

**A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GATES OF GOOD AND EVILIN
JEWISH SOURCES: TOWARDS A MONISTIC-
PSYCHOLOGICAL READING OF THE AZAZEL RITUAL**

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According to the Mishnah, part of the Yom Kippur ritual involved the casting of lots with respect to two similar goats¹ in order to determine which of them was to be offered as a sacrifice to God and which would be offered to Azazel. The text on

* Translations of the texts from the original Hebrew to English in this piece are mine, unless otherwise stated (AK). The translations of the verses from the Tanakh rely on the JPS translation. My deep thanks to my friend and colleague, Rabbi Martin S. Cohen, who so kindly read closely this piece in its first draft, corrected and improved it. I would like to send my thanks to the editor of *Zeremim*, Richard Claman, as well, for his corrections and suggestions, which have been found as a great help in the process of refining the ideas which are expressed in this article.

¹ “The two goats of the Day of Atonement: it is a requirement that they be alike in appearance, in size, in value, and that they be bought at the same time” (Mishnah Yoma 6:1). And see in this regard the discussion of Bar-On (below n. 31) on the question of whether it is indeed the intention of the text, according to the simple meaning of the Torah, to say that it should be done by a process of casting the lot.

which the Mishnah bases its *halakhot* is Leviticus 16:7-10, which details the various rites of atonement that are to be led almost entirely by Aaron, the High Priest:²

Aaron shall take the two he-goats and let them stand before the LORD at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; and he shall place lots upon the two goats, one marked for the LORD and the other marked for Azazel.³ Aaron shall bring forward the goat designated by lot for the LORD, which he is to offer as a sin offering; while the goat designated by lot for Azazel shall be left standing alive before the LORD, to make expiation with it and to send it off to the wilderness for Azazel [...]

Later on, in that same chapter, verses 20-22 present further instructions:

When he [Aaron] has finished purging the Shrine, the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, the live goat shall be brought forward. Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites, whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat;⁴ and it shall be sent off to the wilderness through a

² According to the end of this text (verses 29-30), these orders are not only in effect during the course of Aaron's lifetime, but are the foundation for the set of rituals of atonement on Yom Kippur for future Temple times as well: "And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial; and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the LORD".

³ The English word "scapegoat" appears first as the translation of the Hebrew word "*azazel*" in the King James Version to this verse: "Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat".

⁴ Laying the hands on the animal (*Semihat Yadayim*) as an archaic means of transfer (in general with respect to diseases, but here with respect to sins) derives from rites of the Hittites of Northern Syria (as will be explained below). See Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture: The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 173-174 and n. 16. Another directive that seems to be taken from the Northern Syrian and Anatolian rituals (despite the fact that it is missing from the Torah and appears only later in the Mishnah) is the instruction to adorn this scapegoat with a red ribbon on its head (see, for example, the text of the Hittite person named Askhella that is cited below). See M. Yoma 4:2: "He [the high priest] then twisted a scarlet ribbon [*lashon shel zehorit*] on the head of the goat that is to be

designated man. Thus, the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region⁵; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.

According to the Mishnah Yoma (6:6), this latter goat was “pushed from behind, whereupon it went rolling off a cliff and was wholly dismembered before it was halfway down the hill”.⁶

The word **Azazel** does not appear anywhere else in the Tanakh, and its meaning is controversial. In essence, scholars have proposed three different suggestions regarding its correct interpretation: a. Azazel is a place name (or a description of some specific place), b. Azazel is a name for the goat itself,⁷ or c. Azazel is the name of the desert demon to whom the goat was being “sent” for some unstated reason.⁸

sent away” (see Bremer, p. 174-175 and n. 19). In regard to this order see also: Moshe Weinfeld, “Things Which the Satan /Evil Inclination /Nations Criticize,” in *Atarah le-Hayim: Studies in Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature in Honor of Professor Haim Zalman Dimitrovsky*, eds. Israel M. Ta-Shma et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000), pp. 105-111; Mira Balberg, “Omen and Anti-omen: The Rabbinic Hagiography of the Scapegoat's Scarlet Ribbon,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 17 (2016), pp. 25-53, and see the discussion of Noga Ayali-Darshan, “The Scapegoat Ritual and Its Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” published at www.thetorah.com (<https://www.thetorah.com/article/the-scapegoat-ritual-and-its-ancient-near-eastern-parallels>).

