The scapegoat rituals as the origin of theatre

Niam Fouad Al-azzawi

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THE SCAPEGOAT RITUALS AS THE ORIGIN OF THEATRE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Theatre Arts

by
Niam Fouad Al-Azzawi

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This thesis is an attempt to prove that the scapegoat rituals were practiced in ancient Greece during the Theatre of Dionysus. This research is based on the theories of Walter Burkert’s “Theory of Hunt” presented in his book “Homo Necans”, and of René Girard’s “Scapegoating Mechanism” that appeared in his work “The scapegoat” (Girard and Freccero, The Scapegoat). These theories explain the origin of religion and the motivation of man through all ages to sacrifice. These will be used to prove that the festival of Dionysia, which is considered the first form of theatre, may have had the first impact on the religious sacrificial ceremonies of the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Also, the research will describe the influence of Dionysia ritualistic ceremonies that set them and whether scapegoat rituals are considered the main and first form of what we know now as theatre.

In order to understand sacrifice, we need to ask a number of questions: What is the need to sacrifice? What are the main reasons for the sacrifice? Has our desire for sacrifice changed through history? As well as, is it possible to stop sacrificing? This research will answer these questions to understand the reasons why this first
form of theatre continued to influence humanity and transform certain aspects into the most influential religions in the world. This research will attempt to prove that the three religions are advanced forms of theatre that evoke Dionysia festivals. The research will first discuss the rituals of the scapegoat religion in ancient Greece, and particularly the one performed at the Dionysia festival. Then it will take Sophocles’ “Oedipus the King” as an example of the scapegoating concept and aim to provide understanding of the religious goals behind the sacrifice in ancient Greece. The second part will investigate the concept of scapegoat rituals on Abrahamic religions, and the similarity of sacrifice and offerings on those religions with the sacrifices of Dionysia, through a comparison of Yom Kippur, Jesus Christ’s crucifixion, and Eid Al Adha with the sacrificial rituals of Dionysia.

Many studies and researches explain the relationship between scapegoating and its impact on Abrahamic religions. However, there is no search that discusses the influence of Theatre of Dionysus on those religions and the implementation of the three main scapegoat rituals: guilt, sacrifice and purification, and this is what the research will aim to do.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE BEGINNING ON THE RITUAL

Hunting Stage

In his book, "Homo Necans", Walter Burkert described the first historical recitation of the sacrificial performing act of what we now know as the scapegoat rituals. The description of the different stages, from the beginning to the end and presented at the beginning of his book, were found in one of the Homer epics. The rituals were summarized in three stages: the defining of a sacred place, usually accompanied by prayers, music and hymen song; the slaughtering of the prey; which is usually, but not necessarily, a goat; and the scream of fear or triumph perceived the beginning of the slaughtering of the goat. Burkert gave one of the most famous theories that discussed the origin of religion: he blamed it all on guilty feelings. The sense of guilt started when ancient primitive man shifted from gathering fruit, as an occupation to survive, to hunting (during Paleolithic times 60,000-8,000 B.C.E.). He transformed his lifestyle and made daily contact with death and killing, and made the shedding blood and slaughtering of another into a profession. According to Burkert, this created "a shock of
killing" in the hunters, because when they shed other being's blood a sense of guilt and unfairness emerged toward the prey. Therefore, in order to repent those feelings, the hunters started to ritualize their hunt and established the first form of religious rituals that are now known as the scapegoat rituals.

Since the language of the hunters was limited to expressions related to the hunt activity, and a proper and communicative language to express their feelings and complex thoughts had yet to be developed, the scapegoat rite was presented in pantomimic moves combined with "screams of fear or triumph or both" (Burkert 213). It was their means to express their fears, sense of guilt, and repentance to the prey that took hold of the archaic community, who then danced seriously and without mistake. If they committed such flow, then they would have to repeat their ritual from the beginning. This made the training of tribe members obligatory since childhood (Hunningher 17). Another aspect of the rite was to wear masks of the animals that were killed during the hunting, a symbol of taking the souls of those animals. People believed that by shedding the blood of those animals, they took part of their lives and souls. The last dances in the ceremony were a mimic of animal soul and life. An
imitation of the prey moves and voices appeared animally and as if they belonged to another world; the three elements of the prey performance, mimic, hymen song, and masks created the first form of tragedy, which is the first organized form of professional theater that set the stage to the developing of Tragedy.

The theory of hunting goes to be the core of this research not to explain the origin of religion in general, but to develop the origin of the scapegoat rituals. Later, the motivation of the three Abrahamic religions to sacrifice and present offerings, and to keep the rituals of ancient man continuous through different interpretation but with the same basic thoughts, will be discussed.

