

The Dark Side of Monotheism

Satanism and possession by evil spirits are but extreme examples of the underbelly of monotheism's renunciate moral system—a system that asks people not only to sacrifice this life for the next, but puts the highest value on the purity of selfless behavior. The self-centeredness and the carnality that are part of being an animal, if not made out-and-out evil, are made into something to repress and transcend. It is this artificial polarization between spiritual selflessness and carnal self-centeredness that is at the bottom of inner fragmentation.

The great fear, of course, is that if the forbidden were not suppressed, the base nature of humanity (whether original sin, callous social Darwinism, or greedy me-firsters) would reign. It is true that if children are not brought up with love, and if people are not treated well, they are very likely to take it out on those around them unless constrained by fear or coercion. The old authoritarian moralities kept people in line by building self-mistrust. This was done by creating an inner battle between good and evil wherein one could only become good by surrendering to the authority who told you what good is. That this is not working ought to be evident. Try telling a boy in the ghetto whose options are becoming a crack dealer or a shoeshine boy that he better make the right choice or he will go to hell. He may feel like he is already in hell.

The battle between an irreproachable God and an evil Satan creates a symbol system that polarizes thoughts and behavior into moral compartments that people can only fit into by denying essential parts of themselves. The ensuing struggle, as the denied or suppressed aspects seek some kind of expression, necessarily breeds self-mistrust and self-condemnation. From self-mistrust people look to an authority to find out how to be. This makes controlling them easy. Surrendering to an authority is yet another way of attempting to end the inner battle. The sad outcome of all this is that people remain children looking outward for verification—being willing to follow the latest fad, fashion, savior, or charismatic leader in the hope of feeling whole. Satanism is an extreme manifestation of this more general distortion brought about by dividing the self.

The basic crisis on the planet today is moral, involving how people treat each other and the planet. The old symbol systems that polarize good

and evil, the sacred and the secular, spirit and nature, the selfless and self-centered, created a division within human beings that led to rigid mental compartments. A truly whole person is one who can integrate the diversities within being human without denying any of them. Just as "good" people attempt to deny the cravings of the animal within them, satanists must deny their empathetic caring aspects.

Mental compartments easily justify hierarchical social compartments—caste and class, haves and have-nots, good guys and bad guys. Communism as a symbol system tried to eliminate only social compartments, but failed. The failure was partially because self-sacrifice was still made the highest good, with the difference being only in what one was sacrificing to. In communism one sacrifices to the abstract idea of the supposed collective good, the state. Communism at first seemed revolutionary, but it was still stuck in the old morality that made self-sacrifice the highest virtue. Regimes used this ideal to justify their blatant, heartless, and corrupt exercise of power. As a secular ideology, communism did not have the luxury of promising people otherworldly rewards. Thus it was a renunciate experiment whose results could be actually be seen. Its failure and the misery it wrought should not be ignored because religious renunciate worldviews cannot be so tested. Rather, they historically engendered their own ongoing miseries and extreme reactions—satanism being but one.

The ethical symbol systems of recorded history reflect the essential power structure of recorded history: authoritarian hierarchy. Unchallengeable authorities at the top of the hierarchy make this work by delineating who is to sacrifice what to whom. A different kind of symbol system for morality is necessary that can view the altruistic and the egotistical as not only each being needed to define the other, but each only having meaning in the context of the other. Caring for others is a natural human expression that cannot be ultimately fragmented off from caring for oneself. A morality that does not polarize the two would allow people to be in touch with and express what is appropriate, without being distorted by a compartmentalized psyche. The perspectives offered in this book do not make sacrifice a virtue in and of itself, and do not categorically divide the self-centered from the selfless. It is because of this division that so often corruption lies behind the face of righteousness.