

IS EXORCISM A MIRACLE SIGN FROM GOD?

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1673:

When the Church asks publicly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion, it is called exorcism. Jesus performed exorcisms and from him the Church has received the power and office of exorcizing. In a simple form, exorcism is performed at the celebration of Baptism. The solemn exorcism, called "a major exorcism," can be performed only by a priest and with the permission of the bishop. The priest must proceed with prudence, strictly observing the rules established by the Church. Exorcism is directed at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation from demonic possession through the spiritual authority which Jesus entrusted to his Church. Illness, especially psychological illness, is a very different matter; treating this is the concern of medical science. Therefore, before an exorcism is performed, it is important to ascertain that one is dealing with the presence of the Evil One, and not an illness.

Notice that this is about Satan himself. What if it is a demon possessing somebody AGAINST Satan's orders! Those who think Catholicism is full of demons itself may say that the Church deliberately sets it up for exorcisms not to work for they are trying to get out the wrong entity.

In exorcism, the entity can be made to swear or take an oath to God that it will go and stay away from the victim. The ceremony itself implies that it is an attempt to use oaths calling on God's name to get the demon to agree to go. This is nonsensical for it amounts to getting a demon to draw punishment on itself for promises it is led to make but will not keep.

The New Testament warns against demons and says they can indwell people and torment them. It says they can be evicted by exorcists who are authorised by Jesus or God. Most of the exorcists if not all that go around can give no evidence at all that Jesus really authorises them to act. And the gospel says that Jesus just had to say, "Get out!" and that was the demon gone. No exorcist has ever been that adept which is why the evidence points to them being fanatical liars.

When Jesus sends out his disciples as exorcists he stresses they must go as poor men and not even take any bread with them. Read Mark 6:7-13. Today's exorcists never worry about that and usually get a wage. Plus as they were authorised by Jesus it follows they were his instruments for instantly dismissing demons.

While believers say demons can take over bodies and control them, others say it is more common for demons to simply harass and torment the victim without invading their bodies. Thus though a case of possession needs an exorcist, demonic oppression can need one too. Demonic oppression is very hard to prove for it can be simply a matter of a person being unfortunate a lot of the time and blaming a demon for it. It is cruel and evil to do anything to encourage a person to feel harassed by someone when they are not.

The apostle Jude wrote a letter in which he wrote that the Archangel Michael and Satan were in combat and Michael would not argue with him but prayed for God to rebuke him. The Greek is clear that Michael had no choice but to stop the argument "He did not dare bring against Satan a blasphemous judgement." The Greek words *durst* and *etolmese* mean not daring because of the risk of retaliation by a stronger power. Satan is stronger than Michael.

The New Testament warns that demons are evil spirits. The New Testament uses the Greek word for demon. Demon *back* then suggested a spiritual entity within a person which could be controlled by reason, destiny, or even divine power (Zijderveld 2008). It did not mean evil spirit. So why the contradiction? The answer is that while demon did not in itself mean evil spirit, and the Greeks believed in benevolent demons, it was Christian doctrine that even if such beings meant well they were still evil and any dealings with them was forbidden. It reflects the Christian tradition that any god or spirit venerated by other religions is automatically bad for it does not believe in Jesus no matter how kindly it is. What we really have here is an example of Christian bigotry and ignorance.

It is Christian doctrine that the Christian God Jesus did miracles. The faith says he didn't do them for the mere sake of performing them—as, for example, the Pentecostals do. The “miracles” of Pentecostals are mere “show case” miracles of no significance or value, done in an arbitrary and purposeless manner. The faith says he did them to help people.

If it is really about helping then he does not help everybody. He is said to refrain from helping when there is a reason that only he may know. But if so we would expect to see the miracles happen in a less organised way. It's strange that Jesus did miracles all the time on earth and hardly bothers now. If his reason was to show his power over evil spirits and sickness then he was not principally interested in helping people. Could such a being really be a good God?

One of the things most religions have in common is an acceptance of the possibility of diabolical possession, that is, that evil spirits or demons have the power to control the bodies of their victims. Taking over the body would not necessarily mean taking over the person. Exorcism is a form of prayer to which God responds by putting the demons out. Exorcism is expulsion. Some religions say the demons actually take over human beings.

If demons control the body, they can pretend to be the person. If demons control the person and not just the body, it follows that many murderers could be innocent. The Devil made them do it. The concept of demonic possession then is extremely important for it has huge implications if it really happens.