The scapegoat ritual derived its name from sacrificial rituals based on slaughtering a goat and sprinkling its blood on the altar. The sacrificial animal was not necessarily a goat; the executer may have sacrificed other domestic animals such as lambs and/or oxes. Nevertheless, goats were the common prey to sacrifice, due to their large numbers that inhabited the aria of Greece. Thus, the name of the goat accompanies the rituals.
Theatre of Dionysus

The word tragedy is derived from the Greek word tragidia = tragonoide, "song of goat" (Else 12), which refers to a religious ceremony that practices the scapegoat ritual. This is where a goat is slaughtered to shed its blood on the stony altars of ancient Greece and a dithyramb, a passionate choral hymn, is performed for the sake of repentance and purification from all sins.

The above is usually followed by phallic song, which would represent the rebirth of earth and a declaration of new life, and where the soul of the sacrificed animal was incarnated into a new phase represented by earth. Lewis explained in his book Ritual Sacrifice: An Illustration History this type of sacrifice:

Blood had another, equally fundamental significance in the sacrifice scenario. It was recognized as the major life force of human beings, which was why ancient agriculture societies used to perform human sacrifice in order to feed the gods and the earth. (39)

Another element of the tragedy was the chorus, which stood out as another interpretation of the screams and shouts that the hunters released to express their overwhelming emotions. The chorus was usually wearing
masks made of leather and sang a dithyramb song that indicated the catharsis and birth of Dionysus (the god of wine, fertility and agriculture). The ancient Greeks ciphered that they would be able to speak to the gods by performing dithyrambs. In addition, Nietzsche described how the Greek archaic man behaved towards singing and dancing, saying:

"In song and in dance man exhibits himself as a member of a higher community: he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the point of taking a dancing flight into the air" (27).

This mindset still existed and was practiced by all of the Abrahamic religions, in which their prayers are all rhymed and had a special melody. However, it seems that despite developing the language to express complex thoughts, the Greeks kept singing in rhymed words; and this tendency never stopped. Man still finds singing a vigorous and true medium to reflect his emotions, and perhaps singing is a longing sentiment to the primitive days of when man could not express himself but through shouts and screams.

In the tragedy, the chorus presented the voice of logic, truth, and wisdom that resembled the prayers on the rites of sacrificing. The interpretation of the chorus on
the event of the play can give one an idea of the comments
the oracle made on that specific action, which emphasized
the symbolic meaning of the prayers that the soothsayers
or priest would say during the slaughtering of the prey.

The Greek tragedy was not limited in adapting to the
three elements of the primitive sacrifice; it went beyond
performing and extended to the themes of the tragedy and
its concepts by bringing catharsis and arousing pity and
fear. Those emotions were the same that the hunters
exposed when they slaughtered their prey, which shows such
feelings were essential in the process of purification.
Repenting could not happen unless there was a struggle to
throw the sense of guilt away. The sacrifice extended to
the major characters of the tragedy to present the
person’s life as immolation to a city, a god or an oracle.
We observed the great Oedipus agonizing for the goodness
of his city and repenting a crime that he committed
ignorantly. Therefore, these oblations presented after the
bloodshed rituals were to emphasize the core of the
rituals, to repent.

In ancient Greece, the sacrificial rituals
transformed into an exemplifying of political, cultural,
and religious ideology that dominated people. The process
became a medium to gather people and direct them through
acceding symbolic actions and characters that may help to inform them of their history, the latest events, and social problems they met on a daily basis. Since there were no newspapers, TV channels, or the Internet, the scapegoat rituals extended from religious ceremonies that the group demanded, into a presentation to another kind of ritual, an educational one.

Illiteracy was common at that time and there was a need from religious institutions, such as the oracle, and political institutions, such as the courts of the tyrants, to a propaganda machine that could reach people of all types, backgrounds, cultures, and ages. The Greek religious rituals turned from being a repentance and a purification operation to a pointed message, and there was nothing better than a story of ordinary individuals in woe to capture their minds. This was a major element that the drama should have, according to Aristotle.

It seems that the scapegoat rituals, based on the idea of purification from the hunting guilt, changed to a new guilt manifested on the guilt of killing human beings. Through the extant Greek tragedies, almost all the plays dealt with the guilt of killing a person intentionally or accidentally. Thus, tragedies were extended to the scene of slaughtering the goat.
The scapegoat concept is a symbolic idea that depends entirely on the sacrifice of individual for the sake of the group. The peculiarity of it has prevented humanity, through a number of centuries, from the danger of extinction and made the human race dominant over others. In the past, it was insubordinate—even suicidal—to live alone and away from the tribe or the group; therefore, in the process, the interests of the group was a necessity of the individual, and vice versa.

