

OBJECTIONS TO RELIGION BEING A MENTAL ILLNESS

Atheist Chris Stedman keeps saying religion is not a mental illness. It would not be as bad if he would say this is true of some religion. But he gives the impression that there are no cults of religion that are deranged.

He should see if religion is a process of dissociation. Dissociation is about escape from some trauma or the threat of a trauma. But the escape is not real. You are dulling yourself and that is not coming to terms with the pain. You can end up with seriously impaired ability to find or feel your emotions in your own body. You put yourself in danger for you to Jewish festivals for these things need to see threats clearly. How can you protect yourself otherwise? You feel you are outside or disconnected with your pain body, your body. To help yourself you have to get rid of anything that is dulling your sense of the pain that is there. The harder bit is getting rid of anything that MAY be doing this which is scary. If it works and you cast it out you will know it works and you can get it back. Get rid of the faith based and psychological pain killers or pain hidiers. You have to see that you are your body and the body is your mind and the mind is your body. This is lonely for you have to abandon God and prayer as they might be traps and crutches. Its fundamentally using atheism as a method to free yourself or to aim for freedom. Aim even if you think you will not succeed.

The atheistic mental health advocate Miri Mogilevsky stated, "'Religion and mental illness are different psychological processes". Mir suggests that religious faith will "stem from cognitive processes that are essentially adaptive, such as looking for patterns and feeling like a part of something larger than oneself." So religion is not a mental illness if it helps you be a functional member of society.

The reasoning is that religious belief helps you adapt to society. Mental illness blocks adapting. The religious will form communities but the insane will not integrate in society. They will think and do things that make such integration impossible.

Dr Ken Pargament stated, "When it comes to facilitating mental health, empirical data demonstrates that religious people have more positive emotion, more meaning in life, more life satisfaction, cope better with trauma, are more physically healthy, are more altruistic and socially connected, and are not diagnosed with mental illness more than other people."

Religion could easily be a foundation for many forms of mental illness. The believer might not develop the illness but is at risk. The only answer is to encourage her or him to keep religion at a polite distance.

WHAT HAS AUTOMATIC WRITING GOT TO DO WITH IT?

In the heyday of the Spiritualist or psychic movement, many produced books from "spirits" by automatic writing. The writer felt that some other being was moving their hand. It is felt that these spirits were secondary personalities for none of them showed any proof of being a dead spirit passed on. Mental dissociation was popularised as showing how you could split your self into two so that a new personality could emerge. Sounds like self-inflicted possession of a sort! The idea was that a subconscious personality could be contacted and made to communicate through ouija boards and so on. Many therapists advised against all that as there was a danger of bringing up repressed and forgotten and latent bad feelings and traumas. Sometimes the "spirits" were malicious to the person channelling them or to others. In this it is taken to be showing a different facet to the channeller.

When contraptions such as ouija boards and loosely held pencils were so adept at getting communications it is clear that the mind probably does a good enough job on its own without them by sending you subliminal lies and poison and by acting as if there is another person inside you. The mind simulates God. There is no need for God to explain why you feel accompanied and that there is a higher power. There is - your unconsciousness!

GROW

Founded in Australia in 1957 by Catholic priest, Cornelius Keogh, GROW is a God-based "support" system for people with mental health problems.

Typically it blames the victim not God, "We gave too much importance to ourselves and our feelings." "We grew inattentive to God's presence and providence and God's natural order in our lives". "We lost all insight into our condition." All these things in effect blame lack of faith for contributing to mental illness and try to make the person feel it is up to others to define her or his illness and not her or him. False hope is offered too, "We surrendered to the healing power of a wise and loving God." These answers to the problem are to be expected and are absolute proof that religion

does not help with mental illness. People involved with GROW are in recovery and it is to the success of mental health care and to people confiding in each other that GROW does not wreak more destruction than it should. And if it destroys it can blame lack of faith and the participants' alleged immaturity.

SYMPTOM OF A MENTAL ILLNESS?

A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts and damages a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning

If religion is not a mental illness, it could nevertheless be a symptom of a mental illness.

A religion could be a symptom of your own mental illness or somebody else's.

Abraham was going to kill his son for God.

Moses slaughtered and had people stoned to death because he thought God wanted it.