⁵ In the original Hebrew text: ארץ גזרה, lit. a cut-off land, which means probably a desolated land or a land of destruction. In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Lev. 16: 10, 21-22, it was identified as a place called *beit hadudi* or *beit haruri*. Cf. Devorah Dimant, “*The Fallen Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic Books Related to Them*,” PhD. Thesis, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1974 [Hebrew], p. 61 n. 222.

⁶ For a comprehensive review of the numerous details of this ritual as they were shaped by the *halakhah*, see the summary of R. Jehiel Michal Epstein in his *Arukh ha-Shulhan he-Atid*, vol. 4 (Korbanot), part 3 (Jerusalem: Mossad haRav Kook, 2003), Hilkhot Avodat Yom haKippurim, ch. 160, pp. 21-24.

⁷ One can ask at this point of our discussion: why was the sacrificial animal specifically a goat? See below supplement 1.

⁸ See Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus*, World of the Bible Encyclopedia, (*Olam haTanakh*; Tel Aviv: Davidson-Iti, 2002), p. 108 [Hebrew]. (According to the first explanation, that Azazel was the name of a place in the desert to which the goat was sent, it can be taken as a synonym for “land of destiny,” a detached place, see verse 22). Another explanation (which seems to me far from the simple meaning of the Torah) claims that Azazel includes of the two words ‘ez

It is the third proposal – the one that takes Azazel as the name of desert demon that is the most puzzling, since it seems to presume a dualistic worldview wholly inconsonant with the unwavering monotheism of the Torah and the Talmudic sages.⁹ How can the Torah possibly be commanding that a sacrifice be sent to a demon named Azazel?

[=goat] and *azal* [=Aramaic for “walk”]. See Shlomo Na'eh, *Notes* (see below n. 21) at p. 273 and n. 7.

In fact, the origin of the name Azazel has been the subject of a great deal of writing, which I obviously am not able to list here; therefore I will refer here in short only to the list of bibliography provided by Jan N. Bremmer (see above, n. 1), pp. 173-174 n. 15.

⁹ A dualistic worldview perceives reality as consisting of two basic principles: good and evil, matter and spirit, and so on. In the realm of the world of religions, the notion expresses itself as the belief in the existence of two opposing divine forces that rule the world. One of the famous Talmudic statements that does not allow any place for dualistic thinking in this direction is the statement in the name of the Amora Reish Lakish at BT Bava Batra 16a: “Reish Lakish says: Satan, the evil inclination, and the Angel of Death are one.” This is not the right place for me to try to show the clear tendency of rabbinic-Talmudic Judaism to reject the dualistic worldview of other Near Eastern religions. Suffice it then solely for me to cite here the clear words of Daniel Boyarin in his *Carnal Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 77 n. 1: “The distinction between Hellenistic and rabbinic Judaism is, in my view, not geographical (i.e., not Palestine versus the Diaspora) so much as chronological. **I see the rabbinic movement as in large part a rejection movement against the Hellenization of much of first-century Judaism**, including that of Palestine. This Hellenization, unlike the Seleucid one, did not involve the adoption of the 'hedonistic' sides of Hellenistic civilization so much as its **dualist**, spiritualist, anti-corporeal moods, as witnessed by figures as diverse as Philo, Josephus, and Paul, and by the Qumran writings. I hypothesize that as the cultural effects of this spiritualization became more and more apparent, particularly in the growing Christian movement, a significant reaction developed against it” (my emphasis).

To this we should add that it is helpful in this regard to distinguish between monism and monotheism. In a monotheistic religion, for example, dualistic **aspects** can sometimes be found. Thus, for instance, there are cases where a monotheistic religion officially believes in one God, whereas its anthropological conception clearly posits a split between the body that is perceived as related to human evil – while the spirit is perceived as related to the “good side.” On this question in the Bible and the Talmud, see Nissan Rubin, *The End of Life: Rites of Burial and Mourning in the Talmud and Midrash* (Tel Aviv: Hakkibutz Hameuḥad, 1997) [Hebrew], pp. 54-86, esp. pp. 54-64. However, in a general way – derived clearly from Martin Buber's point of view on the history of the worldview of Judaism – we can certainly say that

B

Nevertheless, it should be noted that already by the beginning of the 20th century, scholars of the ancient Near East understood clearly that this ritual was not an original Israelite one, but rather a Hittite one.¹⁰ Indeed, it is quite clear from the sources that in Hittite culture this was a magic ritual designed to rid society of something unwanted (diseases) by pitching it into the territory of the demon, and at the same time it is intended to reconcile the demon ~~him~~ by the presents that were send with it.

