

# RELIGIOUS TRAUMA: THE ETERNAL SINNER

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## PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Differentiating concepts of sin in world religions
- Preoccupation with sin/punishment in psychopathology
- Preoccupation with sin/punishment in non-clinical populations



## A NOTE ON TERMS

I'll be using the word "sin" as a catch-all, but many world religions do not actually use this term.

# SIN ACROSS THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

CHRISTIAN	ISLAM	JUDAISM
<p data-bbox="249 644 784 743">Major (mortal) vs. minor (venial)</p> <p data-bbox="249 843 759 943">Focus on thoughts and behaviors</p> <p data-bbox="249 1043 657 1143">Direct or mediated repentance</p>	<p data-bbox="986 636 1561 736">Major (al-Kaba'ir) vs. minor (al-Sagha'ir)</p> <p data-bbox="986 822 1495 922">Focus on behaviors and rituals</p> <p data-bbox="986 1008 1358 1051">Direct repentance</p>	<p data-bbox="1722 644 2247 851">Rebellious sins (pesha) vs. intentional sins (avone) vs. sins of ignorance (chet)</p> <p data-bbox="1722 951 2262 1051">Focus on behaviors and rituals</p> <p data-bbox="1722 1150 2119 1193">Direct repentance</p>

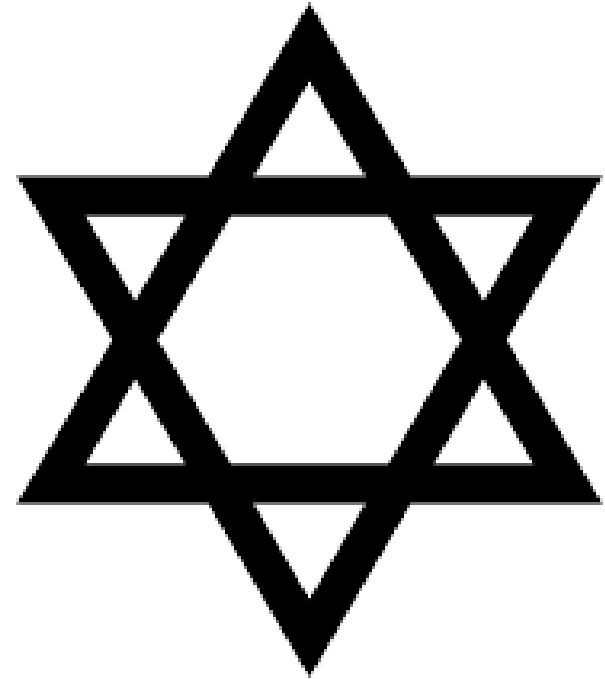


# EXAMPLES OF MAJOR SINS

- Polytheism
- Murder
- Witchcraft/sorcery
- Not fasting on Ramadan
- Cutting off relationships
- Adultery
- Using intoxicants
- Taking or paying interest