Jesus Christ was supposedly an exorcist. He put demons out of a man and sent them into pigs which promptly drowned themselves. The story does not say if Jesus made them do that or the demons but you can be sure it was Jesus for why would demons take over pigs to drown them especially when they begged Jesus not to just leave them without any bodies to live in? The message is that possessed entities should sometimes at least be killed. The book of Acts mentions a demon the Jews tried to put out of a man. Instead they barely escaped with their lives. The Bible implies that it is acceptable to murder possessed people if they are dangerous and the demon won't budge. The Bible would dress that up as self-defence rather than murder!

Jesus asked the Jews in the Luke gospel that if he casts out demons by Beelzebub then who do they cast them out by? Clearly his own exorcisms were nothing special. Sceptics will find it hard to believe that anybody is that good at exorcism for even today's are bunglers by Jesus' standard!

Jesus Christ claimed that exorcisms have an apologetic significance. He alleged that exorcisms cannot be done by the Devil for Satan cannot put Satan out so they must be attributable only to God (Mark 3). This was a lie as we will soon see.

It is a mystery why the gospel of John never mentions Jesus putting demons out. Such an omission in a gospel about signs from God that Jesus was the saviour and the conqueror of Satan is as good as a declaration that Jesus never cast out demons. One good exorcism tale would be a better choice than turning water into wine when only one or two people knew about the miracle.

The Catholic Church says that her exorcisms prove that she is the true Church and is holy when God uses her to fight the Devil. If exorcisms are signs then God won't do them through a false or untrue religion but will just perhaps let the person seem to recover naturally without them. So, religion that is evil cannot cast out demons if God exists for it is on the side of the demons. If it is not deliberately evil but still evil, God would not answer its prayers to cast out demons for the demons use error to do harm and would harm those who convert to the religion thinking it has power to protect them against demons. Error is a natural evil. It would be a case of an evil doctrinal system casting out its evil teachers which is absurd. So, only the true religion can cast out demons if miracles are indeed signs.

The problem is the Church says that Jesus cast out demons there and then. The Church never does that. It sometimes takes years of exorcisms to get demons out. And sometimes they return. Perhaps they never left at all! It is a fact that few attempted Catholic exorcisms work. The success rate is low. And we question the right of the Church to attempt them in that light. Also, considering that drugs given to psychiatric patients help only about 30% of the time it follows that the Church claim that it only sends in the exorcist when it is sure the illness is not psychiatric as evidenced by the medication failing to help is just a bare-faced lie. One excuse for failed exorcisms is that the victim only pretended to be willing to turn to Christ. Being willing is a necessary condition for exorcism to work.

The following are the evidences that a person is possessed.

-Speaking or understanding languages which the person has never learned. It is impossible to prove a person never really learned the languages. (Curiously speaking in tongues is encouraged in Catholic charismatic circles. The Church simply assumes this is not a sign of demonic influence. But who knows?)

-Knowing (and revealing) things the person has no earthly way of knowing - fortune-tellers through pure luck can do this. An alleged demon always talks a lot of nonsense and the Church dismisses the errors as evidence that the demon tells lies while it upholds the alleged hits as proof that the demon really has supernatural knowledge. Chance and luck could explain it.

-Physical strength beyond the person's natural physical makeup - does a priest know that some parts of our bodies are stronger than what we think? Our legs are powerful. And a drugged person can be stronger than usual. If priests are tired they may feel the victim is stronger than what he or she really is. If you feel an enemy is strong, suggestibility will make you think you have experienced his strength.

-A violent aversion to God, the Virgin Mary, the cross and other images of Catholic faith. The honouring of Mary and

images is idolatry so the demon is only pretending to hate them.

-The person acts as if an entity that tells little else but lies is in them speaking through them. But what if the lies are coming from the person? The lies are not evidence that there is really a demon.

-Poltergeist activity indicates that the person is not necessarily possessed but just pestered by a demon.

Not one of the evidences is sane. Nobody can know for sure if a person's cure from seeming possession was a real cure from possession. Demonic possession is not a medical or psychiatric diagnosis.

Could the Church's antics be proof that Jesus' success with instant exorcisms is an exaggeration if not an outright lie? Maybe. Or it could be proof that the Church only imagines or fabricates its power to cast out demons. Jesus spoke of false signs and wonders.

