken from *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, trans. A. Yusuf 'Alī (Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, 2009) with minor stylistic edition.

him. It is the Devil (*Shaytān*) that caused him distress (*nuṣb*) and suffering (*‘adhāb*). God responded to prophet Job, instructing how he may be cured of his diseases. Furthermore, God gave him back his people (*ahlahu*) and additional people. That God responded to the plea of prophet Job is termed as a grace of God. It is also a reminder or a guideline for those “who have understanding.” It is confirmed that prophet Job took an oath and was instructed how he should uphold his oath. At the end, it is again confirmed that prophet Job is “full of patience and constancy.” And he kept turning to God, in the sense that he did not take what happened to him as a means to object to God, but he always asked God for help to alleviate his suffering.

The main points of the story as related in the Qur’an may be summarized as follows: (1) prophet Job feels distressed and suffering. (2) He prays to God stating how he feels. (3) he identifies the cause of his suffering to be the Devil, or Satan. (4) God responds to him and instructs how he may be cured, God removes his distress and restores what he has lost (i.e., health, properties and people/ family members). (5) All this indicates God’s grace, (6) this whole story teaches a lesson, it is a reminder, for those who have understanding, i.e., those who believe in and worship God. (7) The way Job handles what happens to him indicates that Job is a patient person, and an excellent servant since he always turns to God. His turning towards God may either be understood as thanking God for what has been given to him or to ask help against what befalls him.

The attitude of prophet Job in reaction to what happened to him was praised and considered as an example for other people. Why did prophet Job complain? One should distinguish different points that may be included in this phrase. The complaint may be taken with reference to what happened to prophet Job (i.e., his suffering). It may also be taken to refer to why he was a subject of suffering. With regard to the first point, commentators of the Qur’an came up with different answers to this question. Prophet Job might have complained either (1) because he lost his property, family and health, or (2) because he was cast outside of the society, or (3) because his friends got apprehensive, believing that God was punishing prophet Job for sinning, or (4) because his wife had to cut and sell her hair braid to bring food for prophet Job, or (5) because Satan appeared to his wife and tried to manipulate her in order to mislead prophet Job so he would rise up against God, or, (6) because his wife left him after a dispute with him, and prophet Job was so alone that he cried out asking for God’s help.⁴¹

With regard to the second point, one may wonder if prophet Job was complaining, because he was not able to identify the good that justified God to allow him to suffer. The fact that he was praised in the story indicates that his complaint was not a rebellious act or rejection of the existence of God, but because he could not see the reason why God allowed him to suffer. General tendency

⁴¹ Commentators of the *Qur’an* tried to explain, what prophet Job meant exactly when he complained about what happened to him. They tried to clarify the meaning of terms, like “*durr*,” and “*nusb*.” After clarification of what exactly is said linguistically, they tried to clarify what is going on, by certain reports and stories about prophet Job. These reports are sometimes identified as prophetic traditions, and some scholars clearly referred to foreign, or Jewish, origin of these reports. To have a sense of how these verses were interpreted by commentators of the Qur’an, see for example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr = Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol.22 (Beyrut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1990/1411), pp. 176-182; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 26, pp.184-188; Muḥammad Tāhīr b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Tūnusī Ibn ‘Ashūr, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al- Tanwīr*, vol. 17 [no publisher info, no date], pp. 125-128; and Muḥammad Tāhīr b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Tūnusī Ibn ‘Ashūr, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al- Tanwīr*, vol. 23 [no publisher info, no date], , pp.268-275.

among the commentators is to confirm that Job's complain was not rebellious because he lost his property or health, and could not see why all this happened to him. It was rather because of the misgivings of Satan. That is, he feared to have a wrong attitude towards God, due to Satan's misgiving. In this context, they also discussed whether Jobs' complaint about his situation is justified given the fact that Job was a prophet, an upright person who had a closer relation to God compared to other people. It is emphasized that Job complained about Satan and his misgivings, but he did not complain about God and what happened because of God's creation. Prophet Job's reaction to his suffering was not to rebel against God. To the contrary he submitted to God, but he was afraid that he could develop a wrong attitude because of the misgivings of Satan.