One of the first scholars to show this was the British scholar of Hittite culture Oliver Gurney, who wrote a book in which he presented three clear examples of ways in which the ancient Hittite scapegoat ritual resembled the one described in the Torah.¹¹ All are fascinating. For the sake of the brevity, however, I will present here only one of those examples and then cite Gurney's conclusion.

Judaism tends towards a monistic position. A perfect way to present a clear Jewish monistic position is the one that Buber presented (derived from his understanding of Hasidism): "Nothing, in fact, is unholy in itself, nothing is in itself evil. What we call evil is only the directionless plunging and storming of the sparks in need of redemption" (Martin Buber, "Spinoza, Sabbatai Zvi, and the Baal-shem," in: *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1966), p. 98).

¹⁰ The Hittites were a people of Indo-European origin whose empire (divided by historians into the Old Kingdom c. 1700–1500 BCE, and the New Kingdom c. 1400–1180 BCE) was centred in Anatolia and northern Syria.

¹¹ Oliver R Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1977), pp. 48-49. Gurney, however, writes that the first scholar who ever paid attention to this resemblance was Archibald Henry Sayce, in a preliminary publication from 1919 (see Gurney, p. 48 and n. 1).

From the discussion of Sanders (Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana And Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009)) one might get the impression that he believes that the origin of this ritual is not Hittite but Ugaritic. This however is not what he intends to say, see *Ibid.* p. 193 n. 101. Sanders is not denying the Hittite source of this ritual, but rather emphasises another point, that in the Hittite origins of this ritual there was no intention to do it for the sake of the whole collective. The people become the subject of this ritual of

This text in question was written by Hittite person named Askhella, a man of Hapalla, and is presented as the “Ritual of Uhhamuwa (=name of a magician from Arzawa in the west of the Hittite kingdom)”¹²:

When evening comes, whoever the army commanders are, each of them prepares a ram – whether it is a white ram or a black ram does not matter at all. Then I twine a cord of white wool, red wool, and green wool, and the officer twists it together, and I bring a necklace, a ring, and a chalcedony stone and I hang them on the ram’s neck and horns, and at night they tie them in front of the tents and say: “Whatever deity is prowling about(?), whatever deity has caused this pestilence, now I have tied up these rams for you, be appeased!” And in the morning I drive them out to the plain, and with each ram they take 1 jug of beer, 1 loaf, and 1 cup of milk(?). Then in front of the king’s tent he makes a finely dressed woman sit and puts with her a jar of beer and 3 loaves. Then the officers lay their hands on the rams and say: ‘Whatever deity has caused this pestilence, now see! These rams are standing here and they are very fat in liver, heart, and loins. Let human flesh be hateful to him, let him be appeased by these rams. And the officers point at the rams and the king points at the decorated woman, and the rams and the woman carry the loaves and the beer through the army and they chase them out to the plain. And they go running on to the enemy’s frontier without coming to any place of ours, and the people say: ‘Look! Whatever illness there was among men, oxen, sheep, horses, mules, and donkeys in this camp, these rams and this woman have carried it away from the camp. And the country that finds them shall take over this evil pestilence.

Gurney then concludes as follows:

atonement only in the Ugaritic and later on in the Tanakh ceremony (see *Ibid.*, p. 66). I thank Richard Claman for reminding me the discussion of Sanders in this regard. pp. 61-66.

¹² Charles Allen Burney, *Historical Dictionary of the Hittites* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 184.

At all events, these [...] rituals provide a possible parallel to the dispatch of the Biblical scapegoat “to Azazel,” if this word is indeed the name of a demon.¹³

C

In Second Temple times, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which as a body of literature undoubtedly tend toward dualistic conceptions,¹⁴ the act of sending the goat into the desert was taken plainly to denote sending Israel’s iniquities to the camp of the great opponent of God, the rebellious angel regularly known as Satan, but in apocryphal literature also sometimes called Uzzah or Azzael.¹⁵ This is how William Guilders formulates the conception of scapegoat in Qumran sect:

The evidence of these works [...] suggests that the members of the Qumran sect viewed the Azazel of Lev 16 as a fallen angel, a demonic figure, who had been the leader of the Watchers,¹⁶

¹³ Gurney (above n. 11), p. 49.

¹⁴ Holtgren concluded that three main sources of influence (omitting reference to distant Zoroastrian religion) intervened in crafting the dualistic impact on the sect of Dead Sea Scrolls. See Stephen Holtgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 319-408; and see in this regard the collection of articles included in: Géza G. Xeravits (ed.), *Dualism in Qumran* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

¹⁵ On the Names Uzzah and Azael (and their return to Rabbinic Literature after being banned in the Tannaitic period), see Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From Asael and Šemichazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azael: 3 Enoch 5 (§§ 7-8) and Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8:2 (2001), pp. 105-136.

