

Religion and its Sociopathism

Are you always a psychological egoist when you are religious?

Ethical egoism is the doctrine that you should do only what is best for you and that helping others is only a good idea if you get a good feeling or some other comeback from it. It's biggest and essential flaw is this: "If you come first or alone matter then it follows you must tell others to serve others not themselves. You tell them that so that you will benefit. Ethics is that you which you have to tell people to do for it ethics is essentially about principles. So ethical egoism contradicts itself for you cannot teach it to others."

By the way if it is principle that I come first or alone truly matter then I am declaring myself divine! Others are just my subjects without knowing it. The idea that ethical egoism is religious in its own way is irrefutable. That means religious people may indeed be religious but not in the way they want you to think. The Catholic saint and the ascetical Hindu monk are not really Catholic or Hindu religionists - it only looks that way.

It may be that people who preach altruism are in fact egoists! They are very manipulative if that is the case.

Many say that ethical egoism is not ethics! They would say, "There is something wrong with an ethics that tells you to take from others for only you matter to you. Ethics cannot be just about you. And if it has you pretending like our manipulative "friends" it is incoherent for a manipulation based ethic is as logical as a poison laden health drink."

EGOCENTRIC

Believers' estimates of God's beliefs are more egocentric than estimates of other people's beliefs.
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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19955414>

Abstract

People often reason egocentrically about others' beliefs, using their own beliefs as an inductive guide. Correlational, experimental, and neuroimaging evidence suggests that people may be even more egocentric when reasoning about a religious agent's beliefs (e.g., God). In both nationally representative and more local samples, people's own beliefs on important social and ethical issues were consistently correlated more strongly with estimates of God's beliefs than with estimates of other people's beliefs (Studies 1-4). Manipulating people's beliefs similarly influenced estimates of God's beliefs but did not as consistently influence estimates of other people's beliefs (Studies 5 and 6). A final neuroimaging study demonstrated a clear convergence in neural activity when reasoning about one's own beliefs and God's beliefs, but clear divergences when reasoning about another person's beliefs (Study 7). In particular, reasoning about God's beliefs activated areas associated with self-referential thinking more so than did reasoning about another person's beliefs. Believers commonly use inferences about God's beliefs as a moral compass, but that compass appears especially dependent on one's own existing beliefs.

Egoism

Egoism as an ethical theory says you must put your own interests and wellbeing above that of others. It does not rule out caring for others - it only says you care about yourself most. The extreme version says that everything we do is entirely about ourselves.

Psychological egoism is the theory that everything we do is caused by self-interest only. It says we can't help this – it is just the way we are made.

Even if psychological egoism is nonsense, it could be the case that in so far as you are religious or spiritual or both that you are a psychological egoist.

Psychological Egoism

Some psychologists believe in psychological egoism. They think its human nature and we are all the same in that respect.

If you don't want to go that far, you may wish to ask yourself the question, is being religious in any form psychologically egoistic?

The suggestion that religious people are engaging in a spiritual or religious form of psychological egoism is a controversial one. It comes across as cynical and bigoted and judgemental. It seems unnatural to suspect that Catholic saints for example who go among the dying to look after them have a self-centred or selfish motive.

A self-centred person cannot reach out to others for they have so many problems they cannot get out of thinking only for themselves. A selfish person is defined as a person who is able to love others for their own sake but who doesn't and who uses them to get what he or she wants. The saints could be either or a mixture of both.

People fear saying "holy" people are bad because they don't want to accuse them falsely or to make unnecessarily negative assumptions about them. There is the fear of discouraging goodness - fewer people will want to be good if they are going to be judged for it. The truly good person will not be put off by being judged. She will be doing good for it is good and not for the praise. So judging her should actually encourage her!

If being religious and being self-interested and out for yourself are inseparable then it could be that the religious person is self-centred and not selfish or vice versa. Or the person may be both to different degrees.

Religion - a symptom of being selfish or self-centred?

The Christian Religion is passive-aggressive. That's what we are going to prove. That is how its selfishness or self-centredness manifests. Passive aggression involves using yourself as a weapon against those who care about you in some way. The person will not take a job for it is what her family want her to do. It is possible to be passive-aggressive against yourself - self-hate is what it is usually called. Wanting to be bossed by a God is a sign of self-hate and passive-aggression against yourself. A benevolent commander is still a dictator.

