

I'm going to present an argument for this claim:
(D) No one truly deserves to suffer.

When I say "truly deserve" here, I mean deserve for its own sake, and not merely for the sake of good consequences that can come from punishment. For instance, when most people discipline their kids or pets, it's not about inflicting punishment for punishment's sake—it's about helping them to learn what they should and shouldn't do and incentivizing good behavior.

So, here's my argument:

(D1) The universe is either deterministic or probabilistic

(D2) If so, then no one truly deserves to suffer.

(D3) So, no one truly deserves to suffer.

By deterministic, I mean that past states of the universe together with the laws of nature guarantee a particular future.

By probabilistic, I mean that the past and laws determine a probability distribution over possible futures, and which one results is random.

In D1, I'm not saying these are the only possible options, just the most plausible ones according to our best scientific theories, at least as far as I'm aware.

For D2: Imagine that God, at the beginning of time, either presses a button or rolls a many-sided die, and this fully determines everything you'll ever do. It seems like, no matter what you end up doing, you don't truly deserve to suffer for it, since the ultimate cause of your actions is outside of your control. Substitute "nature" for "God", and the result seems the same.

References

Dan Korman – "Learning from Arguments: An Introduction to Philosophy"