

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Religion and Monotheism

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MONOTHEISM, SUFFERING, AND EVIL

Michael L. Peterson

Asbury Theological Seminary



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Monotheism, Suffering, and Evil

Elements in Religion and Monotheism

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Michael L. Peterson
Asbury Theological Seminary

Author for correspondence: Michael L. Peterson, mike.peterson@asburyseminary.edu

Abstract: Suffering and evil in the world provide the basis for the most difficult challenge to monotheistic belief. This Element discusses how the three great monotheisms – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – respond to the problem of suffering and evil. Different versions of the problem, types of answers, and recurring themes in philosophical and religious sources are analyzed. Objections to the enterprise of theodicy are also discussed as are additional objections to the monotheistic God more broadly. This treatment culminates in a recommendation for how monotheism can best respond to the most serious formulation of the problem, the argument from gratuitous evil.

Keywords: evil, suffering, theism, theodicy, God

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Contents

1 The Problem of Evil in Monotheism	1
2 The Problem in Culture and Philosophy	8
3 The Problem of Gratuitous Evil	16
4 A Range of Theodicies	25
5 Evil in Monotheistic Scriptures, Theologies, and Practices	39
6 The Way Forward	52
References	66