

love the sinner and hate the sin - why?

Christianity claims it despises and hates evil actions and not the people who commit the actions. It tells you to love sinners and hate their sins.

What is the justification for this idea?

It is based on the notion that a person can be separated from the evil in them. It is like the evil is nothing to do with them and is like something that got into them such as the flu or common cold.

But the whole point of condemning evil is to identify it to warn people that there is danger and once it is identified something maybe can be done about it. Evil means intolerable. The Catholic Church teaches that we must hate sin in ourselves and others. We are told by the Church that we must hate the sin in others because we love them. Fighting evil means stopping not the evil but the people who serve that evil. To fight evil instead of the doers of the evil makes no sense. It will desensitise you. They will take advantage of that.

The concept of moral evil is based on the concept of evil. The latter is the basic form and the first is just another kind of it. Moral evil is a form of evil that must be punished - it is against moral values and the moral law. So it is more important if a person is doing evil than if they are doing moral evil. Here is the difference. A person who is on drugs and who thinks euthanising people on request is good is not guilty of moral evil in doing this for her mind is warped. She is goes off the drugs and still does it then that is moral evil when she knows the moral law and violates it. But the fact remains that whether she means it or not she is still evil. Doing evil without knowing it means you have less control and serve evil better than you do if you do know it. The evil of ignorance is worse than moral evil. So if we are to love the sinner and be intolerant towards the sin and hate it, then clearly we are saying moral evil should not be tolerated. But why only moral evil? Why not condemn as evil the person who is unwittingly in the wrong religion? The person is still bad even if she or he does not mean to be. Why fight moral evil and ignore other evils? If you are so selective, then you are not really worried about evil at all. It is about getting an excuse for picking on people.

Sinners are supposedly loved unconditionally by God so to love him, we must not hate them. We must love them for God's sake. In reality this is not real love for the sinners though it can look and act like it. They are not loved for being good but because God loves them and does not care if they are good or bad. Loving the sinner and hating their sin will have no effect on them if you are doing this just for God! It will in fact make them worse for not feeling very loved is a major factor in people turning evil. They will not love this God who condemns those who love them properly.

Love for sinners for God's sake is not love at all. Love the sinner and hate the sin is thus refuted. The love is fake and the hate is real. The sinner is hated and the person is too goody goody to admit to hating.

God supposedly separates sin and sinner. If God cares if their actions are good or bad that means nothing when he dissociates their actions from them as if they are totally separate from them. It is hard to see how God can really hate sin if he can love people without caring if they are good or bad. That is really saying people being people matter and people being good or bad does not. And if people matter and their being good or bad does not, then surely then people cannot really matter!

Religion says there is a difference between the person and what he or she does. The person is bigger than any action of theirs. That is true. If you steal a pen, you cannot be seen simply as the stealer of the pen. You are other things too. You are a good son. You are friendly and cheerful and so on. But this difference has absolutely nothing to do with distinguishing a person from their sin. It is an attempt to obscure the fact that religious people hate sinners. In fact the reason why you can hate somebody is because they have good points. The good points fuel your hate for you see that they could be better people instead of doing wrong that provokes you to hate. Jesus himself made the same point in Matthew 25:14-30 which clearly says that the good points in a sinner are a reason to hate and abuse him not a reason to love him. Jesus said that the kingdom of Heaven is like a man who rewards those to whom he gave his money for safekeeping when they made a profit for him and who called a servant who simply returned the money without trying to turn it to profit for him a good for nothing. The man says that the servant who is profitless whatever good he has will be taken from him and he will be thrown out into the dark where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth in agony. This is a denial that there is any good in the sinner. The good will not be acknowledged unless it bears fruit. As unfair as this seems, it explains why the servant is called wicked and lazy.

It is easy to say that a person is bigger than any action of theirs when they do not commit any huge evil. What if they murder or rape a child? And society and the law do not treat all people as being bigger than their evil.

Take the bad parent. If you say you hate a person as a bad parent but love the person otherwise that sounds reasonable. But it is not when the person defines herself as a parent. Saying, "I love this sinner because she is otherwise good" means nothing. People can say that of Hitler. It is only said to cover up that you do not really separate the sin from the sinner.

If you oppose evil, you must be a good person. Whoever does not oppose evil but who lives a good life is not really good. He or she has a bad dark heart.

Religion agrees. It says that is why it is necessary to hate sin in yourself and others. Hating sin is not very nice or happiness inducing. Moreover, if somebody's sinning upsets you, it will lead to more upset in time. You will fear being upset again. It accumulates. Hating sin would be evil for hate means that if sin were able to suffer you would make it suffer. It is personal ill-feeling in a hypothetical but real sense. It seems fake to direct ill-feeling and rancour away from the sinner to the sin. It's artificial and self-righteous. But religion might keep maintaining that it is a necessary evil for the alternative is worse. But then religion should stop pretending to be so safe and goody goody. It needs to tell us the risks of being religious. It should certainly not be influencing and conditioning and imposing membership on children and on the unwary.

If you let evil thrive though able to do something or say something, then you cannot pretend to love people. So opposing evil is to be your basic attitude. You need that to be able to love. Love then is less basic. It would be better to be a person who opposes evil than a person who loves if it has to be one or the other. Hating the sin is more important than loving the sinner. That takes the charm out of the doctrine. Nobody wants their sin hated in preference to loving them.