If prophet Job did not complain because he suffered, can we instead maintain that it was because prophet Job was able to identify the good that justified God letting him suffer? The answer is no. The Qur'anic version of the story does not give details, but obviously he was a prophet, a good person, but he lost his wealth, his health and people associated with him. And there appears to be no good justifying this. This is confirmed by prophet Job's fear of being deceived by Satan. Although he could not identify why all this happened to him, prophet Job did not conclude, "since there appears to be no good served by what I have experienced" then there is not an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God. Scholars tend to understand from this account that prophet Job "complained" not because of what actually happened, i.e., loss of property, family members and health, but because of the anxiety as a result of misgivings of the Satan. Clearly, certain injurious things happened to Job. In the context of what happened to prophet Job, he could either submit to God or rebel against God. Thus, medieval Muslim scholars, interpreted Job's complaint as simply asking God's help against the misgivings of Satan, not against the suffering *per se*. It is confirmed by a report that prophet Job told his wife that God provided them with good conditions for 80 years. Thus, just as God's provision of them with good conditions is acceptable, when God does not provide them with good conditions, it must be acceptable as well.⁴² In all cases there is some good that justifies God to do whatever he does, even though one is not able to identify it.

This may be related to Wykstra's argument. In line with Wykstra's argument one can say that prophet Job refrained from claiming to know God's reasons for allowing his suffering. He wants to submit to God, no matter how he suffers. He is simply afraid of developing a wrong reaction due to the misgiving of Satan. As a whole, his story is considered to teach a lesson, and to be a reminder of the limits of the human condition. This seems conceivable since prophet Job accepted that he may not know God's purposes in allowing his suffering. He could not identify the good justifying God's permission of his suffering. In this case it may be beneficial to consider the story of prophet Job in comparison with the stories of other prophets, i.e., Solomon and David. In the case of prophets Solomon and David, they seem to have well-satisfactory conditions with regard to health, wealth and prestige in the society. As opposed to them, prophet Job suffered under terrible conditions with respect to all these three aspects of life conditions. We cannot blame God either for providing prophets Solomon and David with well-satisfying conditions, or for not providing Job with similar conditions. Prophet Job does not conclude that God made him suffer without any justifying reason.

⁴² See Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's and Ibn 'Ashūr's work as cited in the previous footnote.

The description of Job's attitude in the Qur'an seems to indicate that one's reaction to evil is guided by one's metaphysical outlook, or worldview in the broader sense—not the other way around. The fact that God responded to the prayer of prophet Job and restored his condition is a grace of God, it is not something required of God. Prophet Job does not rebel against God for allowing him to suffer without any justifying good that can be identified by him. Although prophet Job is a good man by definition, since he was a prophet, unpleasant things happened to him. Prophet Job prayed to God, God responded to his prayers, and God gave him more than what he had lost. And all this indicates God's grace, and the story is a reminder for those who have understanding (*ulu'l-albāb*) (Sād 38: 43). It is a reminder, because it gives an example of suffering and proper reaction in response to it. To be "a person of understanding" (*ulu'l-albāb*) seems to indicate that such a person properly acknowledges the limits of human knowledge with regard to God's purposes in governing the universe. This is the metaphysical outlook that implies a definite conception of God and man, and the nature and limits of human knowledge with regard to what happens. "A person of understanding" is the one who properly acknowledges and embraces his limits.