Jesus as saviour is said to be invested with positive spiritual power. If Jesus was a fake then he is a bad spiritual influence and to serve him is opening yourself up to evil. Evil leads to deception and evil and deception are not necessarily about making you feel bad. A spiritual being or force that cannot harm or help is still harming in the sense that you are depending on it for spiritual help that is not there. You are blocked from the truth and without truth you cannot grow. You are blocked from the real spiritual good influence and power. The lack of concern in most religionists about truth and spiritual truth speaks of Jesus being impotent spiritually.

Religious believers believe rubbish easily because when they think others take it seriously that this somehow validates it. Believers are selfish because they endeavour to have their prejudices about truth and people confirmed. Instead of that they should want the truth confirmed as truth.

All agree that manipulating others is the strongest form of selfishness. In so far as you do not care for the truth about life and God etc, to that degree you are a manipulator.

Of the following who is the most selfish? Is it the person who manipulates others for

- #Money
- #Influence/Power
- #Sex
- #Praise
- #Two or more of those?

The person who is most selfish inside is the person who plots to get influence and power that they are not entitled to. Indeed you cannot manipulate to get money or sex or praise unless you start with scheming to get influence and power. And those who manipulate and flatter to get power and influence are the most selfish for they have the best chance of getting away with it and avail of it. We all know that if we abuse money and sex that the greed for them puts us at serious risk. Despite the risk and the self-destructiveness we still class it as selfishness though it seems more sacrificial than selfish. So the person who exploits and takes steps to avoid it backfiring is the most selfish.

When the manipulator succeeds at winning one of those it is a great buzz for the ego. He celebrates his success. He feels clever and powerful. This buzz, the reward, means more to him than actually being manipulative. It motivates him to devise new plots.

There is no ego buzz more powerful and addictive than the buzz people get when they have many people believing their

drive when they should know better. The manipulator enjoys getting rational people to accept the irrational just because he says the irrational is rational.

She enjoys getting people to believe the incoherent rubbish she dishes out to them.

He enjoys seeing people make huge sacrifices for his religious lies.

She enjoys getting people to believe important things on inadequate evidence just because they are taking her as an authority.

Religion may tolerate those who sin on the basis that if they are treated well and accepted they might change. It is feared that to quarrel with them will or may only confirm them in their disobedience to the faith. Or is it? Is it only an excuse for getting an easy life for life is hard if you offend people too much. If you respond in anger and hate to a person who attacks you for not believing in their religion, that does not change the fact that they know it is about truth and not you and not about how hurt they feel. If they offend you that does not mean their religious beliefs are wrong.

Manipulation sounds more like something a greedy and self-interested person would engage in. But not all religious people are ferocious about getting money. If you sacrifice all things for money, you would be said to be greedy and self-interested. That sounds strange considering your service of money is foolish. You can only spend so much. Also it will not necessarily stop you feeling unhappy. It will not save you from terminal illness or death. Surely you are worse if you think that doing good will help you win everlasting life in Heaven.

Belief in God leads to an increase in egoism

Religion sometimes says that it promotes God so that people will be able to bravely accept the trials and uncertainties of life. The God belief makes them strong enough to face up to them and to endure them. But does it really?

You cannot know yourself well enough to be able to tell if the strength came from you or not. If you are telling yourself that it is God then why are you doing so? Are you afraid to offend him in case it was and he is vindictive when crossed? Or it is to tell yourself that God is with you and there will be nothing you need to fear from now on? Neither one of these is good. Even if God never lets evil triumph ultimately, the person who puts God first or to whom God alone matters, has to be hypothetical and be of the attitude that, "If it is God's will that babies be tortured by Satan forever then so be it!" In the midst of good we are in evil.

You may talk about God and pray. But in so far as you are not manifesting the love that is God in your life, then your God is really an idol. You want a god of your own and you follow a good that may resemble the good that God wants you to do but which is in fact not it. If it is true that a relationship with God enables us to become remarkably and unusually good, then why are people like that so few and far between?

Suppose you believe we only or mainly or partly help others out of self-interest. Then if we think God will reward us that makes us even more self-interested than we would be if we were not believers in God.

To accept God for that reason is really not accepting him at all. If you want to believe in God for your own benefit then you are really using God and practicing selfishness in the form of virtue. You have the false virtue of the hypocrite. You will be in danger of fearing, hating and persecuting those who can cause your mask to slip. Unless God is accepted for his sake and not yours or anybody else's he is not accepted.

