

Study Questions

The Problem of Evil (Eastern Religion)

1. Which two central Judeo-Christian doctrines does the eastern philosopher Samkara reject in the effort to circumvent the problem of evil?
2. In what sense does Samkara maintain that *God is dependent* on creatures? How does this potentially assist with dissolving the problem of evil, at least in comparison to the western religious traditions?
3. What is karma and its relevance to the problem of evil?
4. Why does Matilal state that “there seems to be a way out” of the problem of evil even without conceding the beginninglessness of the universe?
5. Why does Matilal discuss the prevalence of a beginningless universe among ancient western philosophers?
6. Why is Matilal reluctant to appeal to karma to circumvent the problem of evil?
7. What three objections to the karmic doctrine does Matilal discuss?
8. What is a necessary condition for the intelligibility of karmic doctrine according to Matilal? (Hint: end of article)
9. Kaufman criticizes the appeal to karma because he thinks the doctrine would require memories of a past life as a collateral assumption (which he assumes we don't have). Why does he maintain this?
10. What is the proportionality problem for karma, according to Kaufman?
11. What is the infinite regress problem for karma, according to Kaufman?
12. Does Kaufman think that karma is compatible with free will? Explain.
13. What is the verifiability problem for karma, according to Kaufman?
14. What is Kaufman's main thesis regarding the appeal to karma to answer the problem of evil?