Jesus said that it is okay to murder big sinners as long as you are better than them. He made a woman sweat in front of a mob who said they were going to stone her though he knew they legally were going to be stopped anyway. He deliberately sought crucifixion.

Those religious heroes were clearly so insane that a diagnosis would have been done in seconds.

Christianity only recognises the work of doctors not because doctors get results but because God allegedly uses doctors to heal you. That makes them no different from the crank who urges you to keep away from doctors and trust in prayer. Both see doctors as useless in themselves. Both agree in principle that if God bans the healing work of doctors then God is right.

Religious people mostly if not always have delusions not beliefs.

If a religion is a symptom of mental illness, it is therefore a facilitator.

Social pressure and "because everybody does it" are major reasons why religion is so powerful.

Allowing social pressure to make you religious is in fact maladaptive.

Religious persons give all their love to invisible friends. They think these friends exist though they have no evidence. If you have a relationship with a non-existent friend that is a sign that hallucination of some kind is involved. Religion induces it. It is very extreme when the relationship is about giving all your love to God. Christ said that you and your neighbour do not come first for you must love God with all your heart.

Religious persons suffer from delusions - they think that no matter how terrible things get for them that some invisible friend will help with magic. They do this in spite of seeing people who are never helped. The evidence cannot shake their belief so it is a delusion.

The believer never learns. The believer trusts in prayer even if it never works. Excuses are made for its failure. They think, "Next time I will get my prayer answered." They might deny they are so confident that it will be answered exactly but actions speak louder.

Believers suffer from a tendency to accept absurd myths and the impossible as historically true. Christians believe in Adam and Eve despite the silly story about them in the Bible and the scientific proof that they are fiction. Fantasy and reality are mixed together. They cannot distinguish one from the other.

Believers suffer the paranoid belief that anybody who does not agree with their religious doctrines is sinful or in league wittingly or unwittingly with Satan.

Believers condone the emotional abuse inflicted on them. They feel awful and evil for doing harmless things such as masturbating or forgetting to pray. They think that some sin that is not that bad will put them in Hell forever. They have their psyche scarred for life. They will often become emotional abusers themselves. By supporting a religion of emotional abuse and passive aggression they are guilty by association.

Believers tend to hate and harass and use violence against those who will not agree with their religious beliefs.

Believers say God is important for there is no morality unless there is a God. They say you need to believe in God to understand why we must be moral. They say that unbelievers if they can behave in a moral way have no reason why and that even then it is because God overrides their ignorance and gifts them with moral tendencies. If believers are saying here is no difference between feeding a dog or torturing him to death if there is no God then they need psychiatric attention. The need to establish a difference is the first step. Taking this first step is itself moral. Then the next step is applying moral thinking to the difference. Though the difference is seen as assessing and not being moral for an is does not imply an ought it is clear that it is still moral. The error is in thinking that taking a step towards a moral issue is not itself moral. It is. Taking the step is even more important than having a moral system for you cannot have a moral system without it. The idea that God needs to be believed in to be moral is clearly trying to diagnose everybody as psychopaths who need a faith "treatment" to manage or cure the disorder.

Liberals and lefties typically try to deny that murder is a sin by saying murderers are mentally ill. Then they hypocritically exempt people like Moses and Muhammad and St Paul who murdered many.

If hypothetically religion does not do these things, it should lead to them. It should still be discarded on a point of principle.

DANGERS

The bad consequences of labelling religion as a mental illness include that it stops you looking into why sensible people get involved with something as irrational as religion.

The answer to this is that we all need to help each other become more rational. There is more to treating mental illness than just listening to professionals.

Another consequence is that it could be thought that simply being irrational means you re ill. But it could mean you are lazy or mistaken or misinformed or just haven't got the chance to think.

If religion is a mental illness, it can make other mental illnesses you have worse. It spreads the maladaptation that leads to further illness.

The world fears the next logical steps.

If religion is a sickness then the religious need professional help and need to go to therapists who can help them weed out the religious conditioning and sickness they suffer.

Children will have to be taken out of religious schools.

Children will have to be removed from religious parents.

Religious evangelisation will have to be prohibited for it spreads the mental illness.

The answer to all that is that the steps will only apply in serious cases. You cannot take every child away from religious parents. Some yes but the rest will need to be challenged on what they are doing to the child.