Tragedy started with one actor in a play when the writer sang and acted the entire text, which was the imitation of the priest's action earlier in the festival. However, with the developing Greek society and the transitions from archaic to modern times, the scapegoat rituals started to become more than a ritual to sacrifice. With the development of Greek society, tragedy was not only for religious purposes; it started to become political and social. At that time, the tragedies and myth served the purpose of what is now considered the media. Illiteracy and the attraction for a medium to reflect society, led priests, political leaders and politicians to introduce their own concerns through tragedy. Thus, priests who had a conflict with political authorities started to gain influential power on society. A conflict
which can be seen between Oedipus and Tiresias in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. The first represents the political authority while the second represents the oracle power. This conflict does not relate by any meaning to the scapegoat rituals, but merely the social and political message to the audience that they needed to obey the power of the oracle over the power of the state.

The tragedy of Oedipus started with his parents and the shepherd who passed him on to be raised by a neighboring king and queen, in order for his true parents to escape their fate determined by the oracle: that their son would kill his father and marry his mother.

Jocasta and her husband rebel against the oracle by trying to kill their newly born son and send him with a shepherd to the mountains to kill him. However, the shepherd saves the child Oedipus and gives him to a childless king and queen of a neighboring city. The oracle again interferes in the life of the young Oedipus when it is once again said to him that he will kill his father and marry his mother. The young Oedipus then fled from the city and the parents that he thought he belonged to. In addition, the tragedy ended exactly as if the oracle wanted Oedipus to become the scapegoat of the city, and
was then punished for his actions by exiling himself from the city and blinding himself.

The punishment that Oedipus did to himself was unavoidable and was part of the purification process where the scapegoat had to offer himself willingly and with no hesitation or regret; this was in order for his sacrifice to be accepted and to purify not only himself but the whole city. This sacrifice is an act of admitting guilt, which leads to purification and admitting guilt in the purification process. Thus, his full obedience refers to the full obedience of the goat when being led to the altar. As Burkert explains, the unwillingness of the goat to be led to the altar to be slaughtered refers to a bad omen, as the process of guilt usually proceeds with agony, followed by sacrifice (106). In addition, in order for the sacrifice to be accepted, the offer should be highly valued. For instance, where Oedipus became the scapegoat of his community, he was not an ordinary person. He was the king and a son of a king, and even when he moved away from his city and family, he was raised by the king and queen of the city he lived in. This refers to the obligatory nature of presenting a great offer to be sacrificed; the offer must be the best thing that a city can give, the best individual, their best son. Greek
mythology is filled with stories of offerings of kings, princesses and princes, and a famous myth is of Agamemnon and his sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to win the war.

It seems that at certain times and in very serious situations, such as war or plague, the community will be in great shock and want to offer something more valuable than a goat. Such myths, including the tragedy of Oedipus, imply that there may be a type of human sacrifice offered to maintain a valuable offer in order to rid the burden or problem that the community is suffering from.

The reason why the Greeks offer a goat or domestic animal in their rituals is that it represents the nature of that society. The offer is usually a reference to the type of community and its main source of living and since the Greeks were cultic community that based its domestic animals then the offer were goats; for instance, if the community is a food gather (their occupation), then the offer will be vegetables and fruits. Greek society was a cultic one and thus offers were domestic animals. This was clear in Oedipus’s tragedy, where the shepherd is the one who saved Oedipus to show a cultic society. For instance, he was not saved by a hunter or farmer when he was abandoned during his childhood.
The Greeks find a way to sacrifice their best men during a tragedy, nevertheless, some offer a goat instead during their sacrificial rites. Thus, some talked about human sacrifice but in the festival would slaughter a goat, and many managed to move away from human sacrifice to a cultic one. Individual communities set the stage and performed all of the rites that refer and show that the sacrifice will be human, until they reach the point of slaughtering where they would bring a goat instead.

From the beginning, the Theban were the main motivation responsible for Oedipus and his family’s fate. They seemed the instigators in fulfilling the prophecy of the oracle, which implied that the followers of the scapegoat rituals are the ones who will decide, during the feast, the way of the celebration. Another reason for the need of the Theban people to blame everything on Oedipus and sacrifice him was that they were not fully aware of the real causes that led to the plague in the first place. Their ignorance to the causes of their suffering was actually a bacterium, not an abomination caused by Oedipus himself. Thus, they wanted to justify this with a moral issue, such as a character’s disobedience to the oracle’s will which calls forth the anger of the gods.
Oedipus was a hero-victim of his people, which is the same image that was reproduce on Jesus Christ story later on. The tragic hero was treated as a criminal until he makes the sacrificial act, where he is not only forgiven for his mistakes but becomes the hero of his city and his people.