¹⁶ Extrabiblical literature from the late Second Temple period (3d century BCE – 1st century CE) reflects many additional terms for angels which are not in the Bible itself. These include among other “watchers” (Aramaic עִיר [‘ir], plural: עִירִין [‘yrin], meaning those who are awake, guards (based on Dan. 4:10). The apocryphal Books of Enoch (2nd – 1st centuries BCE) refer to both good and bad “watchers,” with a primary focus on the rebellious ones. The story of the “angels who sinned” (sometimes referred to as the “myth of the fall”) and their punishment appears in 1 Enoch in two different texts, and researchers usually refer to them as “The Book of Watchers” and “The Book of Parables.” The first one appears in 1 Enoch chapters 1-36 and

before his confinement. Sending the nation's sins out to him (as indicated by the Temple Scroll) returned them to their source, so to speak. This sending away of sin to the demonic realm prefigures the eschatological triumph over sin [...].¹⁷

To that can be compared the interpretation of those early rabbinic sages who took Azazel as the name of the place (or, more precisely, as a description of that place) rather than as the name of the desert demon to whom the sacrifice was being sent.¹⁸ Consider, for example, the tannaitic text of the Sifra:

“To Azazel” (Lev. 16:8): to the “hardest” [az] place in the mountains.¹⁹

the second appears later on in chapters 37-71. The reason for the different names of the books is that the “Book of Watchers” belongs to the earliest level of 1 Enoch and the Apocrypha in general, dated apparently to the 3th century BCE, while the “Book of Parables” belongs probably to the latest part of the Second Temple period. See Michael Mach, “From Sunset to Dawn: Transformations in Ancient Jewish Messianism” in Gideon Bohak et al. (eds.), *Myth, Ritual and Mysticism: Studies in Honor of Ithamar Gruenwald* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2014 [Hebrew]), pp. 307-359, at pp. 314-315 and n. 33.

¹⁷ William K. Gilders, “The Day of Atonement in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 63-73 at p. 71.

¹⁸ Several scholars believed that, according to the plain meaning of the Torah in our text in Leviticus, Azazel is a counterpart to God, as we see here that while one goat is dedicated to God and therefore is to be sacrificed in the Temple, the other is dedicated to Azazel and is sent to the wilderness. See the bibliographic list in the article of Ayali-Darshan (above n. 4) n. 13. Against that, one can argue that, even if we assume that Azazel is a name for a demon that rules the desert, the question remains whether the phrase “it shall be sent off to the wilderness” undoubtedly implies an order to offer it up as a **sacrifice** to the demon of the desert. In the verses itself it is mentioned only that “the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.” Hence it can reasonably be argued that this is not intended as a command to sacrifice the goat to the desert demon, but only to expel the goat to somewhere outside the realm of human settlement so that that the impurities of Israel that had supposedly been placed on the goat's head would be thrown out of the human realm to the desert. See John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (Waco, Texas: Word Biblical Commentary, 1992), p. 238.

¹⁹ Sifra, Aharei Mot 2:7 [8] (ed. Isaac Hirsch Weis, Vienna 1865), p. 81a.

Israel Knohl and Shlomo Na'eh claim however that, although this surely was the most common approach to the text under consideration, rabbinic culture also countenanced the dangerous notion that the Torah in Leviticus 16 is indeed commanding that a sacrificial “present” be sent to the demon of the desert. In an exegetical text from a different section of the Sifra (i.e., the one discussing the “days of the inauguration of the Tabernacle,” the so-called *yemmi ha-milui*)²⁰ we find a text that must originally have belonged to the larger discussion of the scapegoat in which the Rabbis seem accepting of this precise idea. Indeed, Knohl and Na'eh suggest that this text appears in the “wrong” place in the text exactly because it was such a scandalous suggestion.²¹ Cited in the name of the *tanna* Rabbi Ishmael (2nd century CE), the text reads as follows:

“And he said to Aaron: Take for yourself a bull-calf for a sin-offering” (Lev. 9:2): We are hereby taught that Moses said to Aaron: Aaron, my brother, even though the Holy One, blessed be He, has consented to forgive your sins [i.e., the ones relating to the episode of the golden calf], **you must [nonetheless] “place something in Satan’s mouth.” Send your gift before you before entering the sanctuary, lest He condemn you upon your entering.**²²

²⁰ This text is from the school of Rabbi Ishmael; however it was inserted into the Sifra, which derives basically from the school of Rabbi Akiva. See Knohl and Na'eh, (below n. 21) p. 18 n. 6.