The selfish side of belief in miracles

One example of a selfish prejudice is how the believers in religion say we should assume the best about everybody unless there is sufficient reason to do otherwise and they would not believe a miracle report from a stranger which seems to call people to enter a different religion from theirs. But they easily believe the miracle tales produced by their own religion. But that is obviously unfair. You end up being a dishonest person who only believes the miracles that suits you. They won't admit that acceptance of the reality of miracles logically creates a precarious slippery slope for you should believe all miracles if you should believe any.

If people report miracles that is not going to do us any good. There is no such thing as the kind of miracle where a serial killer changes overnight and goes to the poorest part of Africa and single handedly without eating and sleeping tends a million babies in a month saving their lives. This stamina and strength would be miraculous. Instead we get rubbish like wafers turning into flesh and healings done to back up some sectarian or doctrinal point that has little or no direct relevance. Any relevance or inspiration it has, has to be imposed on it. If a stupid miracle happens and I have to rationalise how that is going to make the believer a kinder and better person, that is actually indecent. Rationalising is trying to deceive yourself and others and to stop them seeing that something is nonsense when it plainly is.

Also, you already know what kindness and a good person is so why would you need to see a miracle as teaching you lessons about kindness and goodness? A miracle will not happen to teach people what they know. No decent God will have you trying to impose moral lessons on miracles - that makes your wishes and interpretation the message. The miracle is not the message.

Miracles are signs of religious egoism at best - though as we have seen they are really signs of egotism. They encourage it. Religion has its share of people who imagine they believe but if they thought about they would realise that they do not. It has its share of people who like the escapism involved in religious practices and the sense of community and who do not believe a word of the actual doctrine itself. It is therefore stupid to argue say, "Christianity is good in itself because x is such a wonderful Christian."

So we can assume that those who believe in miracles are really carried away by their desire to believe in miracles. They cannot be taken seriously as disciples of truth.

The Self-Aggrandisement of "Love the Sinner and Hate the Sin"

Religion says we must hate the sin and love the sinner. The sin is not separate from the person - it is about the person, the kind of person. To wish the sin didn't exist is the same as wishing the person didn't exist to commit the sin. To love the sinner is to wish the person did exist. So loving the sinner and hating the sin is a contradiction.

If you oppose the sin you must oppose the sinner. Hate is merely opposition. Opposition is always an intention to harm something. If religion does not oppose sin, then it should not exist. There is no point and its just giving people an excuse for sectarianism and fomenting division.

And if religion admits the obvious that love the sinner and hate the sin does not work, it follows that it is inciting to hatred at least up to a point and not being honest about it.

Society is as bad as religion to be fair. When people have the freedom to be evil such as in wartime, their true colours emerge. Ultimately, that is down to some belief they have and it will ultimately be the crafty "I hate you but I am telling myself and everybody else that I do not" kind of thing.

Loving a person and hating the harm they do to themselves is different. You are not judging the person as a sinner.

Prayer

Religion condemns superstition as a selfish attempt to manipulate other people by magic. Both those who pray to God to do something and those who use superstition to control things argue that it is for the best when they fail. Even failure is turned into success. This is a tactic used by liars and frauds to avoid being exposed. Prayer is a form of superstition. The person who prays has no right then to object if somebody decides to drink deadly poison and who says the St Christopher medal will protect them.

God will do what is right whether we ask him or not if he is really wiser than us and more powerful. But if we reason, " He inspires us to pray for what he intends to send so it is not like the prayer causes him to act" we end up claiming to be infallible! And it is obvious that people do pray for things that never happen. Prayer thrives on the argument from ignorance: "I cannot know that the prayer is working or has worked though what I asked for happened. Therefore the prayer did it." That is even worse than superstition for superstition often tries to pass as scientific.

God would be the one thing we need if he is our maker and we depend on him for all we have and if he is the source of love. Religion creates a need for God, and keeps people praying to instil this need, and this need is an illusion. It is cruel in the extreme to make people to need what they do not need at all. Would it be right to make the poor need cake when they can need bread?

Finally

If psychiatry is generally uncertain that human nature is only or mainly motivated by self-interest and fakes altruism, it cannot deny that religion may always be based on egoistic motives.