

God is Not All-Powerful

If God made all things from nothing then God has infinite power because the difference between something and nothing is infinite.

If God exists and is simple then it does not follow that he should necessarily be able to use his power only that he has it.

If there is no power but God's power then no matter how much we sin we never defy him. We are doing his will. He is as much to blame for the crimes of the Ripper as the Ripper is believed to have been. This is the problem presented by Professor Mackie. First, if God can make a being that he cannot control then he is not omnipotent for the being is able to go against him so he ceases to be omnipotent when he makes it. Second, Mackie said that if we say God cannot make such a being then he is still not omnipotent.

Religions says that God cannot do the logically impossible - for example he cannot make a round triangle for a round triangle is nonsense and so is impossible. But God making things out of no materials (creation) would mean he can indeed do the logically impossible. Thus God is evil for he has no excuse for letting suffering happen.

If God is all powerful then he must know all things. You can't be all powerful unless you have knowledge of all things for without that knowledge you don't really know what you are doing. Your plan for example to make a universe could fail. A failing God would not be all powerful.

God is supposed to know all things. This is impossible. Apart from the fact that I exist now, I know nothing. Everything I say I know I mean I believe. It must be the same with God. It is impossible to know anything for sure apart from one's own existence. Thus God is a contradictory idea. A God that has beliefs is not a God at all. Even if those beliefs are right, God cannot know this for he only believes it. God is not entitled to any worship.

Omniscience, knowing all things, is what matters most with God for there is no point in being all powerful if you don't know what you are doing. And you are not all powerful if you cannot use your power when you want to use it intelligently. You could however be all powerful as long as you don't care if what you do is sensible or not.

A free being can choose to do evil or good. God may have two equally good options and there is no other. Some say he chooses one of them for no reason at all. This is wrong. He does have a reason. The reason is that he has to choose one of them.

Is free will really choosing good or bad? Or is it having irrational desires that make the bad seem as good as the good? The latter is the case for we only do evil because we find it attractive. But even good desires are irrational in the sense that desires are just desires. They are only good or evil objectively. Subjectively good and evil desires seem equally attractive. The objective has nothing to do with it. So we do what we do because it seems attractive not because it is right or wrong. God cannot have desires and be God and therefore he cannot be good like we are good. He would be an impersonal force not a person. Plus a God who has made us victims of desire who are manipulated and controlled by it cannot be called good in any sense. God could not make beings with real free will so he is not omnipotent.

The idea of an all-powerful God is insane.

If God made all things from nothing then God has infinite power because the difference between something and nothing is infinite.

So God then is all-powerful or omnipotent.

God cannot do what is logically impossible. He cannot make a bed that is too heavy for him to lift and then lift it for that is impossible because it is nonsense. Religion says that God is good so we are to blame for evil for we misused his gift of free will. If he could then he could give us free will to do evil and not give it at the same time so he would be an evil God when we sin and suffer for free will is no excuse then for letting these things happen. So God can only do what is logically possible (page 120, The Puzzle of God). However, this has its problems.

It must be logically possible for there to have been no God. After all there could just have been nothing. If God makes himself then God can do what is logically impossible for that means that God made himself when there should have been nothing. So it follows that if God exists then he makes himself then he can do the logically impossible. Why is it logically impossible? Because when there could be just nothing and when a being cannot make itself there should be nothing and if

there is a God that is all contradicted.

It would seem that when we exist there has to be something that comes from nothing or something that always was and never needed to be made from nothing or perhaps both that gives us existence. If God always existed and does not make himself then we don't need him for the building blocks of the universe could have made themselves. God would not be supreme unless he does make himself. This has God designing himself to make himself. If you hold that whatever always existed is a non-intelligent force then you avoid this absurdity. It just made itself without planning. It was chaos.

God would have to be omnipotent if he exists when there could have been no God. If he makes himself he makes himself from nothing and it takes infinite power to do that for the distance and difference between something and nothing is infinite so to say he is omnipotent is the same as saying his power is infinite. Omnipotence then destroys the idea of a God who can be proved with the necessary being stuff or of God being necessary and yet a necessary being God would have to be omnipotent to make himself! There is nothing in it all but incoherence.

