

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH IS THREATENED AND UNDERMINED BY THE SIN TEACHING

Sin is the idea that wrong is done to God. Wrongdoing against another person is not the same thing. The two ideas are overlapped in religion. But is it good for mental health to believe in sin?

Mental illness must have a trigger or catalyst.

What is the catalyst of mental illness?

Wayne Oates held that the main driver of mental illness was "the rejection and exploitation of the individual by the community" (Adams, p 6). He blamed society.

I would add that a believer in God should be more prone to this kind of suffering as he or she will feel rejected by God. Sin accuses you of rejecting the one being to whom you owe everything and says you reject the happiness he offers you. Such ideas can only make the troubled person feel worse. Mental illness goes along with the notion that you are a worse person than what you are.

Believers are told that that the love of God and others go together and you must find God in others which is why if you hurt a poor person that is the same as hurting God. It may be a case that God creates others in such a way that to hurt them is the same as if you hurt him. He would have to set that up deliberately. A maker can decide that to insult his creation is to insult him. Now, if others are your mirror of God it follows you will respond to abuse from them as abuse from God. Your brain will make that link. Even a suspicion that God exists can be very damaging for some parts of the brain interpret data in a very simplistic and concrete way.

If hurting another person implies you offend the God that made them for they are his and his work then you are being accused of two things. You are insulting the being without which they would not exist and therefore insulting them. Then separately there is the issue of the wrong you have done. So if there is a God you are worse than you would be if there was not. So much for God grounding morality! The believer is at risk of taking offenses against his or her person harder than an unbeliever.

A being who can let something terrible happen to you is as fearful as one who would do it to you. A parent who molests you sexually is as bad as one who lets somebody else do it. If you are not damaged by faith in God then is your faith real?

"Fromm emphasized society as the major determinant of human personality. In particular, Fromm describes man as intrinsically and naturally good and attributes anything bad - evil - to society, especially when society causes the self to deny its own potential for growth and expression" (Vitz, p. 18).

It is objected that society is people and it makes no sense to say people are good and society is bad or at least too unhelpful. But people can be good but in structures that are bad. Society is really a collection of societies. It is structure built up of mini-structures. When mental illness is strong in religious societies the religion plainly has a lot to do with it. Many atheists think that religion needs to be erased from society for it creates an environment that damages people. That charge needs investigation. So far we have seen that it is right.

It is said that if human beings are at least non-malignant by nature then systems and religions are to blame for the harm they do and for the distress they suffer. Those who promote the religions such as parents are responsible. And not only for the damage done to their own children but through the system they unwittingly hurt others. When an evil system rises to power the unwitting harm soon becomes witting.

Sin and blame

Many feel that psychology blames everybody but the person. You can't really say that the badness in you is always somebody else's fault for their own will say it is somebody else's fault too. To blame everybody is to blame nobody. Blame has to do with a perception of wrong behaviour or bad treatment but if you cannot be to blame ever then it follows that there is no such thing as right and wrong. To blame everybody else by default is to be totally incoherent.

It sounds odd to say that person x is not bad but everybody else is. If x is really as important as everybody else she or he must have faults. So not blaming her or him is in a sense degrading her or him. Those who want to blame somebody else find a godsend in God! They can blame him!

The Bible teaches a lot of things about temptation and sin.

It starts off with a story about how temptation led to the first sin - the sin of Adam and Eve.

Eve may have been tempted and this was nothing to do with her but she then internalised that temptation and thus tempted herself. So it is only the initial suggestion that is not her fault. The temptation was not to do harm but to eat something God had banned. The sin was actually simply Adam and Eve deciding God was a liar and that eating the forbidden fruit would be the right thing to do.

The Bible is clear that God makes us suffer for what Adam and Eve did. God cursed and rejected King Saul for what the people did. They refused to kill all the Amalekites. God considers people not as individuals but as a group.

The concept of sin can lead to you punishing yourself for what you have not done.

Depression usually involves the person feeling that something they have done is a terrible thing when in fact it is not or is merely human. A depressive person can feel they have failed to be there for the most important people in the world of the most important being ever: God. Christians need to take responsibility for causing that or risking causing it in innocent people. Teachings such as these are disgraceful:

Jesus died for sin to make up for it therefore to sin is to be to blame for his terrible death.