²¹ Israel Knohl and Shlomo Na'eh, “*Milui Ve-Kippurim*” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 62 (1993), pp. 17-44, at pp. 39-40. This is perhaps also reflected in the different version of the word Azazel. The prevailing spelling in the Apocrypha as well as in the texts of Qumran is אַזַּזֵּל [=Azaz-el] whereas in the traditional Masoretic text of the Torah it is אַזַּזֵּל [=Aza-zel] (i.e switching the order of the ‘aleph’ and the ‘zayin’, and leaving the aleph as silent) It is then possible to imagine that the rabbinic tradition in its Masoretic version attempted to blur the option of the theophoric reading of this name (Knohl and Na'eh, p. 40 and n. 7). Cf.: Shlomo Na'eh, “Notes on the Tannaitic Hebrew in the Sifra According to Codex Vatican 66” [Hebrew], *Mehkarim ba-lashon* 4 (1990), pp. 271-295, at pp. 272-275.

²² Sifra, Shemini, Mekhilta DeMilui, 3 (ed. Isaac Hirsch Weis, Vienna, 1865), p. 43b.

Knohl and Na'eh noted as well that this daring concept is mentioned only once more in all of tannaitic and amoraic literature, at BT Yoma 67b (perhaps again in the name of Rabbi Ishmael!²³)²⁴ where it is said:

The school of Rabbi Ishmael taught [*tanna d'vei rabbi ishmael*]:
Azazel is so called because it atones for the actions of Uzzah and
Azael.²⁵ [Cf. Rashi: “These are the names of “sons of God” who
sinned with “daughters of men” (Genesis 6:2) and thereby
caused the world to sin during the generation of the Flood”].²⁶

Daniel J. Stökl stressed another important linguistic point in his interpretation of the passage, one which strongly supports the idea that in tannaitic times the dualistic reading of the scapegoat ritual (i.e., that in tannaitic times, imagining the scapegoat ritual to have been a kind of sacrifice to the demonic realm) was at least formally rejected by the rabbis. Stökl paid attention to the simple fact that the

²³ For this point see Knohl and Na'eh (above n. 21), p. 40, n. 8. It should however be noticed that the relation between the various Tannaitic traditions preserved in the name of R. Ishmael himself do not invariably match those brought in the Talmud in the name of '*tanna devei R. Ishmael*'. Although Michael Higger, *Otzar ha-Baraitot* [Hebrew] (New York: Dvei Rabbanan, 1940), vol. 3, p. 42, claims that “Usually we can say that the Babylonian Talmud assumes that the citations brought in the name of 'Tanna Devei R. Ishmael' are the same as of R. Ishmael himself,” in truth there are sometimes contradictions between those two different sources. See Chanokh Albeck, *Introduction to the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1969), pp. 39-43; Marc Hirshman, *Torah For All in the World* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1999), pp. 135-136 n. 238.

²⁴ On the other hand, we might pay attention to the role played by Rabbi Akiva in removing this idea from Rabbinic tradition. See the citation below near n. 30. Regarding the traces of Rabbi Ishmael's magical perception of this ritual see also Na'eh, *Notes* (above n. 21) at pp. 272-273 n. 5 (towards the end of the note).

²⁵ In this regard, see the discussion of Annette Yoshiko Reed (above n. 15) and see the discussion below in n. 32.

²⁶ Following the translation in the edition of Tractate Yoma from the Talmud Bavli by Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz), ed. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb (Jerusalem: Koren, The Noé Edition, 2013), p. 325.

Mishnah systematically use the term *ha-sa'ir ha-mishtalei-ah* (i.e., the goat (that is) sent away) and does not mention *Azazel* even once.²⁷

The concept of “sacrificing” to Satan was thus at best a marginal one, while on the “main road” of rabbinic Judaism we appear to find only the idea that *Azazel* is the name of a place or a descriptive word referring to that place. Yet, following the observations of Knohl and Na'eh, we can surely say that the dualistic idea retained some currency even in Talmudic times, and that that was so even despite the concerted effort to repress it. Although any strange reference to worshiping Satan would be immediately rejected in standard rabbinic texts as an obvious contradiction to the monotheistic concept that would open the dangerous door to a dualistic worldview, it appears nonetheless that the notion continued to exist in some out-of-the-way corners of the literature. This is evidenced, indeed, ~~in fact,~~ precisely by the fact that the Talmudic rabbis felt the need in the first place to chase after this line of interpretation, if only robustly to reject it, on the grounds that the commandment regarding the sacrifice of the scapegoat is a **pure decree of God**, and thus no one should dare misinterpret it as a direction to worship Satan. This point is made expressly at BT Yoma 67b:²⁸