If it is true that immoral exorcisms may lead to the exorcist getting possessed then maybe exorcists are all possessed? Maybe exorcism and the philosophy behind it is so insane that it leads to many exorcists losing their minds completely and acting possessed themselves?

It is dishonest of the Church to use psychiatric science to help her see if a demon might be present when this science is ignored after. The psychiatrist is left out of the affair after he or she gives the Church warrant to believe that the illness of the person cannot be explained by psychiatric knowledge and principles. This is dangerous in itself. And irresponsible. And it is hypocritical of the Church to run to the psychiatrist when the Church and psychiatry are at war over whether or not gay people are ill and transsexuals and very religious people etc are psychologically or mentally ill. The psychiatrist is not consulted when the Church says a demon has gone. The reason is that the Church is breaking the law by giving medical treatment without scientific warrant and the warrant of the medical establishment. If you took it on yourself to treat mental patients you would be arrested. There is nothing holy about any of the Church's exorcisms. At least it is an improvement on Jesus who took it for granted that the people brought to him were possessed and had no concern for verifying it or having it verified by the doctors of the day. If the Church were true to Jesus it would do the same vile and evil and irresponsible and fanatical thing. Jesus was also encouraging gullibility in those who brought the allegedly possessed to him. In fact, hardly any of the alleged victims showed any signs of truly being possessed. To do exorcisms in the name of Jesus is a sign of incompetence not of spiritual wisdom.

Is it really correct to say the Church exorcises demons when it commands them to go and they are still there? The demon stays put for ages indicating that the Church has no real power over it and is really laughing at Catholic superstition. There is every reason to think that the demon that leaves just wants to go to pastures new! It was not the exorcism that ejected it. The arrogant exorcist assumes it was his ceremonies and prayers that got the demon out. He cannot know that.

The victim during an exorcism is often aware of what is going on. The process must be very distressing for her or him. Not only is there a creepy ceremony going on, but it is often being repeated and it builds up hope that the demon will go and that hope is usually dashed. And the "demon" may be rampant and crazed during the exorcisms and start tormenting the victim with new ferocity. The victim is put through all that when there is absolutely no evidence that exorcism really benefits. The demon may go in its own time or start to hide in the victim. Exorcism is abuse. When the victim is a child this is heinous abuse.

Surely the victim could be trained or authorised to perform her or his own exorcism? The victim after all is privy to knowledge and experience that no other person can have. It is only justice to train people to cast out the demons themselves if there really are demons. Yet it is restricted to clergy even though Jesus didn't care who exorcised. The Catholic clergy in particular is guilty of using possession and exorcism to build up its own mystique and power.

The Church says there is a danger of the exorcist getting possessed if he acts without Church authority or if he is not trained properly. If a demon seems to leave the victim is it only moving house into the exorcist? It would hide its presence in the exorcist if it finds exorcisms upsetting. It would not want the exorcists on its back again if they really have any power.

The miracle of exorcism forces society to take the exorcists' word for it that this miracle really happens. Exorcisms are not public events. It is insane to imagine how a God can allow the miracle of possession to take place and then set up the miracle of exorcism. What is the point? The miracles are only signs for the exorcists. Nobody else. The exorcists might be lying and deluded. We do not believe anybody who says they were abducted by aliens when there is only their word for it. So why believe the exorcists?

Back to the Catholic exorcisms being an alleged proof that the Church is the only religion authorised by God to teach the truth. The demons would not advertise the true religion by attracting an exorcist by abusing the victim. If they do then God must be possessing them to make them do outrageous stupid things! Maybe it is God that should be exorcised!

If love is a person and love is God and God is love, then it follows that you cannot cast a demon out by telling it to go. Just be so holy that it cannot stand your presence. Exorcism is certainly magic.

The Catholic Church says that it is a sin for Catholics to organise an exorcism without the express permission of the bishop. The Church fears the legal consequences of people trying to cast demons out of people who are actually mentally ill and not possessed. So the Church investigates and has the person checked out by psychiatrists and then decides if it will undertake an exorcism. Even if there are seeming signs of possession the Church may not approve the exorcism in case it is wrong. The Church does not claim infallibility in discerning possession. Even if there is poltergeist activity, it does not prove the person acting possessed really is possessed. Speaking in unknown languages can be explained naturally. And if there is such a thing as psychic power, this power may be used by a self-destructive person who craves attention. Perhaps the person is wilfully simulating demonic possession and there is no demon. Nobody has the right to tell anybody they have a demon or may have one when there is no way of knowing if they have.