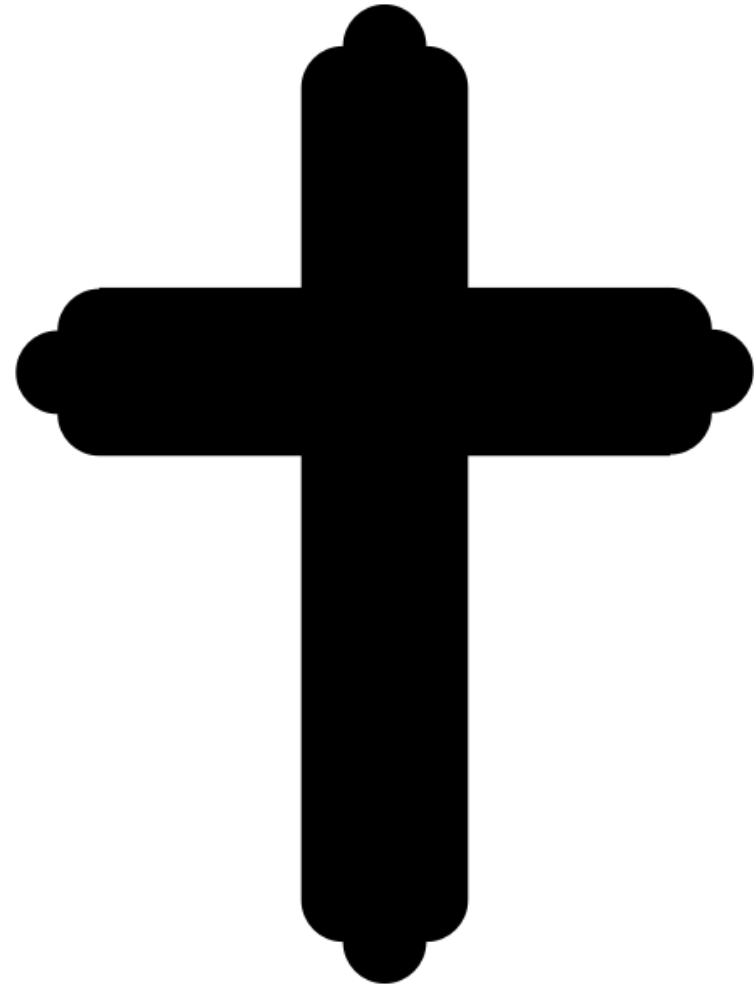
# EXAMPLES OF THE 613 COMMANDMENTS

- To know there is a God
- Not to worship idols
- Not to take God's Name in vain
- Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day
- Not to murder
- Respect your father and mother



# EXAMPLES OF MORTAL SINS

- Abortion
- Adultery
- Blasphemy
- Envy
- Lying
- Missing mass
- Murder
- Rape
- Suicide



# CONCEPTS OF HUMAN NATURE

CHRISTIAN	ISLAM	JUDAISM
<p>Inclination towards sin</p> <p>In some denominations, idea of “original sin” – forever tainted by sin from birth</p>	<p>Inclination towards sin, but not inherently sinful</p> <p>“Straying from the path” and “returning to Allah”</p>	<p>Inclination towards sin, but not inherently sinful</p> <p>“Straying from the path” and “returning to God”</p> <p>Most sins committed out of ignorance or neglect</p>



