

Prayer is Psychological Manipulation

I grow not by prayer but by trying to find and stir good feelings towards others. Prayer doesn't come first. Neither can God.

Manipulation cannot take place in a vacuum. There has to be somebody letting you do it to them. Thus they consent to being manipulated. In reality, they may be letting themselves be influenced to their own detriment. We need others as examples of self-esteem so we must build up the self-esteem of others. If we manipulate, let us do it in such a way that it nurtures the self-esteem of others. But we must never manipulate.

You leave yourself open to manipulation by those who wish to use you and dent your dignity by embracing attitudes and traits such as the following:

You feel the most useful and loved - and feel the happiest - when you please others at the expense of your own wellbeing.

You feel you must serve and not be served.

You feel that you must be punished by serving others.

Prayer is said by Christians to be merely telling God what you want. They say it is not telling him to give you what you want. They say that to insist upon getting your way is disrespectful and that kind of prayer is not acceptable to God. It implies that God is a genie and only there to do what you want.

Some people say that when you use the power of magic you are trying to manipulate. Suppose it were. Prayerful manipulation is not justified - it is trying to override everybody else and control the universe. It is worse for it is even trying to fool God.

Magical manipulation is not justified but is a bit more justified than prayerful. Magic does not ask that people suffer to bring you what you ask. It only tries to find and demand the good. Prayer however is demanding that God hurt others to give you what you want or what he wants.

When you pray you are trying to have the world manipulated to suit your request. Be honest! When you ask for money to pay the bills you are asking God to kill people and do a lot of harm in the process of doing what you ask. All events on earth are linked and one event affects the other. If Napoleon hadn't fallen for Josephine the whole of history would have been very different. One event changes the course everything takes forever.

Prayer, connecting with God in a relationship, proves only how good we are at fooling ourselves. That is a bad trait to encourage. We fool ourselves that the harm we do is justifiable. Prayer is effective training in the art of self-deception.

That needs verification.

People may pray and find their thinking is clarified. It is not prayer that did that but the quiet time and their taking time to think straight. People feel they have done good for others by praying for them. But it is only a feeling. Instead of trying to feel that you have done good for others, you will go out and do them a favour and then feel you have done good. Prayer is cheating.

The Church deceives itself that we can know God and how he looks after us through prayer. Those who want to believe just remember the times prayer seemed to work. The excuse for failure is that God knew what we asked for would not be good for us so he refused it. So failures are really successes! This is a very manipulative doctrine. Witches and psychics use similar excuses to hide the fact that there is no evidence that they have real power.

To love God with all your heart, as Jesus commanded, means to hate sin with all your heart as well. Prayer is opening up to this principle - it's merely consenting with sincerity of heart to love God totally. That is what really matters. That is the true meaning of prayer - and the only meaning. To pray for health is a sin unless you are asking for the health solely that you can serve God. If you ask for health without much concern for God, really you are telling him that health means more to you than him. You are not praying but insulting. You are trying to manipulate him. Manipulation is violent in the sense that it tries to impose your will on others and trick them into thinking that is not happening. Freedom and truth go together. The happy person who feels free but because of a religion's lies is not free at all. He is not allowed to be his own person and is therefore a victim of violence.

Agnosticism in the strict sense of the word means you are neither sure or unsure of something being the truth. Most of us

use use the word in a looser way. We know that if we believe in something, there is always the possibility that our belief is incorrect. The believer in God, or the atheist, both may say that part of them is agnostic. Belief is not full certainty.

When belief is not full certainty, we have to try and be as certain as we can be. That is what integrity is all about. That involves making assumptions that pave the way for belief and do not weaken it. That also involves being open to revising and even reversing what you believe. If you assume that miracles happen and that prayer causes hidden or obvious miraculous intervention then you are making an assumption that increases the agnostic element of belief. For example, if you do not accept the notion of the supernatural and the miraculous, your belief on the whole could be 20% agnostic. If you do accept the notions, then the percentage is increased. The atheist is surer that a convict committed the crime than a believer would be. The believer has to be open to the view that supernatural or occult intervention set the person up to make him look like a criminal. Prayer undermines our right to rational discourse. It is us trying to brainwash ourselves that we should make our deliberations about what is true or false far more complicated. That is selfish because people suffer while we waste time.