The phrase: “And you shall keep my statutes” (Leviticus 18:4), [is a reference to] matters that Satan challenges [because the reason for these *mitzvot* is not known]. They are: [The prohibitions against] eating pork and against wearing [garments that are made from] diverse kinds of material [i.e., wool and linen]; [the one ordaining that the] *ḥalitzah* [ceremony be performed with] a *yevamah*, [i.e., with a widow who must otherwise participate in a levirate marriage]; the purification [ceremony] of the leper; **and the [ritual regarding the] scapegoat [who is cast into the desert].** And lest you say these [commandments have no reason and are

²⁷ Daniel J. Stökl, “The Christian Exegesis of the Scapegoat Between Jews and Pagans,” in Albert I. Baumgarten (ed.), *Sacrifice in Religious Experience* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 207-232, at p. 221.

²⁸ Following Even-Israel (Steinsaltz, above n. 26), p. 325.

thus] meaningless acts, the verse [therefore] states: “I am the Lord” (ibid.) [to indicate:] I am the Lord, I decreed these statutes and you **have no right to doubt them.**²⁹

It seems as well that the following tradition, preserved in the Tosefta at Sotah 2:10 in the name of Rabbi Akiva, is related to the concern of the Sages that those who harbor a predilection for magic will assume that the scapegoat ritual is basically a propitiatory sacrifice made to the forces of evil:

Rabbi Akiva’s students asked him: Is he allowed to change it? [In other words, if the lot with respect to the two goats was drawn by the High Priest incorrectly with his left hand, what is the *halakhah* regarding his right simply to transfer the lot to his right hand?] He said to them: Do not give the heretics an opportunity to dominate.³⁰

As Saul Lieberman in his edition of the Tosefta explains (in his short commentary), the fear that R. Akiva expresses here of the heretics has to be understood as follows:

Do not allow the heretics [*minim*] to gain the upper hand in their answers, as they will say that even Israel believes in the worship of the spirits of the underworld, exactly as the Gentiles worship the gods of the underworld.³¹

D

And yet, despite all that has been said, this dualistic-magical conception nonetheless managed to penetrate Rabbinic Judaism openly (albeit from a

²⁹ In the original text: ואין לך רשות להרהר בהן

³⁰ Tosefta Kippurim (Yoma), 2:10 (ed. Lieberman, p. 235), and see BT Yoma 40b (my translation).

³¹ Lieberman, *ibid.* See in this regard also the notes of Shraga Bar-On, Goralot Yom haKipurim: bein Razyonalizm, Mantika uMistika, *Kabbalah* 28 (2012), pp. 163-189 at pp. 174-181.

completely different direction) in a well-known midrash from late rabbinic literature that astoundingly was not rejected as heretical, a midrash from the end of the eighth or ninth century CE, *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* (chapter 46). This midrash explicitly expresses the puzzling idea that this sacrifice is best understood as a bribe offered to the demon Azazel.³² The text there reads as follows:³³

On the day the Torah was given, Samael³⁴ said before the Holy One, blessed be He, “Master of the World! You have given me jurisdiction over all the nations of the world, but over Israel do you not give me jurisdiction?” He replied, “Here, you have jurisdiction over them on the Day of Atonement if you find sin

³² This phenomenon of a type of “re-remembering” or “reviving” banned traditions that had been relegated to the Apocrypha in Tannaitic times can be found quite often in the Talmud (see above n. 25), and, even more so, in post-Talmudic literature. Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), dedicated her entire book to this interesting historical fact, focusing particularly on the late Midrash *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, and see in this regard the notes of Ryan S. Dulkan in his “The Devil Within: A Rabbinic Traditions-History of the Samael Story in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 21:2 (2014), pp. 153-175. See also in this regard the list of passages in which Samael appears in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* in Katharina E. Keim, *Pirkei derabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality, and Historical Context*, PhD. Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2014, pp. 405-406. Lastly, it is interesting to note in this concern that according to Joseph Dan, *History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism* (The Middle Ages: Vol. 7: Early Kabbalistic Circles) (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2012), [Hebrew] p. 150, *Sefer haBahir* refers indirectly to this dualism, and to the figure of Satan in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, and specifically rejects this perception in favor of a monistic one.

³³ Following the version of Adelman (above n. 32), pp. 125-126.