Even if the true religion could cast out demons we cannot prove that it really does so because God wishes to advertise it as his authorised teaching authority. Maybe other religions cast out demons too not because they are really holy but because God wishes to help.

Exorcisms do not prove anything about religious beliefs for the demons might pretend to have gone to avoid expulsion. In fact, they probably would. Exorcists report that demons are outrageously untruthful and will pretend they are going or have gone.

The exorcists report that demons may use the victim's madness or illness or fear to hide behind. That way their activity is hidden. It should be illegal to bring exorcists in when they suspect mental illness of being a sign of possession. They clearly show they would tell a mentally ill person that the devil is or may be masking his presence by making it look like the person suffers a chemical or medical disturbance. That is the height of superstition and moral terrorism. The criteria used to judge if a person is possessed is so bad that there is no way to be reasonably sure if the person is a faker or not.

An exorcist once said, "The devil is a liar and the father of lies. Once you have identified the demon you don't know if you really have or not. The demon lurks within. He will lie, lie, lie. He will pretend to respond to your commands, but then trick you. He is malicious beyond your imaginings." A demon should be smarter than a human priest. The demon can find out things the priest cannot. It is fanatical for the priest to be so sure that Jesus is going to back him up and help him a puny man contend with a genius from Hell.

Exorcists have been known to declare a person to be freed from a demon though the person is clearly mentally ill. They reason that the illness and the demon were two separate spheres.

Exorcists say a demon can be calm and cowardly one minute and full of rage and berserk the next. That is simply refusing to see that the victim is mad not possessed. Human beings can be changeable for our brains, crudely speaking, turn off certain characteristics and turn other ones on. But a demon can't have a brain so why does it act like it does? Because it is not really a demon!

Possession implies that the demons don't have much power for they can't possess everybody (not even everybody who is playing with fire) or it implies that the possessed person has asked for to be possessed and you have to consent before God will let demons into you. If demons are not that numerous then it would be a better idea if they controlled and bothered a person secretly. Evil that looks good is the most deadly type.

The claim that God won't let demons torment somebody in secret is just an assumption. He lets humans do that so why not devils? The evidence is therefore against it.

Belief in exorcism is evil for there is no evidence for exorcism – that it is real. So exorcism is evil.

Evil cannot expel evil or an exorcism being evil cannot put demons out. If the demons go it is not because they are put out. The exorcist is a villain in league with the forces of evil so his work does not prove any religious conjecture apart from Satanism.

Demons would be happy to leave a victim at the bidding of the exorcist when it is necessary to do more damage with somebody else or if they see their departure will reduce the unpopularity of evil in some roundabout way perhaps. But then it would not be the exorcist who put them out. Exorcism cannot be proved. Exorcists and their supporters are know-it-all boasters. They are doing the Devil's work.

The idea that demons would torment a person which attracts the exorcist and shocks observers into renouncing the evil ways of the Devil for a mysterious purpose that maximises evil is wrong for we don't have free will. When they can pull

our strings internally to do their bidding they don't need complicated schemes which externally influence us. Secrecy guarantees them a better chance of success.

If God exists then he has complicated and mysterious plans. He only lets tormenting demons into a person so that he can defeat them. If the demons enter freely there must be no God for they would not do anything he lets them do for they would know he is up to something. If they are forced, which they would have to be, then it is God who should be exorcised.

If demons can be expelled by an exorcist then good magic is stronger than malign magic. But this cannot be true when the demons got control of the victim in the first place. There is no free will therefore there is no use in evil.

Exorcisms never happened immediately. The Church says they did in the time of Christ – he just commanded and the demon came out right away. Isn't there something contrived about the exorcisms performed by the Church when it takes the Church a long time to get the demons out?

A prayer that God wants to answer should be answered on the spot and the demon should be ejected immediately. It looks as if demons are happy enough to possess somebody for a while and just move on to somebody else when they feel like it while making it look like the exorcist got the demon out. But it goes on so long and the attacks of the alleged demon on the victim are exacerbated during the process for the exorcism makes the demon get really angry. No good God would stomach exorcism when it does this. So this suggests that the victim is just mentally ill and the supernatural tales about his or her affliction are exaggeration. Mental illness can often clear up eventually so is that why exorcism looks as if it worked at times?