

## Opening Statement

My goal in this debate is to defend the position that the god of the Bible (hereafter, called God) is a being for whom existence is logically impossible. To accomplish this goal, I define a concept, specify the concept of God as such, and examine that concept's claim to intelligibility as an object of faith.

## How Concepts are Formed

Let us begin by exploring the definition of a concept. A concept is defined by *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* as "something conceived in the mind," like a thought or notion, and "an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances." [1] These are very general definitions. There is a more detailed definition as set forth by the late mathematician, Gottlob Frege, considered by many logicians to be the father of modern mathematical logic. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* gives Frege's mathematical definition of a concept, called the Comprehension Principle for Concepts, as:

“ $\exists G \forall x (Gx \equiv \varphi(x))$ ,  
where  $\varphi(x)$  is any formula which has  $x$  free and which has no free  $G$ s.” [2]

This tells us that, given at least one instance of  $G$  and all instances of  $x$ , it is the case that  $Gx$  is equivalent to  $\varphi(x)$  if  $\varphi(x)$  is equivalent to  $Gx$ . To further simplify for practical use in this debate, this definition, given in another entry from the previous source, tells us that:

"If we replace a complete name appearing in a sentence by a placeholder, the result is an incomplete expression that signifies a special kind of function which Frege called a *concept*. *Concepts* are functions which map every argument to one of the truth-values. Thus, ' $() > 2$ ' denotes the concept *being greater than 2*, which maps every object greater than 2 to The True and maps every other object to The False." [3]

Here, the open object or placeholder ' $()$ ' is treated as an argument in the function ' $() > 2$ ' that maps every object greater than 2 to a truth-value of The True. The concept ' $() > 2$ ' is a function, also an incomplete expression, that, when filled with a numerical object like 3 or 1, leads to a true or false truth-value, respectively.

## The Concept of God

Applying Frege's terminology, then, the concept of God may be written as a complete function or expression containing one or more objects or properties attributable to God in the Bible as follows:

Let  $Gb$  represent the concept of God as defined in the Bible and  $\{a\}$  represent a finite array of attributed objects forming a strict logical conjunction in the form of  $(A \wedge B \wedge C)$ . Thus, there is a concept  $Gb$  and an array  $\{a\}$  such that:

$$\exists!Gb\forall\{a\}(Gb\{a\} \equiv \varphi(\{a\}))$$

A complete function or concept of God is, thus, found in which exists only one instance of the concept  $Gb$  such that, for all  $\{a\}$  attributed to  $Gb$ ,  $Gb\{a\}$  is equivalent to the expression  $\varphi(\{a\})$  if  $\varphi(\{a\})$  is equivalent to  $Gb\{a\}$ .

### **The Intelligibility of God**

The concept of God requires a finite array of mutually dependent properties derived from the Bible. Properties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Creator of universe (Genesis 1:1)
- Omnipotence (Genesis 17:1)
- Omniscience (Psalm 139:1-6)
- Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-13)

God as the creator of the universe is self-explanatory. Omnipotence means all-powerful, omniscience means all-knowing, and omnipresence means everpresent everywhere.

Let  $\{az\}$  represent a finite array of objects comprising everything in the universe at the point of creation, let  $k$  represent knowledge, let  $p$  represent power, and let  $e$  represent a state of ever-present being.

The concept "God is the creator of everything" may be written as:

$$C = \exists!Gb\forall\{az\} (Gb\{az\} \equiv \varphi(\{az\}))$$

The concept "God is omniscient" may be written as:

$$K = \exists!Gb\forall k (Gbk \equiv \varphi(k))$$

The concept "God is omnipotent" may be written as:

$$P = \exists!Gb\forall p (Gbp \equiv \varphi(p))$$

The concept "God is omnipresent" may be written as:

$$E = \exists! Gb \forall e (Gbe \equiv \varphi(e))$$

Applying these references, omnipotence entails omniscience and omnipresence:

$$P \rightarrow (K \wedge E)$$

Thus, one may derive the concept of God as:

$$Gb \equiv C \wedge (P \rightarrow (K \wedge E))$$

The ' $\equiv$ ' symbol used throughout this notation symbolizes material equivalence, revealing that  $Gb$  is equivalent to  $C \wedge (P \rightarrow (K \wedge E))$  if and only if the latter is equivalent to the former. Thus, the concept becomes incomplete or unintelligible if:

- (1) At least one of these properties is shown to contradict one or more other properties, or
- (2) At least one of these properties is shown to be internally contradictory

Giving:

$$(1a) (C \wedge \sim P) \vee (C \wedge \sim K) \vee (C \wedge \sim E), \text{ or}$$

$$(1b) (P \wedge \sim C) \vee (P \wedge \sim K) \vee (P \wedge \sim E), \text{ or}$$

$$(1c) (K \wedge \sim P) \vee (K \wedge \sim C) \vee (K \wedge \sim E), \text{ or}$$

$$(1d) (E \wedge \sim P) \vee (E \wedge \sim C) \vee (E \wedge \sim K)$$

$$(2a) (C \sim \equiv C) \vee (P \sim \equiv P) \vee (K \sim \equiv K) \vee (E \sim \equiv E)$$

Where:

$$(1) \vee (2)$$

I find a number of cases in which (1) and (2) prove true. Here, I will consider one case proving (1) in which  $C$  contradicts  $P$  and one case proving (2) in which  $K$  is internally contradictory.

First, consider  $C$ , the property representing God's creation of the universe. It is necessarily true that a creator creates for a purpose. To have a purpose is to have a desire. To have a desire is to lack the object of that desire. Yet, God is omnipotent and one who is omnipotent has no desire to create, given that such a desire entails a lack of attainment or power. Thus, it necessarily follows that God cannot simultaneously be a creator and omnipotent. This can be written as follows:

Let  $\Box$  represent modal necessity, let  $g$  represent a purpose or goal, let  $d$  represent a desire, and let  $o$  represent an object of desire.

- (1)  $\Box(C \rightarrow g)$
- (2)  $g \rightarrow d$
- (3)  $d \rightarrow \sim o$
- (4)  $d \rightarrow \sim p$
- (5)  $P \rightarrow \sim\{az\}$
- (6)  $\Box(Gb \sim \equiv (C \wedge \sim P))$

Second, consider  $K$ , the property representing God's omniscience. Omniscience is the knowledge of everything. This assumes that knowledge is composed of a finite set of knowable things. Yet, God cannot know that he knows everything without knowing something about everything, and this metaknowledge must necessarily exist outside the set of all knowable things. Metaknowledge is knowledge about knowledge, so it is a form of knowledge in its own right. Thus, to know everything that can be known, God must know everything that can be known plus the fact that he knows everything. This presents a contradiction. Therefore, omniscience is an internally contradictory property and God cannot be omniscient. This can be written as follows:

Let  $\supseteq$  represent a superset in which every element of  $B$  is also element of  $A$  but  $A \neq B$ , let  $v$  represent everything that can be known, let  $\{fz\}$  represent a finite set of knowable things, and let  $m(k)$  represent metaknowledge.

- (1)  $K \equiv K_v$
- (2)  $k \supseteq \{fz\}$
- (3)  $K \rightarrow m(k)$
- (4)  $m(k) \equiv (\{fz\} + k)$
- (5)  $K \sim \equiv (m(k) + K)$
- (6)  $\sim(Gb(K))$

Given these contradictions, the concept of God is unintelligible as the concept is incomplete as follows:

$$Gb \sim \equiv C \wedge (P \rightarrow (K \wedge E))$$

Other properties of God are given in the Bible, but those I have listed suffice to prove that God cannot be known at a basic, conceptual level. The statement "God exists" is not only unproven, but unprovable, since  $Gb$  is incomplete.

No unintelligible concept can exist. To use a common example, no square circles can

exist, because the properties of squares and circles are fundamentally incompatible, leaving the concept of a square circle internally contradictory. Since that which is actual must be known conceptually, that which is internally contradictory in concept cannot be internally consistent in actuality. In short, an unintelligible concept cannot exist. God of the Bible is such a concept, so God cannot exist.

### **Sources**

1. "concept." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2005.  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com> (12 Sept. 2005).
2. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2005.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frege-logic/> (12 Sept. 2005).
3. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2005.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frege/> (12 Sept. 2005).