³⁴ “The fact that in PRE [=Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer] Samael appears as the seducer instead of Satan is, of course, no variant since in rabbinic literature these two were regarded as identical in quite early times” (Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews, Vol. 5* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955), pp. 120-121, n. 116; and see *ibid.*, pp. 123-124, n. 131 regarding the fact that the names Satan, Samael and even Azazel all denote the same figure in the Apocrypha literature; and see also Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages*, trans. Israel Abrams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), pp. 167-169, and pp. 760-761 on the ancient use of the name Samael in the Apocrypha and the etymology of this name. (In this latter regard, see also Ginsburg, *Legends*, p. 121 n. 116.) On Samael and Satan in the Targums see Yaacov Azuelos, *The Angelology of the Aramaic Targums on the Pentateuch* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2016), pp. 160-164.

amongst them, and if not, you have no jurisdiction.” Therefore they [Israel] would bribe³⁵ him on the Day of Atonement, in order that Israel’s offering should not be canceled,³⁶ as it says, “(and he shall place lots upon the two goats,) one marked for the Lord and the other marked for ‘Aza’zel”³⁷ (Lev. 16:8). The lot for the Holy One, blessed be He, was for a burnt offering and the lot for ‘Aza’zel for a goat-sin offering, and all the sins of Israel were upon it, as it says, “Thus the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to a cut-off land; [and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness]” (Lev. 16:22).

We can, then, at this point of this discussion, fully accept the observation of Israel Knohl with respect to this midrash:

The description [in the Hittite sources] of the goat as an ornate gift, intended to appease the angry and sending-plague god, reminds us of the characterization of the scapegoat in Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer chapter 46.³⁸

This astonishing midrash became quite well known, and was cited by Naḥmanides in his *Perush Ha-Torah* (to Leviticus 16:8) written in the 13th century. There, Naḥmanides turns first to the baffling commentary of R. Avraham ibn Ezra (1089-1164) on this verse, explaining that this idea (i.e., that we offer up the scapegoat as a

³⁵ In Friedlander’s text of Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer (as reflected in his translation published by Hermon Press in New York in 1965, p. 363) we find here the word “present” instead of “bribe.” (Only in a note there does the author suggest that the word could possibly also denote a bribe.) However, the translation of Adelman is right, as שוחד (*shohad*) can only mean “bribe” (in many cases the kind specifically intended to pervert justice, cf., e.g., Ps. 26:10). See David Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew, vol. 8* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2011), p. 316, s.v. שוחד.

³⁶ In his commentary, Rabbi David Luria (Radal) explains that the point here is “so that he should not come to accuse them.”

³⁷ Adelman notes here: “Though this is a quote from Scripture, En866 (NY) changes the order of the letters: ‘le-‘Azaz’el [= לעזזאל],’ close to the orthography in the Aramaic Enoch”. In this regard, see above n. 21.

³⁸ Israel Knohl, “A Hurrian Myth in a late Jewish Text: Sepher Zerubavel,” in Gideon Bohak, Ron Margolin and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, (eds.), *Myth, Ritual and Mysticism* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2014), pp. 73-84, at p. 81.

bribe to Samael, Satan) is already present in the secretive way that Ibn Ezra commented on the verse in question.³⁹ And then, relying on the passage just cited from the Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer, Naḥmanides explains openly that this bribe was given to Satan in order to prevent him from annulling the sacrifices of Israel on *Yom Kippur*.⁴⁰

E

According to Maimonides' philosophical view, evil does not itself exist in reality but, rather is the absence and lack of good. Similar concepts, for Maimonides must be similarly understood: darkness is the absence of light; and the evil instinct, or the devil, is just the power of the imagination in man, which hides the true power - the intellect. In Maimonides' eyes, rational thinking would lead any sane person to deny the existence of forces and creatures that were commonly attributed to the "existing" world of evil, such as demons.⁴¹

Maimonides did not know the commentary of Naḥmanides to the Torah, which was written only in the 13th century;⁴² nevertheless, he certainly knew the idea itself that

³⁹ See in this regard the notes of Henoch (below n. 40), pp. 421-422, n. 718.

⁴⁰ For a discussion on Naḥmanides here, that seems to hold a dualistic position, see Ḥayyim Henoch, *Ramban: Philosopher and Mystic* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1982), pp. 414-427, and see the recent list of bibliography on this topic (in regard to Naḥmanides and the Zohar, which will be discussed below), in Iris Felix and Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, 'Fire Bearing Fire': An Unknown Zoharic Text and the Beginning of Zoharic Commentary in the Early Fourteenth Century – the Case of R. Menahem Recanati and R. Joseph Angilet, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 24 (2015; Hebrew), pp. 157-200, at p. 176 n. 51.

