

RELIGIOUS GUILT IS A SYMPTOM OF BEING SPIRITUALLY ABUSED

Guilt is when you feel bad about having given into temptation to do something forbidden or bad. Adler defined guilt as a sense of remorse that is not genuine. He meant that if you really feel bad about what you have done you will do something constructive and try to make amends. So guilt is feeling bad while merely moping around about it.

Feelings of guilt and shame and a wish to self-punish can lead to and usually do lead to a person staying in their sin or vice longer than you would expect or they end up stuck in it for life.

You may feel guilty about giving in to a desire to do bad or gain at the expense of another unjustly.

You may feel guilty only when your action is discovered.

Guilt protects you from the possibility that you may become a harmful person and that can result in harm for you. For example, the aggressive person makes everybody else aggressive towards him.

It protects you from the possibility that you may be found out.

Or it may protect you from both.

Guilt can also alert you to the fact that you are over-dependent on someone. If you feel very strong guilt over God or not being with a partner though you are with him more than others are with their partners then you need to face that guilt and work out what it is really about. Why are you so needy and dependent?

Guilt can result even when some kind of harm takes place that isn't your fault. A surgeon can feel guilty about having to cut a child to save the child's life.

Guilt can lead to you taking steps to avoid being found out. Thus it can act like it is policing you while making you even more calculating than you are.

You can feel guilt that is totally out of proportion to the harm you have done.

Guilt often but not always is what tells you an action is to be condemned and it punishes you. It cannot be taken as proof that an action really is bad. It punishes you for what it cannot prove. It is evil despite its pretence to be caring policeman.

If it is good for guilt to deter you from doing harm, then it follows that you need a bit of guilt and you do not need belief in God.

When belief in God is used on you as a tool for making you feel guilty, be clear that you are being abused and manipulated. If you are normal and healthy, your guilt will have nothing to do with God.

Guilt is about protecting you so God simply CANNOT come into it though some people are conditioned to think that he does.

Incredibly if you go to a Catholic priest with a guilt problem he suggests getting God to forgive you. But you can be forgiven and still feel guilty. You need to see why you feel guilty and deal with the underlying issues. Perhaps you feel bad because what you did confirms your underlying belief that you are bad and nobody would love you. The guilt will come back if this is not done and religion is not about dealing with self-esteem issues but about God. For everybody who assumes the priest helped them there will be ten more who would disagree.

There is no point in considering God important unless his doctrine that you can love the sinner and hate the sin is true.

The teaching of hate the sin and love the sinner makes no sense for hate is necessarily about hating a person. You cannot hurt the sin but only the person committing the sin. You cannot oppose the wellbeing of the sin for the sin is not a thing, it is something that makes a person a sinful kind of person.

People cannot love the sinner and hate the sin and be angry at it and not the sinner. Then they are left with the burden of guilt on top of whatever problems they have.

If a person kicks a baby, he or she will feel horrible and try to make amends and apologise. But if the person feels horrible because he or she has broken the law of God in doing that, additional and unnecessary guilt and remorse is created. This additional guilt is definitely a psychological disorder. It would be different if there was proof that there was a God to sin against but there isn't. Guilt like that will gather force and momentum and prove very destructive. It is vital that priests and the Church be banned from counselling people. The Church will reply that it has a remedy for the problem - confession. But this sends out a message that it is okay to hurt a person deliberately as long as you have a way to benefit them as well. And as feelings are not very rational there is no promise that confession really will help. Many people feel as bad about their sins after they are confessed to the priest as they do before they confess.

The lessons are that guilt is sometimes useful and partly useful and religion and God threaten to make it a worse problem and evil than what it is.

The feeling of guilt is useless. If something bad has been done, all the guilty feelings in the world are not going to help. Guilt makes you want to be punished and it is full of self-criticism. It makes you feel bad and less efficient at correcting the harm you have done and making atonement. It tells you you are bad and in that way it seeks to discourage you from doing better in the future.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

The Power of 'Negative Thinking', Tony Humphreys, Newleaf, Dublin, 1996