Religion says that God alone is wise and good and since he freely made all things we owe all our devotion and love to him and he alone matters. Therefore all prayer is, in essence, the hearty praying of, "Thy will be done." It consists of confidence in divine power and submission to it which is the same as submission to him. In other words, you do not ask God to keep you safe on the boat tomorrow. That is expressing a desire to be safe when what you should be desiring is that God will do what he wants even if it means leaving you to drown in an accident. You are asking God to fulfil his desire instead of your own. In fact, if you really believe God is always right you will not wish to be safe on the boat. You will not wish it for anybody else either. You will wish that God will do what he wants even if that means he will send a storm to drown you and anybody who is with you.

Prayer then should not change how we feel. But religion markets itself on the premise that it can and will. It distorts the meaning of prayer to this effect. Religious people want you to pray so that their agenda will have a greater hold over you.

People like praying when it reminds them that the religion says there could be a Heaven waiting for us when we die - a state of permanent and everlasting happiness. Wise people know that we will have to face pain and suffering in life. What makes it worse is mulling over the pains of the past and fearing the pains and sufferings of the future. What you need to do is focus on now and keep your attention fixed only on the present. It is that skill you need and the more you practice it the more success you will achieve. It is not prayer you need therefore prayer is only going to get in the way. Even knowing that focusing on the present eliminates at least some suffering is liberating.

Prayer is reflecting the Christian refusal to accept the reality of human suffering - ie that its pain for nothing. Rather than that, it says God lets it happen for a good reason. If you accept suffering as it really is and as useless and inevitable you at least know you are throwing away the crutch and facing the reality. Using a crutch means at some level you don't accept the reality. By accepting the reality you avoid the pain non-acceptance causes. The sensible person does not console himself when he suffers by prayer or by thinking of Heaven or God's purpose. He faces the suffering head on. He does not make it worse by refusing to. Even partly refusing to causes more suffering. The sensible person is able to rise above the suffering. Consoling yourself with the thought of the power of prayer or a Heaven is not rising above it. It is trying to find comfort in a distraction. The person who feels they have no control over their suffering and their life thinks that by handing the control over to God that they in a sense regain control. They will get a rude awakening for they make their own suffering worse. You cannot control suffering but you can control your attitude to it. That is the only thing you can do.

No matter how horrendous your suffering is, you need to see it for what it is. You need to see it as useless and inevitable. If you don't see it as it is, it will make you.

Prayer has only meaning for those who believe in a transcendental God - a God who is above nature and who is master of all things. We mostly fear things that will not happen. We fear people thinking that if they murder you they do you a favour. Some faiths imply they are. Even accepting the notion of a transcendental God is making it possible that murdering you is the right thing to do. It is true that religion says God forbids murder. The main idea is that there is a transcendental God. The idea that he bans murder is second to that. And we only believe he bans it - we are not 100% certain. There is still the possibility that murder is not a sin or wrong. Merely accepting God is asserting the possibility that murder is right.

Nobody denies that even if there is a true religion, the mega-vast majority of God people today have beliefs they wrongly think were revealed by God. These people get their erroneous faith through prayer and it sustains it for many. When prayer fails to wean them off error and give them light is it not clear that prayer is making them pridefully sure that their own DIY creed is from God. The assurance is not coming from God but themselves.

All religionists teach that belief in God and any interest in spiritual matters will die away without prayer. Quality not quantity should matter with God so if a person prays once to be blessed with graces from God for life that prayer should suffice. If a person prays once in their life that God must do whatever he wills no matter who doesn't like it they should not need to pray again. Religion doesn't teach that prayer needs only be done once. It militates against the notion most

vehemently. Catholicism has gone as far as to declare it a serious sin that will deserve everlasting torment if you miss Mass on a Sunday.

Such teaching shows that prayer for it is not about God at all but about clergy wanting to brainwash you. Prayer is like auto-suggestion that reinforces the undue influence of religious faith and cultism on you. To have a child pray is to abuse that child.

If one person in the world prays that God's will be done and nobody else prays ever the prayer will cover them too. Same if the person asks that everybody get to Heaven to be with God forever.

If God answers the prayer he will do his own will. He will give blessings and health to unbelievers and he may give suffering and poverty to his followers. What good can it do one of the lucky ones then to pray? Believers attribute the blessings in life to praying to God but people who don't pray get the blessings too. Prayer seems fanciful and seems to be as unhealthy and distracting from reality as daydreaming.

The real reason why spiritual life flounders without prayer is that religion disguises prayer as something appealing and something that is wholesome even when it is a pain in the neck. This tells us that the trouble that religious people cause is all for one thing, their own spiritual thrills. Spirituality thrives on the denial that the human being is a naturally self-centred (I mean that we love ourselves and help others because we love ourselves not that we are naturally violent and evil) creature even in prayer. Only a minority of the people in any congregation might come close to being real authentic members of the religion they profess so religion and prayers and Masses cause a lot of dissension and hassle just for the convenience of a minority of real – say - Catholics in the midst of a great crowd of fake Catholics.

