

Re: The God Paradox

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indoarsman@xxxxxxxx wrote:

The God Paradox is stated as:

"Can God create a stone so heavy He can't lift it?"

It is postulated that God is omnipotent, so we deduce that He can: (1) create a stone of any weight, (2) lift a stone of any weight, and, by interpreting the paradoxical statement, (3) create a stone He cannot lift.

But deductions 2 and 3 are logically inconsistent, since they suggest that God is both able to lift a stone and not able to lift the same stone.

He problem here, as with so many supposed paradoxes, is inconsistency is the use of unspoken assumptions. By requiring that these assumptions be made explicit, we can see where the assumption is violated.

In the God Paradox, the unspoken assumption is whether or not God is bound by laws of logic. If yes, then we cannot say that God can do anything. If not, then he is not limited by logic that proves that he cannot lift the rock. In this latter case God is free to bypass the constraints of Logic by:

- (1) Increasing his strength so that he now can lift the rock.
- (2) Change history so the rock in question was not made to that specification or was never created at all.
- (3) Change the meaning of words so that what he actually did was to make a rock that is blue (and liftable.)

(What other tricks might God use in this case?)

Other famous supposed paradoxes follow this same format. The unspoken assumption in the Unexpected Test (Hanging) paradox is whether or not the students may expect the test on more than one morning. If yes, then it is in fact impossible to give the test because they can expect

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it every day. If no, then we can in fact give it Friday by surprise, as they might expect it on an earlier morning and thus not be allowed to expect it again on Friday.

Contradictory conclusions can be reached using valid rules of inference only if we are using inconsistent assumptions. "Paradoxes" are arguments where we fail to make those inconsistent assumptions explicit and thus they elude many people.

C-B

Indoarsman