

BABY CUTTING AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP: THE THEOLOGY OF CIRCUMCISION

The Old Testament according to the Catholic Church is free from doctrinal and moral error for it is the word of God - CCC

The Old Testament tells us that God commanded that male babies must be circumcised at eight days old as a sign that they are making a covenant with God and it makes them Jews.

Judaism and much of Islam obeys this command. And its absurd for they know fine well a baby can't make a covenant with God. Why should we respect their obedience? And God could have asked for a tattoo instead which would have been less crazy. And what about women? They are not circumcised.

It is abhorrent how no effort is made to give the parents a complete theological and philosophical case for having the baby boy circumcised. This is as manipulative as the Catholic Church saying that baptism is the most important thing that can be done to a child without giving the persons the knowledge to make a fully informed decision about such a huge step.

Judaism never taught that circumcision meant a violent cutting away of sin and lawlessness. Christianity invented that interpretation which appears in the writings of Paul. Paul gave it more violent overtones than it actually had! He twisted the practice and its meaning in order to insult the Jews by saying that as they sin and break the law they are exactly the same before God as if they had never been cut. Though Christians do not circumcise they accept the principles it supposedly conveys which makes them no better than rogue circumcisers.

Racist Jews don't want a baby to be Jewish even if it is Jewish if there is no cutting. Then it miraculously becomes a real Jew when the cutting is done! A baby will still belong to the Jewish race without circumcision. Membership of religion should be a choice. Religion unlike race is a choice.

The circumcision command is not justified because the circumcision is not that important except to a culture. There is no need for the rush. The timing is not that big of a deal.

Christianity believes that God has the right to make such a command but he has made Christians exempt from it. The Christian has a duty to obey his religion therefore the Christian has no right to campaign against any faith that requires circumcision if the campaign is based on the fact that nobody has the right to cut a piece off an infant boy.

Indeed to be a true Christian is to be part of the problem. It is tacitly against the human right of the baby to bodily integrity.

A Christian cannot agree with the German court which ruled that the ritual circumcision of baby boys was bodily harm and contravened the right to choose whatever religion one wanted later in life. This was decreed in June 2012. The case arose because a little boy of 4 bled terribly after undergoing a ritual circumcision. The case was reported to the police by the hospital that had to treat him afterwards. The court correctly judged that the desire of the parents to have their baby boys circumcised did not justify it. The court also asserted that the right of freedom of religion did not extend to the right to hurt another person.

The main argument in favour of legalising the religious circumcising of male babies is that it is a religion's own business and it has a right to obey its traditions.

This dismisses the importance of the child. Tradition and religion must never be put before that of a child. It is hard to respect the right of Judaism and Islam to circumcise children when those faiths refute themselves by saying it would be child abuse to pierce those children's ears for earrings. We have to send a child to school and vaccinate him without his consent but that is a different matter. It does not give us the right to remove his foreskin without his consent. A child needs decisions to be made about his health and education but not about his religion as he can be good without religion. And he certainly does not need decisions to be made about removing his foreskin. Those who say he does are really saying that circumcising religions are like women and people with special needs or ethnic minorities - they have special requirements. But that is absurd and insulting to say people with special needs.

The proper view is that a male baby must not be circumcised unless there is a sufficient medical reason for removing the foreskin. The World Health Organisation asserts that circumcision is good for sexual health as it removes the foreskin which is a breeding ground for germs and diseases. But it must still be left up to an adult male to decide if he will be circumcised or not. Its not a justification for the parents imposing circumcision on him when he is a baby. Careful washing will deal with any hygiene problems that a foreskin causes - and those problems are only problems for a tiny number of

males. The numbers are too low so those who advocate circumcision because of hygiene are not telling the real reason,

Circumcision must be done by a medical professional who is exercising the proper procedure and operating strict hygiene and avoiding the risk of infection as far as possible. Incredibly some say that being a professional medical person means you will do it for children not adults if you have a choice. They dubiously claim that circumcision more high risk when you choose it yourself as an adult! That is rubbish for children can and do suffer and that is worse than suffering when you risk it yourself. And who says the whole foreskin needs to be removed? The expert should know how much to take away and that is not a decision for a religionist but for a medical professional.

There is a small porn subculture around the mutilation of babies in circumcision. Images and videos of the sick act are provided.

There is no shortage of pictures of the little boy screaming in fear and pain when he is circumcised.

Odd that the Bible says two men having sex is an unnatural abomination. Surely circumcision then would be an abomination too - a worse one. At least the men haven't done any damage! Religious circumcision implies support for the notion that God must get what God wants whether we think its bad or not.

The baby cannot object to the circumcision or consent to it. The right of parents to make decisions for the baby do not extend that far. Sound medical reasons alone would be the exceptions. Would you allow it if a finger tip had to be cut off for religious reasons? Or if a small brand mark had to be put on the baby? What if some new faith arises demanding that babies be branded?

There is the risk of complications from the circumcision.

Jews often get their boys circumcised by a medical professional. But when God commanded the practice he made no requirements regarding hygiene or the avoidance of infection.

There is argument that if circumcision for religious reasons is made illegal, then the babies will be circumcised in secret leading to the risk of infection or losing more than the foreskin or bleeding to death. The law would need to be sure that banning does not make the problem worse. If people choose to disobey the law that is not the fault of the law. The law would still be right to ban the circumcisions because otherwise the message is sent out that hurting babies in the name of religion is okay.