If you die without repenting of sin you will never see God but will be banned from Heaven for all eternity to the pains of Hell.

Sin is the worst evil for God can tolerate death and suffering but not it.

Religion may define sin as immorality or breaking God's law but the reason it sees it as immoral and illegal in divine law is that it does those terrible things.

Psychology tends to see not sin but a psychological malady. Millions find that approach helpful and constructive. The Bible denies that sin or doing wrong is just an illness. You cannot help having an illness but you can help sinning. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 Peter 5:8,9. James 1:14,15 teaches that sin is a mystery and full of Trojan horses that destroy you in the end. How can you consent to all the badness that arises from sin if sin is a mystery? Taking the risk counts as consent.

The other difference between a disease and a sin is that you justify the sin and want to stay in it while you want rid of a disease full stop.

Nobody encourages you to get ill but they will encourage your sin.

Christians say that sinners with emotional problems will try to divert your attention in relation to their sins by masking them with odd behaviour. It is as if they want to feel they are not sinners by having you judge them as unstable.

Love the sinner not the sin

Modern psychology seems to want you to feel good about yourself no matter what. They tell you that if your beliefs make you feel you are a wrongdoer or make you feel guilty or ashamed then the beliefs have to be discarded. They argue that some traits even ones that man call bad are about you being you. They tell you to be yourself

The Christian says, "No matter how a person acts, we ought to love the person." Those who do evil do it not as actors but as people. It degrades them and the evil to deny that. It is not love to condemn somebody as a sinner for failing to love a person who succeeds in personifying evil! So while Christians love sinners and hate sins they do not love those who see that the problem is not the sin but the person! And we are amazed at how badly Christianity has behaved all those centuries! The contradictions mean the doctrine of loving sinners is just noise not doctrine. It is not a teaching - it is nothing. The teaching though foundational to the faith in fact leaves one with no way to say any uplifting act is good or any harmful one is bad.

The Bible in Hebrews 5:14 supposedly commands Christian growth and asserts that they must use their God-given reason to help tell good and evil apart. Psychology finds that this cannot be done for good and evil are more about appearances and look plausible as long as you don't consider the big picture. All of us at heart think we should labour for the greatest happiness of the greatest number but that is not a moral position. Utilitarianism is not a moral view and yet it is essentially

what psychology is about. Even fixed rules do not solve the problem for you may be only carrying out your utilitarianism another way. The principle is still there. You want the rules for the sake of making people happy even if it means allowing late-term abortions and normalising them and making them frequent.

Quotes showing Psychology and Religion do not fit

American Psychological Association president, Donald Campbell stated, "There is in psychology today a general background assumption ... that repressive or inhibitory moral traditions are wrong" (Vitz, p. 49).

Stanley Anderson wrote: "The counselor should listen, show no authority, give no advice, not argue, talk only to aid or relieve or praise or guide the client and to clarify the problem" (Adams, p. 78).

Julian Hart is quoted as saying: "The good pastor in this office is not judgmental, he is not directive ... he is not moralistic. So when someone puts this kind of question to him, 'What ought I to do?' he knows that he must not answer it, whatever else he does or does not do. He is permitted to ask, 'Well, what do you think you ought to do?'" (Adams. p. 78).

Rollo May, in his book, *The Art of Counseling* wrote: "This is a crucial point. The counselee asks for advice. If the counselor succumbs to the temptation ... and gives advice or even specific instructions, he short-circuits the process and thwarts the real personality readjustment of the counselee ...; true counseling and the giving of advice are distinctly different functions ... Advice-giving is not an adequate counseling function because it violates the autonomy of personality. It has been agreed that personality must be free and autonomous; how, then, can one person justifiably pass ready-made decisions down to another. Ethically one cannot do it; and practically one cannot - for advice from above can never effect any real change in the other's personality" (Adams, p. 79,80).

Carroll Wise is quoted: "We can say frankly that we see no place in pastoral care for the passing of judgment in terms of condemnation or name calling, or of moralistic preachments" (Adams, p. 85).