Plantinga says it is wrong to claim that God can do only what is logically possible because it is logically possible to make a table that God did not make but God is unable to make a table he did not make. He gave up trying to find a definition of omnipotence that was any good. Christians say, "But if there is no God then the table cannot be made for there would be nothing so then it would be logically impossible for the table to exist without God in the first place. So it is wrong to say that it is logically possible for there to be a table not made by God who is the source of all things." But this assumes that there can't be anything without a God which is incorrect. Therefore there can be a table that God did not make.

Another problem is one presented by Professor Mackie. First, if God can make a being that he cannot control then he is not omnipotent for the being is able to go against him so he ceases to be omnipotent when he makes it. Second, Mackie said that if we say God cannot make such a being then he is still not omnipotent.

The first observation is correct. If God makes an agent with free will then he cannot remain omnipotent. This shows how bad it is to believe in God. If I murder then God wants me to do it. I might be using my freedom but paradoxically I am still doing what he wants and he is as much involved as I am. My freedom is really his freedom.

I cannot sin in such a scenario. Suppose I can. Then it would be the bad intention that was bad not the act of murder. It would follow that I could murder all I want as long as I am aware that God wants me to do it.

If God is omnipotent and making a free being would end that omnipotence then it is logically impossible for him to make such a being for he cannot change. So we find it is impossible for God to make a free being because he is omnipotent and the source of all things.

It is a problem because the Lord has to make a power that is outside of himself which is the power to go against God. You can't have omnipotent power making itself not omnipotent.

God and free will are incompatible even though free will is used as a rationalisation for the evil in the world. Swinburne says that God does cease to be omnipotent by making free beings but that is no problem. In other words, he thinks that God's power has not lessened with the creation of a free being because that being is free because of him so he omnipotently makes me free. It is a problem and more for God makes all things out of his power. He must make the power to sin and create it. If anything can come from nothing without his power then why believe in God? So say that God omnipotently makes me free makes no sense and is contradictory.

Now to the second observation. If God cannot make a free being is God not omnipotent? From observation one we know that God cannot make a free agent anyway in any real sense. If God can do everything that is logically possible, God is omnipotent. If God could do the logically impossible he could do away with his omnipotence and still be omnipotent which makes no sense. For omnipotence to be possible, God has to be able to do everything that isn't self-contradictory or logically impossible. If omnipotence means being able to make a non-existent egg, then it is incoherent and therefore impossible. So it is not a contradiction of divine omnipotence to say he cannot make a free being.

You can't argue that it is logically possible for sin to exist so God should be able to sin if he can do the logically possible when you believe in the necessary being type of God for he is changeless and all-good. If God is a spirit, he is what he does so for God to do anything apart from his nature would be logically impossible.

If it is best to be able to do evil and not do it then God who cannot change is imperfect and he is not all-good. If God causes himself then God should cause himself to be a being that can sin but doesn't when he says that freedom to sin is necessary for being good and loving. He has caused himself to be a being that cannot change so as to be able to sin and that is criminal love depends on having free will as he says. Omnipotence then in that case means that God should be able to sin. Why? Because if God is omnipotent he should be able to be perfectly good but he isn't. So then a contradiction comes up.

For God to be able to sin would mean that he has an infinitely evil power in him though that power is only potential not actual. God cannot be both potentially infinitely evil or infinitely good for that would mean he was identical to infinite evil motive and infinite good motive and he cannot be both. The idea of omnipotence is incoherent with a spiritual God of infinite power. Omnipotence gives us a God who cannot please or satisfy us for he is not really love. An omnipotent God cannot love if love requires the power to be evil but turning away from that power. The idea of God denies the popular view that if evil exists so does good and if good exists so does evil. This would mean that God is evil for giving us free will.

Anybody who wants to believe in God has to deny that God is an infinite spirit and a necessary being and affirm that he is not omnipotent but just the most powerful being there is. But the end result is only a super-being and not a God so they can't win!

CONCLUSION

There is no God. The belief that he is all-powerful is incoherent. It is therefore opposed to correct thinking which means it is opposed to people for we need to think correctly for our own self-confidence and our welfare.

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