If the practice is driven underground because its illegal, and if it therefore becomes more dangerous, then the answer is to keep it illegal but maybe prescribe lighter penalties for the breaking of the law of the land.

If a faith has the right to circumcise, we cannot celebrate that right. We grant it reluctantly. The only way we can get rid of the practice is by discouraging the religion and to encourage its practitioners to leave it. Religious freedom does not mean there is no right to discourage religion.

The evidence that circumcision reduces the chances of getting cancer or diseases is flawed. The risk does not justify circumcising a baby. Let the baby decide for himself when he is big enough. And the risk can be reduced by mild antiseptics and washing carefully.

Children need to be taught good citizenship - not religion. So nobody can say, "Let's allow them to be circumcised as it is the way they can be entered into religion which will teach them sacred values".

Even in religious schools, responsibility, self-confidence, healthy eating, exercise, hygiene, manners, personal finance, alcohol and drug awareness are taught in a manner that is entirely or largely secular. It is hypocritical for a believer to teach children, "Binge drinking is dangerous. It will wreck your head and your body and you may fall and kill yourself etc etc." Or, "Be confident for God loves you" - if you are feeling low hearing that will only make you feel worse.

The believer's concern should be about how God feels about it. That will exclude those children who do not have much faith or any. But religion as an ideology undermines fairness.

The Jewish child circumcised before he can decide for himself. Is that because the parents want to force religion on him? They would let him grow up and decide if they did.

Some claim that the child should be circumcised though he cannot make a choice because there is more to right and wrong than just choice. But they need to listen to themselves. They go on as if the child's inability to choose does not matter! If

there is more to right and wrong than just choice, then clearly choice has to be considered in forming ideas of right and wrong. And besides how could you ever do right if you don't have the choice to do it? In theory, it would be ideal to let choice be the be all and end all. But our choices have impact on others. The limitation of choice is a necessary evil otherwise society will be torn apart.

A child needs the parents to decide how he is going to be fed, what school she is going to and what name she will have and what kind of house she will be brought up in. It does not follow though that the parent has the right to decide. The parent has only the freedom to decide. What is the difference? Does the child have a right to have its parents make decisions for her or him?

The freedom of the parent is limited. A rich parent who feeds a child on dog food is breaking the law. That is child abuse. A child does not need a religion but to learn how that people need to try to get along and compromise. Even if the parent had a right to make decisions for the child it does not follow that this includes religion. Making a child a follower of your religion is really about what you want for the child. But its not about what you want. A child is not a commodity.

If parents try to inculcate a faith based on intolerance, hatred of science and wisdom, authoritarianism and violence nobody thinks they have the right to do so. The problem with Judaism is that its scriptures command and encourage and promise a reward for those evils. The Jews are nice people and condemn those things but they are still supporting them indirectly. If you adopt a faith and part of that faith is endorsement of the evils and you advocate peace and harmony you are a hypocrite. Its a kind of, "The religion is correct but I disobey it." That is still endorsement of the evil but in a less obvious way.

One of religions major lies is that Article 14 of the UN Convention gives it in the form of the parents has the right to shape a child in the religion of the parents. The article actually says the child has the right to freedom of thought - meaning the child needs to be educated about other faiths too and given the option of having no religious affiliation. In this understanding, trying to cut a piece off a little boy to make him a member of the Jewish religion is evil.

The arguments for male circumcision are similar to those for female circumcision or as we should call it FGM - Female Genital Mutilation. To support it for males is to pave the way for having it done for females too. FGM takes many different forms - some forms do little damage. Other forms involve cutting off the clitoris and the vaginal lips and all. To support male circumcision is to implicitly justify the circumcision of females as well. It paves the way for it for its hypocritical to demand that males be circumcised in the name of God and to forbid wanting to do it to females as well.

It can be assumed that the biblical support for circumcision has bled into Islam and is the reason for the following appalling facts. Two nationwide studies in Indonesia carried out by population researchers in 2003 and 2010 found that between 86 and 100% of households surveyed subjected their daughters to genital cutting, usually before the age of five. More than 90% of adults said they wanted the practice to continue.

A study published in 2010 by Yarsi University in Jakarta tells us that Indonesia doesn't practise the severest forms of mutilation which are to be found in parts of Africa and the Middle East, such as infibulation (removing the clitoris and labia and sewing up the genital area) or complete clitoral excision. The study found the Indonesian procedure "involves pain and actual cutting of the clitoris" in more than 80% of cases.

Catholics claim that bread and wine can be transformed into the body and blood of Christ without us being able to see any difference. To tell a child like a Catholic would that the communion wafer is alive is to oppose the basic principles of science which help us tell what is alive and what is not alive apart. And the child will be forbidden to hold that his action man is really his dead grandfather in the same way that the wafer is supposedly Jesus. How is that fair? Religion creates all kinds of problems for the rights of the child.

Circumcision is to be understood as an expression of the doctrine, "It is our duty to obey God whether we understand his rules or not." That alone is dangerous. We know of how this attitude led Abraham to obey a command from God to slay his son Isaac in sacrifice to God.

Circumcision is primarily an act of worship. Freedom of religion and freedom of worship are not the same thing. Religious circumcision is not medically necessary or about medicine and plus too much flesh may be removed.