There was a major conflict with the Oedipus tragedy and implied events, as there was a conflict between the oracle and the religious or priestly power and the state men power who represent the political power in ancient Greece represented by the king and queen of Thebes, and later by Oedipus. The inside conflict between the political and religious power is one that is manipulated by Sophocles. The playwright sees a great defender of the oracle’s power and its right to run the lives of the people. The attempt of Oedipus to escape the oracle prophecy, along with his parents, symbolizes him as the rebel against the power of the priest by political leaders and their will to transfer power to a political society instead of religious.

The Tragedy of Oedipus

Masks are the main features of the festival of Dionysus and, to this day, the sad and happy facemasks
symbolize theatre. The masks were used to cover the faces of actors to serve two purposes; first, to incarnate the spirit or souls of the gods and present them on the stage, instead of an individual presenting himself. This placed the actor on the realm of having supernatural powers and allowed acting as a mean between him and the spirits. Also, Dionysus used to be called the god of spirit. The second purpose is to convince the audience that what is being represented on the stage is not from an ordinary person, but is a glimpse of the spirit. Thus, it is clear that the story of Oedipus is that he was born to sacrifice himself for all the sins that had been committed by his city, Thebes. His parents did not want him to be the scapegoat for the city, and they believed that killing him was better than following the will of the oracle. They were acting against that will and for changing their doomed future.

The plays would usually be presented after the rituals of the festival, which reflected three major subjects: catharsis, the scapegoat (or person) who was going to be sacrificed; pity and fear, sinful city; and the oracle. The tragedy is a continuous part of purification rituals, which embodies the concept of guilt
and punishment, and is considered part of the purification.

The rituals of the scapegoat were based on a transfer of guilt, suffering emotions of the community and the individual, and placing these on the goat as a symbol to rid the sorrows and pain of the whole year. The time of the Dionysian festival was set for this purpose. March was considered the month of a new beginning, of life after death, and its time of birth. The Greeks and other nations around the world had a spring festival to celebrate the coming of spring (life), after the end of the cold days of winter (death) when the plants died and animals were sleeping. The choice of this season to perform their rituals was not arbitrary, as communities wanted this "new life" and new beginning.

To have a clear vision of the circumstances that led to the creation of a sophisticated and organized festival of sacrifice rituals during these times, we need to understand the meaning of those rituals. Also, we need to understand the way these rituals developed from the pantomimic moves during the hunting stage that were set prior to Greek transferring society from hunting to modernity. The pantomimic moves have transferred into dithyrambic choruses hymns. The Greeks embodied all the
main aspects of scapegoat rituals in the festival Dionysia. They made god shape all the values, purposes and come for the sacrifice so that they were guilt free at the hunting stage. Also, the criteria of god Dionysus and the myths about him can express the reasons why the Dionysia existed.

Dionysus is the god of wine and fertility, and these are seen as far away from the scapegoat rituals practiced during the hunting stage. The Greeks deliberately added the wine and sex to the rituals. They probably found out that the operation of freeing themselves from the guilt by freeing one self and letting them act free, and sex and wine became the main aspect of the festival. The Greeks also added these to their rituals as a main aspect and chose the spring to celebrate. This season represents the beginning of new life, a new year, and a time of fertility. The Greeks immediately saw the nature around and thought that it was a key time to breed and make their women pregnant. Thus, Dionysus was the god who made this possible.

Dionysus was termed the liberator in many myths, which refers to his effect on his followers to practice freeing the self and mind from all emotions and pressures; this was through them pouring wine and having free sex.
Also, he had been worshiped under the name of Aego bolns, which means the goat killer in Boeotia. The name implies that the role of god has the scapegoat ritual and the role of the sacrifice performer is the one who will kill the goat. This indicates that the sacrifice was not to the god himself but to another deity. Therefore, Dionysus was the performer and not the purpose of the action, and the festival of Dionysus was not to worship him as many researchers have implied. It is thus a celebration led by him but not for him and he was the means that led worshipers to a guilt-free state.

In addition, Greeks focused on organizing and putting their habits, daily life, and concerns in their gods and goddess in order to reflect on their society and beliefs. They made their gods present these aspects of them and made each god specialize in certain aspects of their lives.
CHAPTER TWO
ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS AND SCAPEGOATING

A Reason to Sacrifice

From the beginning of humanity, man has always needed fulfillment, even when this has contradicted with the values and laws that he set himself to organize his life and survive. Man has had to sacrifice emotionally, psychologically, and materially to gain those goals. The feelings of guilt and shame were symptoms that appeared after fulfilling these needs; and this became an immortal scene that stayed with man, despite numerous achievements and developments gained through the centuries. The old books of wisdom, such as the Old Testament, have revealed this conflict in stories, such as the story of Cain and Able. This story looks simple and naive at first, but contains a tremendous amount of symbolism that can explain human nature and its mysteries, as well as the causes that have led ancient man to behave in an "irrational" way. The story illustrates the sense of guilt that the father of humanity had when he killed his brother; a feeling that can never be thrown away. We continued to think and act as sinners, and became guilty with the motive of the first rituals and ceremonies created to expiate man's shame and
purified him from previous deeds. The purification process was embodied by the rituals of sacrifices, in which ancient man presented the most valuable objects he had for the sake of repentance. By this time, these ceremonies were developed and thus created a new shape of human activities that we now call theater.

