

The Unintelligible Question that Looks Intelligible:

Why is there something rather than nothing?

“Modern logic ... prompts suspicion that the question of why there is something and not nothing is either ill-formed or profitless, since any intelligible answer will merely invite the same question. A central mistake in the area is to treat Being as a noun that identifies a particularly deep subject-matter. This is parallel to treating Nothing as a name of a particular thing, perhaps an object of dread or fear” (page 40, Being, Dictionary of Philosophy, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, 1996).

The question is used by popular religions to get people to think there is probably a God who is the answer to the question.

Meaningless

The question makes no sense.

The question implies there could have been nothing for it is asking why there isn't just nothing? It wants the answer that there could not have been nothing because there is something. It was logically impossible for there to have been nothing. So the question says it's logically possible for there to be nothing at all and it seeks an answer that says it is not logically possible. Therefore the question is meaningless. It contradicts itself. It is foolish asking the question for we are not going to understand the answer for logic says there might have been nothing at all not even God and to accept any answer is to deny this and therefore to deny logic.

Heidegger

One of the greatest philosophers ever, Martin Heidegger, thought about why there is something rather than nothing.

Of this question, he said that it showed a misunderstanding of being. The question is meant to make us think that God could be the only answer but it fails.

Here is a paraphrase of his teaching from What Do Existentialists Believe?

Heidegger wrote Being and Time to deal with the question, “What is ‘is’?”

This is not bad grammar. It is just wondering what being is.

He sees that we have taken “is” for granted and are puzzled by such a question. We don't see that being cannot be defined as a thing. Being is not a being. It is what allows things to be present. It is what allows them to exist. There is nothing I can describe that is being itself. A tree has being but that doesn't tell me what being is. Being is not. It is not a thing or power and yet things exist and have being through this non-thing. Being is nothing. He used the question, “Why are there things rather than nothing?” He used it to make us see the is-ness that appears from non-thing. He denied that God could be an answer. Heidegger said that being is not God.

Heidegger then answered those who say that God is being itself and the necessary being. If you cannot define being you cannot get far with ideas about a necessary being or a God that is being itself which means the same thing.

Another thought

Why are we alive instead of being automatons? If you have to choose either "Why something rather than nothing?" or "Why are we alive instead of being machines?" which question will you choose?

Conclusion

The question of why something rather than nothing is taking advantage of people to make them think the answer is God for the question makes sense. It is a trick with words.