Fr. Peter Carota says on his blog that "All people who sin are mentally ill". Religion often thinks atheists and sinners are sick so why can't we atheists not think the religious leaders in particular are sick?

While the mentally ill are as harmless as anybody else, it is a fact that if the person is religious then their illness can go in a dangerous direction. 95% percent of crimes in the United States are committed by people who do not have any sign of a mental illness. Most of them do have religion though. It stands to reason that if a person believes a God has the right to kill and delegate that right to us and that belief is a mental disorder that they will prove dangerous.

CONTRADICTION

Contradictory beliefs are really not beliefs at all. They are just fighting each other. They are proof that one only imagines one believes. No matter what the Catholic or Mormon or Muslim or whatever says, the morals they get from being part of society is what matter to them even at the expense of specifically religious morals. Yet they will say they love God totally when in fact they would rather God went and died if it meant their little newborn baby could live. If religion is not a mental disorder then it wants to be. The more self-contradictory a "believer" is the more they are just calling themselves a believer.

OTHER THOUGHTS

To say religion is a mental illness supposedly insults mentally ill people but that is not true if religion really is a mental illness. It is religion that is insulting those people by stealing a place in society as if it were good and healthy. Also, mental illness is an umbrella term. If religion is one kind of mental illness that is not insulting people with more obvious kinds such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia for it is in a category of its own.

Are we defining religion and mentally ill people by mental illness. We are defining religion as mental illness as in how mental illness is a thing. We are not defining mentally ill people by their illness.

There are those who say we are not focusing on what draws people to religion if we dismiss it as mental illness. But with mental illness we still have to try to understand the person and what motivates them. It does not follow that if a person has a mental illness that we can just ignore them and dehumanise them.

If religion is not evil or a mental illness it could still be a stepping stone to them just as sugar is a stepping stone to diabetes

One study found that if you believe in a God who is there but who does not meddle in your life that "Belief in a deistic God and one's overall belief in God were not significantly related to any psychiatric symptoms." That is not a very good endorsement of religion as being good for your mind for it has a more interventionist God. Feelings and impulses are taken as his promptings.

Atheists can be irrational and that does not make them mentally ill. So what about religion? We are saying the irrationality of religion is a symptom of a delusion. The atheist is not having a relationship with a make believe friend. This relationship amounts to little more than pretending that your ideas and impulses are his way of talking to you. What would you think of a person who said that the tree communicates with him through how its leaves fall as if it were a code or sign.

WHAT RELIGION SAYS ABOUT FALSE RELIGION

People say that if characters like Muhammad, Moses or Joseph Smith were not really getting revelations from God though they said they were then they are liars or insane or both. Even religious people say that too. C.S. Lewis said insanity in Jesus was possible but he denied it was likely so it all comes down to faith and probability. But they admit the improbable can in fact be the truth. Lewis would agree that a liar can be insane as well or one thing one hour and the other the next. But why couldn't an insane man or a man with a mental problem not be God? He will not even go there! That Christians think a man with leprosy or a limp or with a hearing problem can be God - the Bible alludes to Jesus having what sounds like a limp - but not a mental illness is interesting. Why not? They obviously then on some level suspect Jesus was mentally disturbed and that is where t

FINALLY

Artistic expression can sometimes disguise mental disorders and religion is a form of artistic expression. Talking to people who are not there is normalised which means we have more madness here than in mad painters. Religion is a mental illness or at least has a lot to do with it and though most members do not need treatment they do not need their delusion reinforced or celebrated. Great harm will be done to many.

If self-deception can be helpful then it is only as a temporary measure. We don't need the supernatural. We all feel we will live for a long time though we know we will not. Natural self-deception is all we need. But it is better to get tough and face reality - that makes you your own person, your own strong person.

We must remember that Christ did encourage religious delusion as in sickness.

He said you must love God with your mind - believe in him totally. You must love God with all your heart - all your feelings are feelings of love for him alone. This centering on God is the greatest commandment according to the Bible. Everybody agrees that love your neighbour as yourself is put lower down and refers to how you treat your neighbour not how you are to feel about him. Hypothetically, if you had to choose love of God or a person you choose God. Jesus teaching is extremism. Extremism is never satisfied and to obey Christ is to go on the slippery slope to religious terrorism.

Catholics feel about the communion wafer as they do a person. That is not right.