The story of Cain and Abel, which is told in Genesis 4:1-16, describes the first sin committed by man on earth. It started when Cain’s sacrifice was not accepted by God while Abel’s was; an act that led to the first steps of a long journey of seeking forgiveness and repentance. The story mentioned in the Old Testament Genesis 4:1-15. Abel and Cain’s sacrifices, and God’s rejection of Cain’s offering, was the start of a quarrel between two brothers that ended with the death of Abel and Cain being declared the first murderer in human history. However, this was just the beginning. The story amplified that man used to offer the best of his yearly revenue to God and kept this ritual vivid through the ages. All Abrahamic religions’ books contain stories of sacrifice, the attempt to sacrifice Isaac to God by Abraham, according to Judaism and Christianity, and the attempt to sacrifice Ismail to God made by Abraham, according to Islam.
There are three festivals in Abrahamic religions that resemble the festival of Dionysus. This chapter will discuss the implementation of scapegoat rituals on the three Abrahamic religions and show the similarities between those and the festival of Dionysus. First, Yom Kippur in Judaism, is the Day of Atonement where the ritual is based on the sacrifice of Jewish people by bringing two goats to the Gods to wash away their sins for a whole year. The second is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sake of people’s repentance and salvation. The third is Eid AlAdha, the Islamic festival where Muslims sacrifice a domestic animal at the end of their pilgrimage in order to wash their sins and become new people.

The Scapegoat in Judaism: Yom Kippur

"And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer him for a sin-offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before the Lord, to make atonement over him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness" Leviticus (16: 8-10).

Looking at the Old Testament and the stories that reflected the life of people thousands of years ago, we
find that it is full of stories of animal and human sacrifice. The idea of scapegoating and offering an animal to God is widely discussed in Talmud. Sacrifice was considered an essential part of Judaism and the only way to obtain forgiveness. The offerings were an ancient practice performed on a regular basis "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). The different and various ways of these offerings or "korban", its Hebrew name, are discussed in detail in the Talmud. However, those offers and sacrificial rites are not practiced any longer. Judaism stopped its korbanic rituals in second century C.E., when the Roman Empire army destroyed the temple where all the sacrifices and rituals took place. According to Torah, it is obligatory to practice the rites on the place that is chosen by God and since that place had been destroyed, there would be no practice of any sacrifice or offering; and it would be considered a sin if any sacrificial rites were practiced. The way that Judaism used to rid guilty feelings and obtain repentance was through prayer and goodwill work for other people. A famous story of Rabbi Zakkai and Rabbi Yehoshua, mentioned in the Book of Hosea, explains the new approach of repentance and forgiveness in Judaism after the temple is destroyed.
Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was walking with his
disciple, Rabbi Yehoshua, near Jerusalem after the
destruction of the Temple. Rabbi Yehoshua looked at
the Temple ruins and said “Alas for us!! The place
that atoned for the sins of the people Israel lies in
ruins!” Then Rabbi Yohannan ben Zakkai spoke to him
these words of comfort: “Be not grieved, my son.
There is another equally meritorious way of gaining
ritual atonement, even though the Temple is
destroyed. We can still gain ritual atonement through
deeds of loving-kindness. For it is written
‘Lovingkindness I desire not sacrifice’”. (Hosea 6:6)
Midrash Avot D’Rabbi Nathan 4:5 (Commentary)

However, this research study is concerned with those
rituals practiced by Jewish people before they stopped,
and the remaining essence and influence they had on
Judaism. This includes the method followed by the Jews,
the way they practiced the sacrificial rites, and how it
was very similar to those of the Dionysia. One remnant
celebration that Judaism holds on to is the embodiment of
the festival of Dionysia, and a celebration of the
scapegoat rituals is the Day of Atonement. This day is
seen as a good example of the concept of scapegoat and its
manifestation in the religion.
Atonement Day or Yom Kippur, is a Judaism holy day and is considered by all Jewish, despite their individual way of practicing the religion, as the most important day in the Jewish year; for God has his final verdict to the deeds of each person for the next year. This is the day when the people have their last chance for a better ending for the year and to atone their own sins. During the time of waiting to hear the verdict, the followers will seek forgiveness and purity. In those days, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies, which is considered the most sacred place in the Judaism, and offers a blood sacrifice for his sins and the sins of his people (Hebrew for Christians).