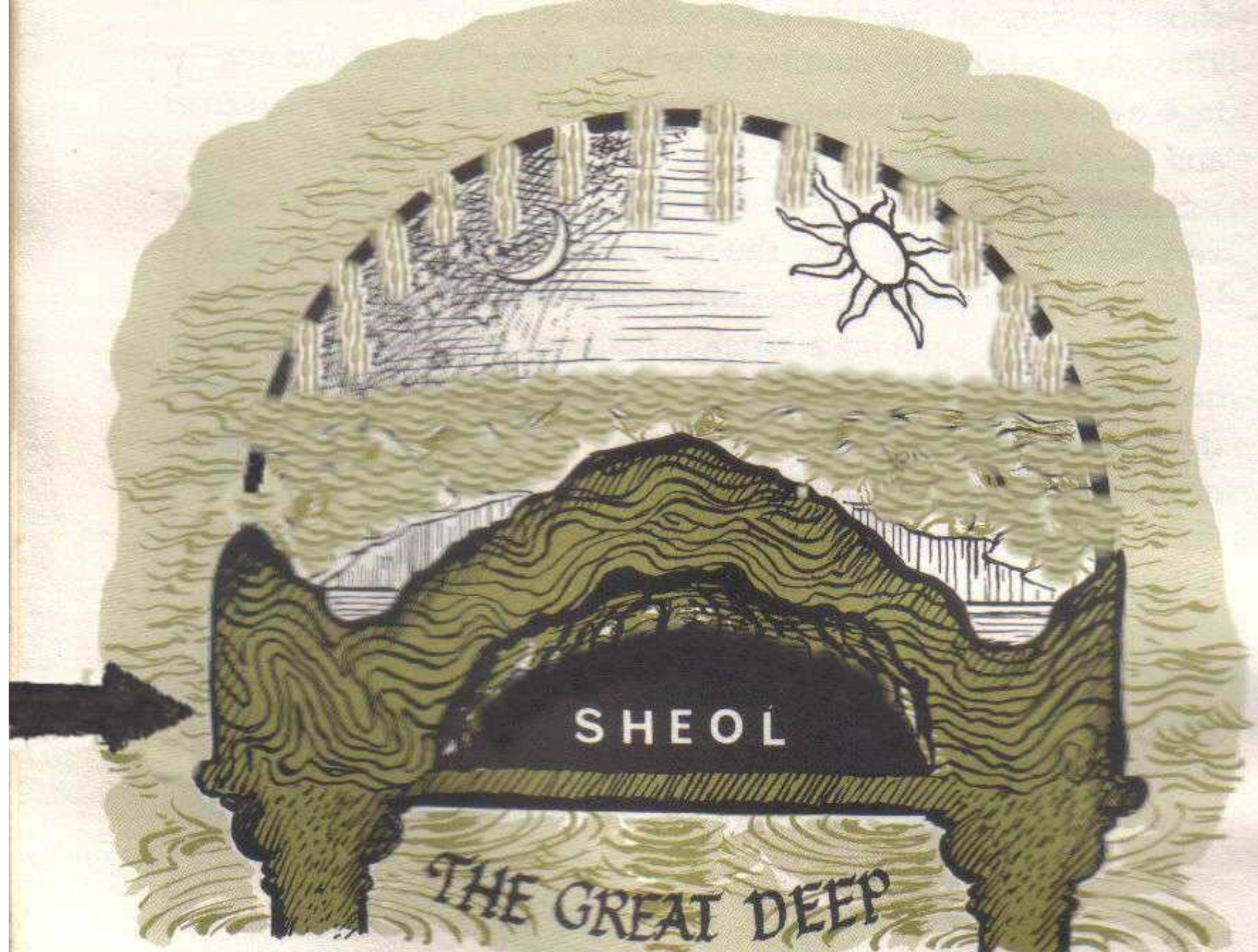
HELL





JAHANNAM

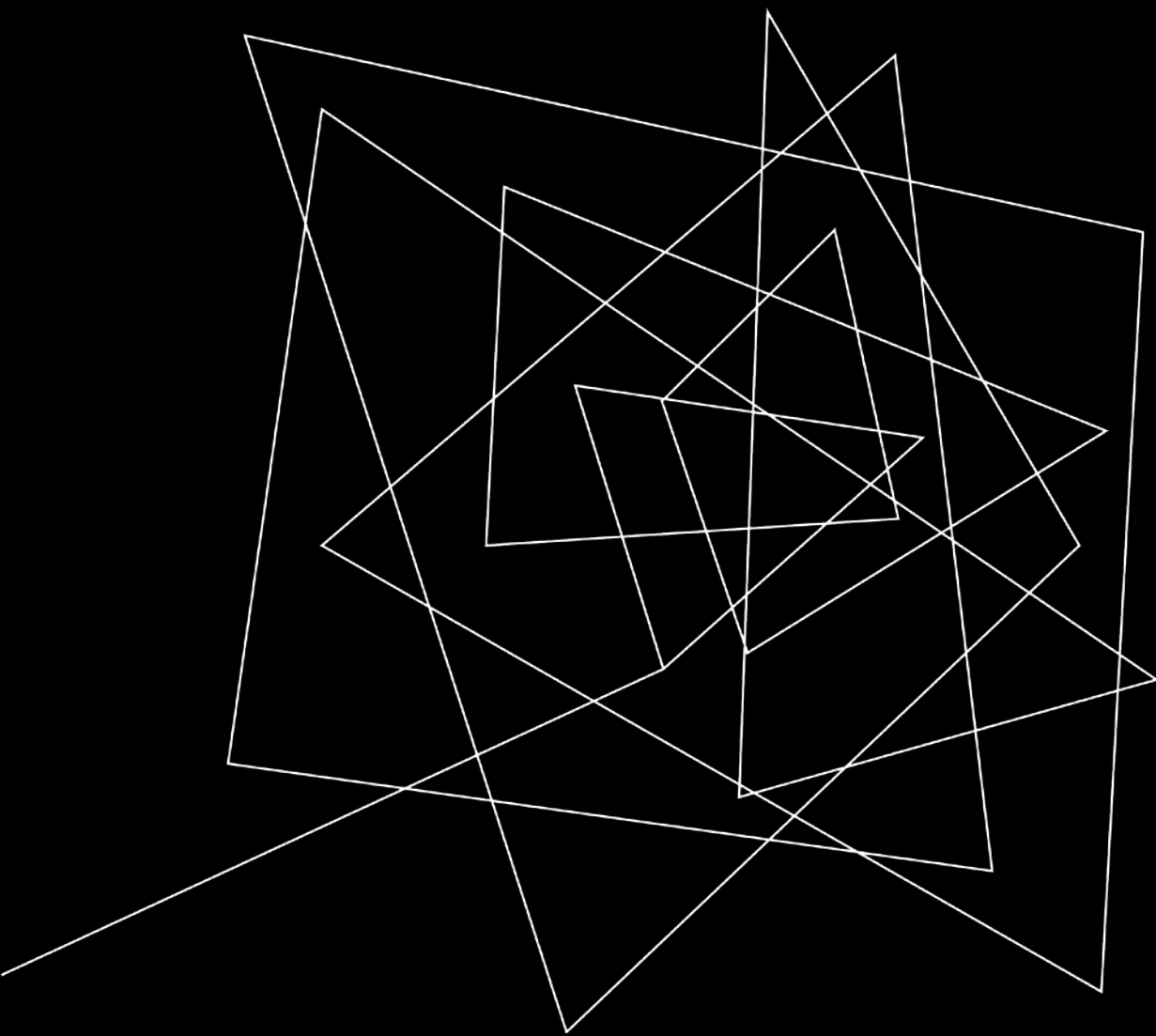
SHEOL





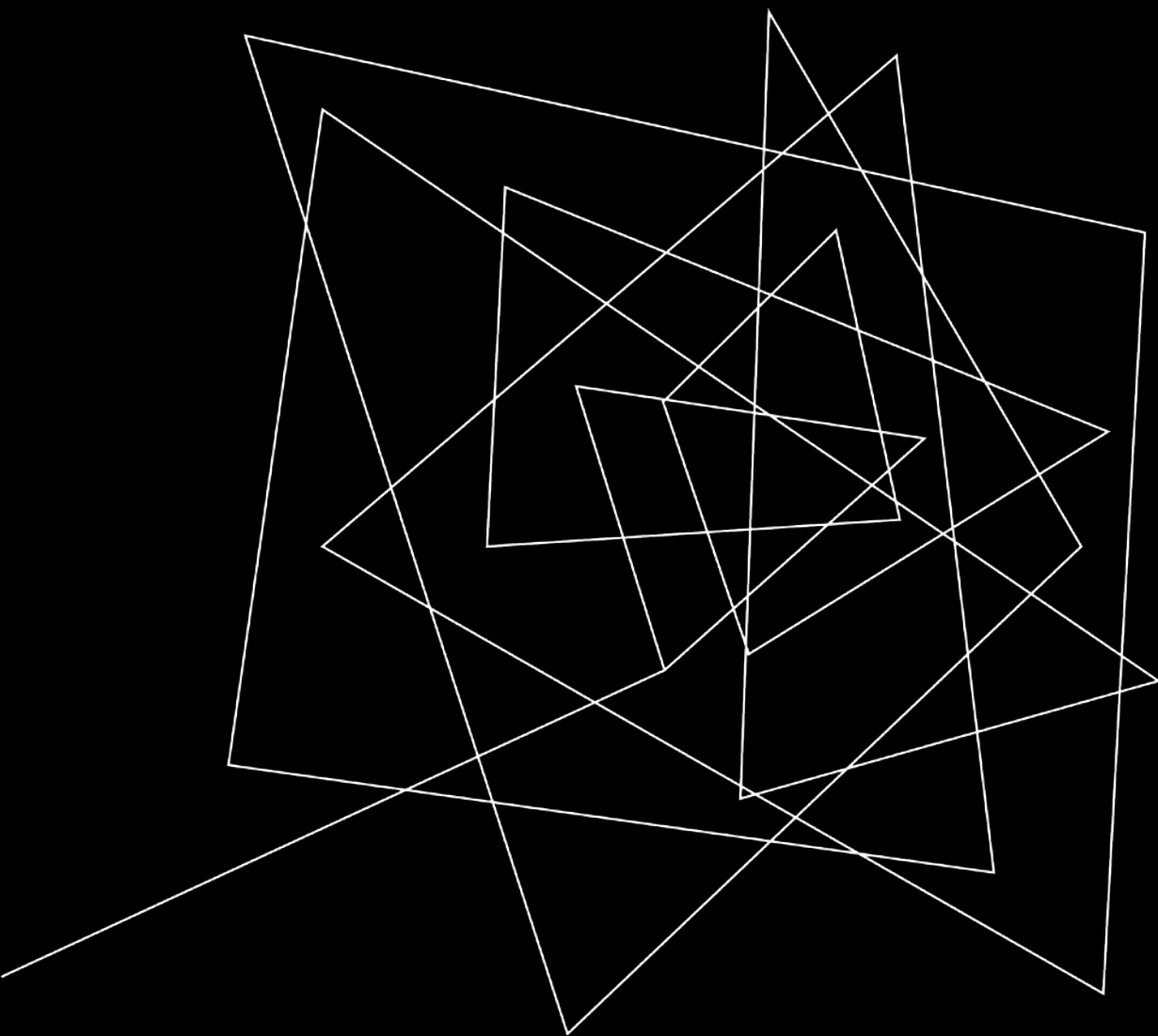
## CENTRALITY OF SIN AND PUNISHMENT

The concepts of sin and punishment are hugely important in religion. This can lead to a preoccupation and fear that manifests in both in clinical populations and in the general population.



# SCRUPULOSITY

A form of OCD in which  
is focused on religious  
taboos



# THOUGHT-ACTION FUSION

A set of two beliefs which, together, are thought to cause and perpetuate OCD:

1. Having a thought is equal to carrying it out in real life
2. Having a thought increases the chance of it happening in real life



## OUTSIDE OF OCD

“We are limited to a very specific idea: a sin narrative, a struggle narrative,” (Hibma, 2018)

# WHY DO SOME PEOPLE WITHOUT OCD EXPERIENCE THIS TOO?

Sin and punishment are central themes of a moral identity rooted in religion. This identity is formed through:

1. Early formative experiences
2. Schemas



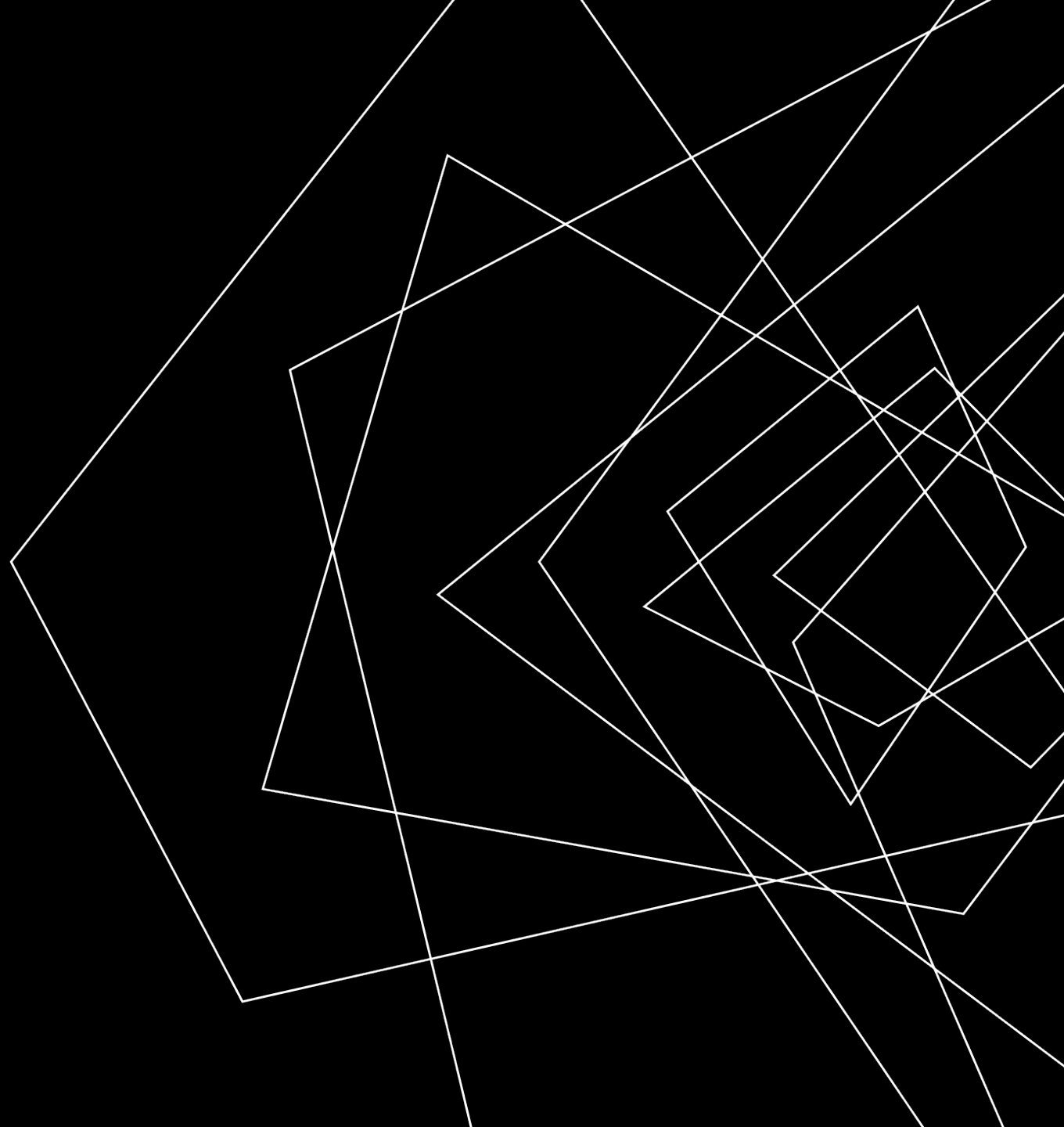


## EARLY FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

Credibility enhancing displays (CREDs), such as seeing high-cost religious behaviors performed regularly by trusted adults in childhood, can deeply affect religious identity.

# SCHEMAS

Schemas are cognitive frameworks which help us organize and make sense of information. Identity schemas can be deeply embedded in the psyche and are often resistant to change.



## OUTCOMES AFTER LEAVING

“However, although some participants no longer believed these teachings “logically”, they were still affected on an emotional level by the beliefs they had held for so long. Some doctrines can be seen as conditions of worth which need to be worked through once the belief has gone on a rational level,” (Lee & Gubi, 2019).

## HOW TO HEAL

- Support groups
- Share your story
- Listen to others' stories
- Counselling



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# THANK YOU

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