How anybody can say that religion is a justifiable evil is a mystery especially when they and their religion believe that people are more likely to abuse something than respect it or as religion puts it, because we have had original sin we are more likely to sin than to avoid sin. Prayer gives religious people the desire for gratification through religion. This is a subtle form of selfishness and not just selfishness but unbalanced and unreasonable selfishness. Since not everybody in a religion can expect to get their own way all the time, it is necessary for leaders to decide what is required for belief and to lay down rules for the flock.

Prayer encourages suspicion and division between people with different views. It causes antagonism. Prayer makes the devout look down on the good works of those who do not pray. The devout say you need grace - magic from God that helps you do what good is not natural to you - to do really good works for we are all infested with sin. So the more religious a person is the more likely it is that their good works are really good and done with a good motive. Prayer then is intended to curtain the devout off from “inferior” people.

The devout say that God does the good works they do, not themselves. This is a sinister denial of human goodness though it's a clear endorsement of prayer. When you do good don't be afraid to take the credit at least in your own mind. Don't be duped by schemers who want you to think you have nothing to offer without God. They want you to be addicted to their understanding of God to get false sense of self-esteem. Self-esteem that comes that way is dangerous and fragile and is not the real thing. It is a way of controlling you through their fake charm.

God is said to answer all prayers that plead for the enlightenment of the atheists and others for wisdom is one of the most important gifts. So prayer accuses atheists and agnostics and believers who barely believe of resisting his light if they don't convert to theism or convert properly or to whatever faith the one doing the praying thinks is the true religion. Prayer is insulting and arrogant.

If God is not influenced by prayer then what he is going to do he is going to do and prayer serves no purpose. God as a belief and prayer give unrealistic comfort. And there is nothing you can do to guarantee happiness for God might send depression on you or kill all your family in a car crash. Prayer then would not comfort you. If comfort came, it came not because of prayer but because God decided to give it irrespective of whether you prayed or not. You might as well never say a prayer then. It would be more realistic not to seek comfort in prayer. It would be a sin to look for comfort in it for that is making a demand of God who chooses to do what he likes and whose total autonomy must be upheld.

Jesus said to love your neighbour as yourself is like the commandment to love God with all your heart. That clearly shows that the God dogma implies we should all become fundamentalist fanatics for God said that no work that is good in his sight (though it may be good in the sight of men) can be done without prayer. The result is that we end up as one of these fundies in our attitude even when this attitude does not spill over into fanatical acts. The message prayer gives is that humanity was made for faith and not faith for humanity which is a clear invitation to the world to be full of poison disguised as sweetness.

Some professional psychological studies have been done to see what happens if people pray for say a half an hour a day every day for a number of weeks. The prayer involved using things such as the gospels and the imagination and different spiritual exercises for the sake of variety and maintaining interest. It was found that, above average, many of those who used these more exciting prayer techniques developed religious experiences and imagined that God was in them like electricity and images appeared in their minds almost akin to visions. They felt they had an emotional and wonderful encounter with God, a divine experience. They sensed they were in an intimate relationship with God based around awe.

This suggests that prayer does not spiritually change a person at all. If it did it would just work no matter if it were as dull as dishwater or full of wonder. Gimmick methods of prayer brainwash the person. It is the gimmicks that are effective and clearly it is unhealthy. Prayer is definitely psychological manipulation. The studies show it not just the theory.

Prayer is bad because religious belief is.

Atheists have a right to see prayer as an evil activity. It conditions people to prefer God's rights to human rights and to deepen the religious hold on the world with all the terrible disasters that brings. Prayer insults people. The view of God that it proposes for us is vile and has resulted in the vile hypocrisy that is so common in people of faith. One wonders if people who are unaffected by its danger really believe or only imagine that they believe. Prayer implies God should let good people suffer for he has the power to save them and won't. It can only lead to trouble. If people didn't see the need for praying they wouldn't see the need for believing in God so prayer must be exposed.

The benefits of prayer do not come from prayer at all which is why we should destroy people's faith in prayer and have no regrets. The benefits are nothing compared to the damage that is done. Prayer puts the thinking man and woman of prayer in danger of fanaticism. The pleasures of some people who pray cannot be used as an excuse for failing to deal with the issue.

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