The similarity between the Day of Atonement and the Dionysia is outstanding. The priests have to offer two he-goats on that day; one is a sin offering, where the request is to remove all of the sins of Israel, and the other goat is to take all those sins and throw them into the wilderness. Therefore, this is an essential part of the rituals the high priest of Israel carries out, as he is confessing all the sins and the horrors of all Israelis to the one of two goats, and then sends that goat out into the wilderness (Lev.16:21). An act to purify a nation from all its guilt and to start the year with a fresh beginning
as with the Dionysia festival, where the priest sacrificed
the goats to purify themselves from guilt and to please
the gods.

Yom Kippur is an annual celebration that performs the
celebration of a day where the guilt and sins of a nation
are pushed away from them. They started the ritual by
choosing a he-goat to give to Yahweh, the proper name of
God in Hebrew, and a he-goat to Azazel, another name of
the devil. The act, just like the one in Dionysia, was
performed by a priest who was usually accompanied with
feelings of sorrow and awe. Yom Kippur marks the climax of
the days of awe, the days that started with the beginning
of the Jewish New Year “Rosh Hashanah” and end with Yom
Kippur. The date of the holy day refers to its religious
function as a new beginning of the worshiper’s life, where
no sin and guilt exist.

The goat pushed from a cliff after confessing all the
sins of the nation in his ear is a process of purification
and pushing the guilt away. However, unlike the festival
e of Dionysia, Yom Kippur is a strict day where the
worshipers should not eat, drink, or have sex. It is a day
to repent and to perform public and private petition, and
to confess all of their guilt and awes. Judaism finds
another way to allow people to become free from guilt by
praying and confessing, instead of living an uncontrolled life. That is the next Abrahamic religion will follow, and the confessions of sins and sincere dedications to the good work for the benefit of people will be realized.

The Scapegoat in Christianity: The Lamb of God

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’" (John 1:29)

In Christianity, there are no rituals of offerings or sacrifices of domestic animals of any kinds. The religion has no history of bloody sacrificial ritual offerings to gain repentance and to free oneself from guilt. However, Christianity is based on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, who willingly sacrificed his life and endured all kinds of torture to purify and atone for the sins of his nation, and to thus become the savior of his followers. He died for the lives of others, and the agony and pain he suffered was from the necessity to delete the sins of his people.

Jesus rising again is a sign of the continuity of his sacrifice and there is no need to take part in another sacrifice. Jesus is still sacrificing his life for the repentance and forgiveness of his followers. When Jesus
rose from the dead, it was a rebellion against the system of having a scapegoat each year. Therefore, it seems that Christianity has found a better way to make the sacrifice more spiritual and focus on the concept instead of the physical aspects. This historical turn of sacrifice, as a concept and as a performance, remarks the evolution of scapegoat rituals. Thus, the idea of sacrifice and the way it affects individuals started to become more effective than the performance of the concept and visualizing it. Like the atonement in Judaism, based on Yom Kippur, the atonement day in Christianity is the crucifixion of Jesus. However, instead of scarifying two he-goats, Jesus crucified himself, and then becomes the savior of his people as became the scapegoat to remove the sins and guilt of people.

In many ways, the sacrifice was similar to that of Oedipus; all the elements of the tragedy can be seen in his story and many similar criteria are in both. Jesus, just like Oedipus, was crucified; he was nailed to the cross and Oedipus, meaning “swollen foot,” had been left in the mountains with his feet bound together. On the cross where Jesus crucified, a phrase was written, “This is the King of the Jews.” Moreover, for Oedipus, he was the king of Thebes.
John 1:29 says, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (Biblos.com) This shows the full willingness of Jesus Christ to sacrifice himself for his people. Thus, if there was any hesitation or disobedience toward the crucifying then the offer would not be accepted. This obedience and full submission is similar to the sacrifice of Oedipus and the Greek role of offering the goat that shows no hesitation when directed to slaughter.

One of the similarities in Christianity with scapegoat rituals is the ritual of crucifying Jesus and the procedures followed to show the sacrifice of god to his followers. The rituals started when Jesus asked to hold his cross, with the cross being the alternative to the altar where the slaughtering was performed along with prayers. Therefore, the cross was the means to reach god and perform the ritual.