Here is a Rollo May quotation: "This brings us to the matter of moral judgments in counseling. It is clear, first from a Christian point of view, that no one has a right to judge another human being; the command, judge not, is an incontrovertible, particularly since it was given a dynamic by Jesus' own life. And psychotherapeutically in the second place, judging is unpermissible; 'and above all,' as Adler says, 'let us never allow ourselves to make any moral judgments, judgments concerning the moral worth of a human being'" (Adams, p. 87,85).

The claim that Jesus agreed with psychology that judging is not an option is rubbish. He said that one must look at one's own record before judging somebody else's. He said they can judge then once they do that.

Counsellors do not concentrate on moral flaws but how the person feels about what they do. It does not follow that psychology is against judging across the board. It is only banning it when you are trying to help a person feel better. It is part of the method.

The hypocrisy of psychology

Proverbs 19:20 commands advice but therapists carefully avoid giving advice.

If you tell somebody what they do is wrong psychology will tell you to say nothing. But it feels it can tell you that you should say nothing. While you cannot rebuke another you get rebuked if you do!

They advise people to advise nobody. But that is advice itself!

The Bible versus counselling

The Bible opposes therapists who try to excuse wrongdoing clients and who refuse to rebuke them. The Bible bans holding grudges or hatred towards others but clearly warns that the must be corrected when doing wrong. Read Proverbs 28:4 and read how Jesus told us to rebuke others in Luke 17:3. In Acts 8:22 Peter rebukes a person and tells them to repent and how wicked they are. We are expect to imitate such behaviour according to Philippians 3:17; 4:9. 2 Timothy 4:2-4 tells us to preach and reprove and correct sinners.

Jesus repeatedly endorsed the need to rebuke sin and by implication rebuke those who made excuses for it. His life was presented as a rebuke.

John 7:7 - Jesus said: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil." The idea

that Jesus practiced the non-judgmental, non-directive approach of psychology is nonsense. When people suggest such an idea, you can be sure they know nothing of the real life Jesus lived. By telling us the world hates him Jesus is telling his followers to judge it as hating him.

The people who would reprimand you for hurting their God are very few and far between. That we would feel that such people are mentally disturbed speaks volumes.

Children

Proverbs 29:11 says that it is only the fool who gives into their feelings all the time. However, modern psychology believes it is bad to make somebody hide feelings. They must let them out and express them "ventilation". If people cannot be themselves and show their flaws they will end up repressed and suffering.

In Caring for Children Draper and Draper advocate "allowing children the right to have all kinds of feelings and wishes and to express them freely" (p. 281).

One thing that psychology does is that if you want to do big damage it tells you not to repress that but to do less damage instead. It will not call it evil. The child who hits his sister will be encouraged to hit the teddy instead. The child still feels he wants to hurt a person so instead of dehumanising a person to be able to hurt them he attacks something that is already dehumanised. To hit the teddy means you will do the same thing to a person you have a low enough opinion of.

Our animal nature

Psychology often treats humankind as higher animals. Some systems say that we are just evolved animals. Christians say that this contradicts the Bible view that humans are made in the image of God and thus that God does not want us to act like animals but live above them (Genesis 1:26-28). Some Christians say that when therapists teach that there is no distinction between right and wrong, they degrade people to the level of animals (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

But if we are higher animals there is no degradation in saying that. We are not being lowered to the degree of earthworms.

Its in the genes!

There is evidence that aversion to God or atheists or atheism can in some people be related to genetic causes. Aversion to God or the thinking that leads to God can triggered by a genetic tendency to be very rational and analytical. For that reason it is not an illness and religion has no right to force itself on children in case they have a genetic predisposition towards atheism through being rational. The genes put prejudices and the tendency to be prejudiced in people but that is no reason for letting people be prejudiced. Those who hate atheists would probably hate some other body that was not on their religious spectrum. If we want God and apes our cousins do not then there is something wrong with our genes.

Finally

It is clear that religion is inherently bad for ones inner mental life. It even piles on other risks and problems that are not inherent to it.