

SUFFERING ISNOT TRAINING FROM GOD BUT DEGRADATION

Suffering is?

Suffering is an emotional pain or agony. You can be happy and still have physical pain.

Suffering contains these ingredients.

One is the sense that one's life, at least at the time, is not worth it.

Another is the feeling that control over the good things that life can bring has vanished.

Another is the feeling that you have lost responsibility for your own life.

Suffering may lead to a sense that the future will be as much rubbish as the present is!

All of these are present but not necessarily to the same extent.

In brief, you cannot stand your existence. You do not want to be alive any more.

Sometimes you suffer so badly that you cannot even motivate yourself to end your existence.

Some do motivate themselves when they use faith in God or prayer or anti-depressants. A slight improvement happens. And it is enough to motivate them to kill themselves. Many suicides die because they are starting to get motivated to act.

What if good emerges when people suffer?

Some artists suffer terrible depression and produce fantastic works of art to cope with it. They put their experience on to the canvas or into the musical composition or whatever it is.

Does that prove that they did this because of suffering and not in spite of it?

If the answer is yes then should we be glad that they suffered so that the art could be produced? Yes but probably up to a point. If you are totally in favour of their suffering it is an error but it is not an error to worry about. It is not a huge error if you forget that you should only go so far. If you go one mile then going another half mile does not matter much. If you shoot people in general it matters does not matter a lot if you don't know you are not supposed to shoot nine year olds for human life is cheapened anyway. Same idea!

Should we believe that we can do great things for others because of our suffering and not in spite of it? No that doctrine is music to the ears of the tyrant. Most suffering comes from the fact that others don't support us well enough when we are sick and they often act maliciously or thoughtlessly towards us. The hero is a hero in spite of evil not because of it. Be a hero.

If you want to be slightly happy that the person suffered for the sake of the good result, that is not laudable. But at least you are not saying it is God's plan. Saying that makes your slight happiness even less laudable for you are implicitly praising a being for making life like that. If your happiness is a necessary evil you don't want to celebrate it more than you have to.

The Christian doctrines that we can be extremely self-destructive in our devotion to sin and that we are morally defective and the good we do is tainted show that we would make huge sacrifices for evil. Imagine what we harbour then in the safe place which is the heart! We are perfectly capable of being glad that a little baby is suffering instead of us. We are perfectly capable of being happy that your baby is suffering not mine even though yours will grow up to be one of the greatest humanitarians ever. And we should take it for granted that our compassion is half-compassion or totally faked. You can mask your relief or pleasure that another is suffering not you by saying there is a lovely plan in it.

Many atheists would say the artistic accomplishment was down to how the artists coped in spite of suffering and not down to suffering. Atheists are accused by many believers of lacking in compassion. If atheists have no real compassion then at least atheism in principle does not even ask if it was down to suffering. The believer in God has to ask that. The believer

has to avoid anything that casts God in a bad light. A bad belief raises bad questions like that.

God

Those who say that God gives meaning to life and suffering are lying. Even subtly encouraging a victim of suffering to please God by getting into a better emotional place only bullies them. Getting meaning for suffering matters more than getting meaning for life. Suffering people usually crave meaning the most.

Also, God religion is based on the doctrine that God though almighty and good has to let evil happen and that evil is chaos, vice, suffering and irrationality. Evil puts God in a position. It is akin to God having to struggle and try to contain and defeat the evil. Thus there is no guarantee that even if God has a plan that he can include your wellbeing in it. If God really respects our free will then there are no guarantees.

This would suggest that we should connect to God because of suffering and not in spite of it. Trying to have good in spite of it denies that God's plan may not benefit you. It insults the God who comes first.

FINALLY

If suffering is degradation then to try and get us to think it is not is evil. To condone my suffering in the guise of it being a gift of training from God is speaking for that of others too and that is not my place. I cannot really consent to something that forces itself on me and degrades me so any good I get from a terrible experience came in spite of it not because of it. The one who links suffering and holiness is evil for that is as good as saying x should suffer when x got holier seemingly because of it. The two things happening together does not mean that suffering made you holier. And to say that you are evil if you do not see your suffering a gift and as training shows there is no real compassion in the notion that it is a gift.

