

Personal Autonomy thoughts inspired by a Christian book

From Timothy Keller's, Making Sense of God.

This book thinks of the believer and the unbeliever who has doubts about the claims Christianity makes for God. It seeks to argue that faith in God is the best way to become moral and it satisfies the needs of the human heart. It gives evidence for God but purports to give evidence why faith in God is a beneficial thing.

Today, patient autonomy, bodily autonomy, personal autonomy are increasingly seen as basic human rights. Keller clearly does not think so!

Keller notes that "love relationships require the loss of independence but that both parties must give it up together." Both people have to say, "You first. I will adjust for you, I will give up my freedom for you." He notes that it is exploitation if one person is saying that and the other is not and will not. He says you must give up the modern narrative of being a self-asserter but be a self-sacrificer instead.

There is hardly any real sacrifice if the other person is going to be another you and look after you. All you are doing is shifting how you deal with caring for yourself on to somebody else. The reality is that you should know best so there is an element of degradation in it as morally lofty as it sounds.

Keller says the only master who will not exploit you is Jesus. He says that a relationship where only one person gives up something is that person exploiting the other. Keller then explores how Jesus gave up so much to be one of us. The interesting thing about this point is that it by default says that the Jewish and Islamic God, and the God of the Philosophers, is a user. By extension, this makes the followers of these gods sound and look bad.

If we are not free even if we have no God for then our god will be money or health or something then how come we are free if we have God? Control is still happening. We are controlled by something no matter what. Do we mean free to get rewards from God? We will not get rewards from false gods such as money for they cannot reward for they are not personal beings and they will let us down. If I am in jail, the four walls control me. I cannot pass beyond them. Hypothetically, if it is the pope, God, Hitler, health or money that is locking me up it does not matter. To say it does is disrespectful to me. God may reward me for putting up with it but even that is irrelevant.

Keller says that trying to look for nobody to validate and accept you but yourself will not work for we are made to get it from others too.

He says the person is mentally disturbed who thinks, "I don't care that literally everyone else in the world thinks I'm a monster. I love myself and that is all that matters."

Interestingly given that most people are monsters to God if he exists and don't give him the love that is his due then that amounts to a lot of mental disturbance. And psychiatry does not care for it is God who is abused. Why does he say mentally disturbed and not evil? He insults real mental illness in saying that. It is gaslighting to try and make out atheists are insane or not right in the head. Keller is not worried about your free will if you have to believe in God or be considered insane!