The Scapegoat in Islam: Eid Al Adha

In Islam the idea of sacrifice and slaughtering a goat is related and embodied clearly on Al Adha day "day of sacrifice" and is the day of slaughtering a domestic animal, such as sheep, camel, cow, or goat. The sacrifice
is carried out at the end of Alhaj (pilgrimage in Arabic) and is the ritual of heading when many travel and walk to Mecca. Alhaj, or the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, existed before Islam and most rituals were practiced in Mecca by the tribes that surrounded the area. However, by the coming of Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca has become an essential part of Islam that all Muslims have to do at least once in their lifetime. The religious rituals of Alhaj are a simulation according to the Islamic perspective on the attempt of prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ismail to Allah, after having a dream of doing so. Dreams were the way Allah communicated with his prophets and if they had such a dream, they had to follow his orders. According to the Islamic interpretation of this dream, Allah was testing Ibrahim’s faith and the way he would deal with the will and commandments of god. Ibrahim did what his god commanded him to do and he was about to slaughter his son as a sacrifice; however, he was stopped as soon as he attempted and he was permitted to sacrifice a sheep instead. Thus, Muslims celebrate the sacrifice of Ibrahim annually after they finish their pilgrimage, and slaughter a domestic animal at the end. Otherwise, it will not be considered a pilgrimage and means they cannot be purified from the sins they have committed. The sacrifice
is practiced after the stoning of the devil, a rite where Muslims have to stone the Three Jamarat (the three walls that represent "Shaetaan" or the devil). The Muslims have to go through seven stones on these three walls at the end of their pilgrimage; the stoning is an essential rite of the pilgrim and it is completed with the animal sacrifice.

Eid Al Adhha, the second holiest holiday in the Islamic calendar, is a celebration to end of pilgrimage rite and is one of the fifth pillars of Islam. The meaning of the name of this holiday is "the festival of sacrifice," where it ends the pilgrimage rite by sacrificing a domestic animal which is then distributed to the poor people. The festival is similar to that of the Dionysia, and shares the same futures of the Greek festival concerning the freeing of guilt and embodying all bad actions, sins and fears.

The Dionysia festival sacrificial rites are based on three aspects: the guilt, the scapegoat, and freedom from guilt (repentance). Those three aspects were embodied in the festival of sacrifice in Islam; the guilt is represented with the will of all the pilgrims to free themselves from their sins by pilgrimage. According to Islamic law, one of the pilgrimage’s main purposes is to purify Muslims from their sins.
Until now, the celebrator of Eid Al Adha has to be clean and wearing new clothes to celebrate the holy day. A costume that Burkert mentioned, explaining the preparation that the worshiper in ancient Greece followed during their sacrificial festivals. Also, the spring sacrifice towards water and the washing of the hands in water, as well as the reciting of prayers,

The Greek Altar and its Manifestation on Abrahamic Religions

The Greek altar is made of rocks to shed the blood of the scarified goat and burn its entrails, especially the bones, in which it was considers part of the gods.

"Sacrifices could be eaten after the ceremonies were performed. In general, only parts of the animals and mainly the fat, would be actually burned on the altar" (Lewis 19). Also, sheep could not be used, which left goats as the main sacrificial animal and it was forbidden to sacrifice a female, as they were sacred to the goddess Isis (Lewis 48). Therefore, the sacrificial animal was always a male goat. The altar in the Theater of Dionysus is evident that this place is actually a sacrificial place transformed by the time to be part of theater stage. In ancient times, the rituals and ceremonies of scarifies to the gods were of high importance to villages and their
tribes, as they prepared for months before the exact date and waited eagerly. It was the time of revealing fears, emotions, and questions of his surroundings that the average person had it during his whale year. The altar was the place for all offerings and rituals to be carried out. The purposes of these rituals are wide-ranging and differ in performing from one place to another. According to Lewis, these sacrifices were made almost every weekday at dawn, and there were specific animal offerings for each god. Cows were offered to Hera, heifers to Artemis, pigs to Poseidon and goats to Dionysus, and the altar was where those sacrifices were transported to their god. For the primitives, it was a magical place. Nevertheless, this piece of stone was found in almost all theaters in ancient Greek times. Also, it was common for the altar to be built in a high place, above the stage, and referred to the elevated rank and symbolizes the position of the gods to whom the sacrifice is for, as well as referring to god’s position between the people. This shows a huge similarity with the mazzebah.

According to the Jewish encyclopedia (Kohler), the altar in Judaism (mazzebah) was usually built from stones, except the one in Solomon’s temple that was made from bronze. Also, due to the fact that there were several
types of offerings made by the kohenim, altars were accustomed to perform those offerings according to the different type: such as sin offering, guilt offering, burnt offering, peace offering, and grain offering. The altar used for slaughtering the goat was similar to the one used by the Greeks and the one used for the goat offering was made of stones, just as the Greek one was. Another similarity is the way of practicing the ritual of sacrifice. The Greeks used to burn the remains of the goats and its fats after they took the flesh and sprinkled the blood on the altar.

The Greeks started their rituals by leading the goat to the altar, preserved by a man playing music, and accompanied by men holding jars of water to sprinkle in front of the goat and on its head as a sign of purification. The persecution of the slaughtering would start when the priest interspersed water on the head of the goat. Also, one of the main conditions to accept a goat or any domestic animal as an offer, in both Judaism and Islam, was that it should be in very good shape and with no disease, injuries, or faults.

