

Religion's boast that it gives meaning to life in the light of sin

Religion says it gives your life the main purpose and value and tells you ultimately why you exist and why you are here. Christianity says it is all about a relationship with God. This ignores the fact that believers who think they are saved and ready for eternal happiness and sin does not matter are more than content. Born-again Christians who murder feel they can go straight to Heaven. In reality it is not a relationship with God that does the trick - it is the prospect of entering eternal bliss at the end of this terrible life that does it. Catholicism says forgiveness reestablishes a relationship with God. You break with him and his forgiveness makes it all right. But no mature relationship is like that. Forgiveness does not fix a relationship but only starts an attempt at mending. Believers fixing their relationship with God so easily is a sign that they have a God that suits them and it is about them not God. Religion could well be a congregation of people who are trying to hide the fact that each individual has a God who suits her or his own tastes. That could be all religion is for.

All this tells us that a relationship with God cannot be what life is about. And if God creates you for that it does not follow that you can respond. God's plan for you might not be your plan. Defiance of God can be the meaning of life. Religion sometimes as good as says that. You lose fear when you feel in control. If you feel you can defy God's will that entails a very strong sense of control. Thus defiance of God can be the best way of winning a sense of meaning.

And religions sometimes preach a God who has forgiven while other religions say that cannot be for they don't have the authority to supply forgiveness. For example, Catholicism teaches you need a properly ordained priest to forgive your serious sins so trying anything else will not work no matter what you feel.

The religion gives the bad ones a weak punishment or forgiveness which is just a way of being okay with what they have done while pretending to be opposed to it. Giving somebody a weak punishment is a form of condoning. And telling somebody God has forgiven them when it is up to God to communicate that even if he does not amounts to trying to get them forgiveness and not caring if it is real or not is also a form of condoning. Forgiveness to believers is the supreme good work and supreme message meaning that their goodness is really largely goodishness and hypocrisy.

It is interesting that those who boast how much God gives meaning to their lives are not interested in true forgiveness from him and hold some sin in their heart - usually they hold a nasty grudge. You would expect God's forgiveness to open up the meaning of life to you but it does not. The Church says there is no connection to God without it and to feel there is is to follow a delusion.

Many say that there is no justification for killing people and persecuting women in the name of God. But if there is a God and you have to depend on faith in him to get some idea of what he is like and to have a relationship with him you are by default saying that God uses evil to do good and that he has a plan that may look like a failure at times. You will say that even a baby getting cancer is the will of God. Those who say it is not do not understand what God means. As nothing allegedly exists without God, even if God lets things go their own way even that is controlled so they only act as if they are random but they are not. What is really happening is that people are treating terrible sickness and death as random and then going to God to beg him to do something about it. It is a desperate reaction based on emotion. Whoever encourages religion and faith so that people may do this is being manipulative. There are no easy answers and for many there are no answers at all. If there are no answers it is not cruel to refuse to pretend there are answers. Supporting people to face the truth is helping. All you can do is stand by their sides. The fact that religion and faith in times of trouble inspire irrationality and a willingness to praise and adore and serve a God who has let something terrible happen in order to get help from him is interesting. It is the same as a mother going to a tyrant whose will it is that her little children starve and regarding him as a good man who may give her bread for them. It is risky and irrational. The risk shows there is an inherent danger in faith in God.

One way or another people are saying God is to be obeyed even if he commands that you be sure that he will help you after hurting you (how can you be sure if you are in your right mind when he didn't help in the first place?) violence for he knows best. If faith gives meaning in life, what use is it if it results in the killing of even one person? Or in an attitude that condones terrible things being done to a child?

It is said by Christians that we are sinners by nature. That is we are not sinners because we sin but sin because we are sinners. The only difference between the thief and the adulterer is what sins they choose to commit - there is no difference in the fact that both are sinners. If you can be a sinner by nature then in theory you could have been a meaning-haver by nature instead or as well. Nobody but the atheist seems able to say that we get meaning because we are meaning havers. If we are meaning havers, then it follows that the only difference between us human beings is in what we do and think gives us meaning. It would mean that instead of looking for meaning in religion we should just let ourselves have meaning. Meaning is so in-built that even a sense that life has no meaning can give your life meaning! It is unavoidable! You could

perceive that your life has no value and you could live it in defiance of this perception. You are still living a meaningful life.

Acceptance of the existence of God removes a sense of purpose in life. Christians say they get meaning in life from the fact that God loves them no matter what they do. This is bizarre for what they do affects the relationship. A relationship that is not affected by what you do is not a relationship at all and how can you grow in a relationship like that? Is that the real attraction for you Christians? When the Christians sin they break the relationship. So they must only have a sense of meaning when they are at peace with him. But they clearly do not. Sinful Christians are often the happiest. It seems people already feel their lives mean something and religion manipulates them to think, "Yes it is your belief in what we say that is doing it!"

Some claim that God loving you and your thinking that he does, will make you feel worse if you reject him. So they say that it is not God loving you no matter that helps but you loving him. Many Christians who have no concern for good works or religion think they get meaning from the idea that they can sin all they want for it is Jesus who gets punished for it. So it is not true that only a loving relationship with God gives meaning for they have no such relationship with him. If some really get meaning in God they must get it from responding to God in good deeds and love. But you don't need God for good deeds and love. So kindness helps confer the feeling that your life has value not God.

Christians have to pretend the shamelessly absurd lie that the sinner can be loved while their sin is hated is true. This lie is their ultimate doctrine - the foundation of their Christian faith. They get away with it for people forget that sin is a crime that is to be punished - a crime against God's law. Too many think that sin is simply doing harm. And deserving punishment means that even if there are reasons why hating a person for hating is wrong, they still deserve it. If hating a hater is wrong, it isn't because they don't deserve it.

The doctrine that bad personal consequences will follow any wrong you do in your thoughts and words and actions and commissions is popular but it is a lie. Catholicism teaches that God has wisely set the universe up to turn against you if you do wrong. Sometimes the bad consequences are hard to attribute to any particular wrong doing. And sometimes they are not that bad. Most wrongs do not have bad consequences. The alcoholic ends up in hospital for he defied nature by drinking too much not because he sinfully put the bottle to his mouth. It cannot be called a sin when he is ill. Alcoholism is an illness. And many religions appeal to those who want methods that allegedly do away with any chance of punishment for sin.

The teaching that there is a hell of eternal punishment where there is depression and despair forever only sends out the message that people can deserve depression. In fact nobody does for it paralyses them. It is great to see people happy even if they have been "bad" for at least they can devote themselves to others even if they don't.

If meaning is important then meaning for the depressed comes first and should be the chief concern. Religion will not admit that which is an outrage.

The meaning of life is not a great thing if it does nothing in principle or in practice to ensure people will be good citizens. It is just a cynical religious ploy to indoctrinate by osmosis.