However, for people who do not have understanding, i.e., do not believe in and worship God, the story may not be motivating or convincing. In a sense, for those people it may not function as a reminder. Thus, it may be understood as saying that the way one understands or interprets what is going on depends on one's belief and obedience to God. Belief in and obedience to God or not having belief in God and rejecting obedience to Him serve as the broader metaphysical frameworks. If one has belief in God and accepted obedience to God, one may understand that it is God who controls everything and who presents unpleasant phenomena to his servants as well as the pleasant ones. As a person who have understanding, prophet Job did not think that God was doing something unjustified to him. He also did not have a claim like, 'if God have a justifying reason, he could get to know it.' Prophet Job's position may perhaps be to acknowledge that we do not have reasonable epistemic access (CORNEA), i.e., we do not have access to divine reasons justifying cases of suffering.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have examined one line of evidential argument from evil and the story of prophet Job as related in the Qur'an and tried to show that one's interpretation of the existence of evil, for which we cannot identify any good justifying it, is by one's metaphysical outlook. As far as the existence of suffering in the world it can easily be maintained that both believing and non-believing people agree on its existence. However, when it comes to making sense of the existence of evil, divergent positions emerge. Although both William Rowe and Stephen Wykstra grant the existence of vast amount of suffering around the world, they argue for contradicting positions. Rowe argues that the existence of evil, for which we cannot identify any justifying good for God to allow it, constitutes evidence showing that there is not an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God who created the world. As opposed to Rowe's argument, Wykstra claims that one cannot make such claim. This is because the fact that we do not know the reasons why God allows certain cases of suffering does not justify the belief that God does not have reasons justifying His allowance of those cases of suffering.

The story of prophet Job, as it is presented in the Qur'an, may be an example of this way of looking at the issue. Obviously, since prophet Job believed in God, and God's transcendence, he did

not rebel against God claiming either that there is a God, but God is not perfectly good, or claiming that there is no God, because what happened to him appears to lack any justifying good. In the Qur'an, this attitude of prophet Job is meant to provide a guideline of how to understand the existence of evil for those who have "understanding." Thus, one who has understanding acknowledges the limits of one's knowledge. Although, one cannot identify the good that justifies God's allowing certain cases of suffering, one may not conclude that there is no good.

We still do have a dilemma: given the existence of evil, is it better to make sense of the existence of evil on the basis of religious beliefs (i.e., existence of God) or is it better to evaluate the truth and epistemic value of religious beliefs on the basis of the existence of evil? The story of Job teaches that one's reaction to the suffering and evil is guided by one's worldview, i.e. why the world exists, why do we exist, what is the proper life conduct/ orientation for human beings etc. His patience with his suffering, and him taking refuge with God vis a vis evil, made him earn divine grace. Even if one may show that the existence of evil is quite coherent with the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good God, would the monotheistic position be appealing to the non-believer? Why should one prefer the monotheistic metaphysical framework over an atheistic metaphysical framework? Thus we go back to the basics. How can we explain what is going on? Certainly, this is such a broad question, the answer to which falls beyond my intention here. As a general remark, one may say that the best explanation must take into account not only one aspect of human existence in the universe but its other major aspects as well. One may include in the set of major aspects, the very existence and order of things in the universe, where human beings are located, as well as human aspirations and expectations beyond the material conditions of our existence. Of course, one may prefer to limit oneself to the material conditions of the human existence. But if proper attention is paid to different dimensions of human life, I doubt such a strategy could be consistently followed. I have a strong reservation about such a person staying consistent with what is said and the way his/her life is organized.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of evil is considered to make a strong challenge against the monotheistic belief in God. For some philosophers the existence of evil provides a rational ground to argue that there is no God, even if it does not make up a conclusive proof. In this regard, the evidential argument from evil devised by William Rowe to reject the existence of God triggered many debates. Rowe argues that there are instances of intense suffering which could be prevented by God without sacrificing any good or causing any equal or worse evil. He argues that the existence of such cases of pointless evil makes it reasonable to reject the existence of God. In this context, I will examine Rowe's argument and Stephen J. Wykstra's response emphasizing that human knowledge is too limited to decide if those cases of evil are in fact pointless. Examining their position regarding the interpretation of cases of intense suffering, which appear to be pointless, I will argue that the existence of evil may not necessarily constitute evidence against the existence of God. This is, because the position of a person in making sense of the existence of evil is governed by the previously accepted worldview of this person; but not the other way around. I will relate this explanation to the story of prophet Job as related in the Qur'an. Prophet Job's attitude vis à vis the suffering he experienced seems to be a good example in this regard. Although apparently there was no reason justifying his suffering, he submitted to God and ask help, instead of rejecting the existence of God on the basis his suffering.

Keywords: Willam Rowe, Stephen J. Wykstra, Problem of Evil, the Story of Prophet Job, Evidential Argument.