In addition, we found out in the story of Oedipus that he was born to sacrifice himself for all the sins that been committed by his city, Thebes. His parents did
not want him to be the scapegoat for the city and believed that killing him was better than following the will of the oracle.
CHAPTER THREE
FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Conclusion

The theater was and still is a means to express ourselves, and it has been known that physical gestures were the first method to disclose one's feelings and ideas, and has preceded language. The scapegoat rituals were part of this attempt to reveal oneself and the religious rituals came from that primitive act. This was deep in the conscious mind of ancient man who practiced the scapegoat as a bargaining tool between himself and God or heaven. However, he realized from his daily activities that nothing can be freely gained, even when the quarry he chases to get his food will require a great deal of courage and effort. In the beginning, the sacrifice was of a very precious or dear thing, such as a goat or domestic animal, and then evolved to the sacrifice in Christianity of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that a kind of uncertainty had accorded the thoughts of ancient man when he started to take the best part of his sacrificial prey and consume it, and offer the bones and blood of it to his god. The matter became more complicated when god himself gave much
concession to man, which is clear in late Judaism. After, it became more frightening when god sacrificed himself for the sake of humanity in Christianity, and became the scapegoat (not the man) due to the development of man’s potential and power. Thus, ancient man realized that he had to exist with caution and fear. So, he began to pay attention in two directions, horizontally to his surroundings and vertically, to god or heaven. He attempted to calm his needs and fears by creating the altar which became the place of god on earth, and by this he merge those two worlds, the realistic with the dreamy.

The rituals of the scapegoat and its procedures are mainly an act of a culture’s hunting stage that formed the first ideas. In all elements of this stage, language was in the cradle and was substituted with gestures and sounds, which can be considered a latter attempt to develop both language and theater.

The scapegoat ritual ceremonies became the beginning of the purifying method that ancient man invented and continued with later in the Abrahamic religions. This was also another crucial step towards a new stage of life, the shift from food gathering to hunting. In these ceremonies, the group taught its young members to act with the new changes they witnessed in their surroundings. The type of
animal was not as important as the act itself and goats were the most common animal slaughtered in those rites. In addition, the word tragedy means the song of goat, which refers to the rituals of offering the goat in the festivals of Dionysia.

The choruses characterized the explanation and the idea behind this ceremony, and Greek literature was very affected by these rites even in its later stages, which were supposed to provide new ideas. The concept of fate and its role on man, which tempted Greek religion and literature, was derived from the first rites. Thus, the purification that appeared in these ceremonies was, in reality, a justification of man's sins.

The goat, which imposed its name on Greek religion and rites, simply represents the most important production means and way of common life in their community. It is clear that the sacrifice in all societies was made from precious and important possessions. Also, the Greeks chose the goat, which was considered the most important animal in their lives.

The three Abrahamic religions were the manifestation of Greek theater and the development of the sacrifice concept. Thus, it was the transition of the Greek tragedy that was mainly based on sacrifice and bringing catharsis.
The story of Oedipus illustrated the conflict between the priest and political leaders. It also demonstrated the attempt of man to combat the super powers that were not always on his side. The sacrifices were found mostly in all religions as another copy of the great sin which is represented by people having possessions on the earth and mostly their existence. Thus, it is an argument between man and superior powers. When the Greeks went further in their religion, they chose Dionysus who was the god of fertility and he became a symbol of life and continuity.

Later, this change was clear in Judaism and took larger shape. The first sacrifice that the Abrahamic religion took seems to be in the Cane and Abel story, which illustrated the first sacrifice and imposed the concept of sin. The sin, which begins with man from the first moment of his being, implied that sin is part of his nature and is thought to be the strongest in Christianity, and the same rites remain and continue. It took a clearer shape and more importance, as the sacrificed animal is different and was the same in the Abraham sacrifice. However, in Judaism the sacrifice took various aspects and several types of offering related to a new era in which life began to be more varied, through sin offerings, burnt offerings, and others. Nevertheless, sacrifice in Judaism
is now linked with prayers, and the sacrificial animal changed from goat to lamb. Goats were widely common in Greece, and while in Jerusalem, the place where Christianity evolved, lambs were a common domestic animal (not the goat). Christianity has taken a great leap toward God, as Jesus crucified himself for the sake of humanity and became the scapegoat. In Islam, the sacrifice was and still is carried out on a lamb, cow, camel or other domestic animal that refer to the development of an agriculture society. Therefore, sacrifice in Islam turned out to be unlimited and can be carried out throughout the year and not only in Mecca. Through all of these performing rituals in the Abrahamic religions, it is clear that the sacrificial festivals of Yom Kippur, Jesus Christ, and Eid Al-Adha were a development of the festival of Dionysia in Ancient Greece, and we are simply performing the concept of freeing ourselves from guilt.
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