⁴¹ See Shalom Rosenberg, *Good and Evil in Jewish Thought* (Misrad ha-Bitakhon: Tel Aviv 1985) [Hebrew], pp. 24-31.

⁴² For a comprehensive summary of the different opinions of the scholars on the exact period of time in the life of Naḥmanides that was dedicated to write this commentary, see Jonathan Jacobs, "The Influence of the Reality in Eretz Israel on Ramban's Commentary on the Torah",

is mentioned in Nahmanides' writings, since he was very familiar with the midrashic work Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer,⁴³ and he would obviously have been aware of the enormous difficulty of this odd midrash.

Maimonides, as expected, ignores completely the concept that the Torah could conceivably be commanding that the goat be sacrificed to a demon, and explains this obligation as a sort of “pedagogical drama” whose sole purpose was to frighten the people of Israel – it seems as if Maimonides is imagining this as a kind of “shock therapy” here! – in order to drive them to repent:

Inasmuch as the he-goat that was sent forth into the wilderness served wholly to atone for great sins, so that there was no sin-offering of the congregation that served as atonement in as great a measure as that goat, which was as it were the bearer of all the sins, it was not to receive at all such treatment as being slaughtered or burnt or sacrificed, but had to be removed to as great a distance as possible and sent forth *unto a land that is cut off*, I mean one that was separated from habitation. No one has any doubt that sins are not bodies that may be transported from the back of one individual to that of another. But all these actions are parables serving to bring forth a form in the soul so that a passion toward repentance should result: We have freed ourselves from all our previous actions, cast them behind our backs, and removed them to an extreme distance.⁴⁴

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Al Atar: Journal of Land of Israel Studies, 19 (2017) (Tevunot, Herzog College; Hebrew), pp. 37-56, at pp. 37-38, n. 1.

⁴³ See e.g., Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 2:6, trans. Shlomo Pines [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], vol. 2, p. 230; Guide 2:30, Pines ed. pp. 356-357. In the second case Maimonides refers directly to the idea of Samael and Satan, and see in this regard the discussion of Sara Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides' Interpretation of the Adam Stories in Genesis: A Study in Maimonides' Anthropology* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1986) [Hebrew], pp. 209-226.

⁴⁴ Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3:46, ed. Pines, vol. 2, p. 591.

The Zohar, however, in contrast to Maimonides, presents a completely different perception: evil, and the concepts involved in it, are not just absence, they have a real reality in the world. In general, there are two parallel systems: one, the system of the good, in which spheres and worlds belong to the 'sacred deity', and of which the good instinct is a part; and the second, the '*Sitra Aḥra*'⁴⁵ structure, of which the devil and the evil instinct are a part. This system also includes the angels of destruction and demons. The world and human beings therefore are torn between good and evil.⁴⁶

It will not come then as a great surprise that the Zohar seems to be passionate about the idea of sacrificing the scapegoat to Satan,⁴⁷ called the "Other Side," the *Sitra Aḥra*.⁴⁸

In Zohar VayeiShev (vol. 1, 190a), for example, it is said that God had mercy on the people of Israel and advised them how to save themselves from the (celestial)

⁴⁵ Literally: "the other side." Berman explains: "[...] Zoharic poetic mythology is centrally preoccupied with the relationship between the two 'sides' of the cosmos, the divine *Sitra di-Kedusha*, the 'Side of Holiness,' and the demonic *Sitra Aḥra*, literally the 'Other Side.'" (Nathaniel Berman, *Divine and Demonic in the Poetic Mythology of the Zohar: The 'Other Side' of Kabbalah* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 3–4, and n. 5). On the destructive power of the *Sitra Aḥra*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* [see below n. 48], vol. 1, pp. 341–343.

⁴⁶ For scholarly study of this Zoharic view see the sources listed below at n. 50. See also now the translation the entire Zohar into English with commentary, by Daniel Matt, published in twelve volumes, 2004–2018, by Stanford University Press (Stanford California).

⁴⁷ The appearance of a similar tradition in the writings of the Nachmanides and (then later) in the Zohar, is well explained by Haviva Pedia's remarks on the transition of traditions from Nachmanides circle in Catalonia to the circle of Moses de León (and the Zohar circle in general) in Castile. See Haviva Pedaya, *Nachmanides: Cyclical Time and Holy Text*, Am Oved, Tel Aviv, 2003 [Hebrew], pp. 106–119, esp. pp. 113–115, and see in this regard Iris Felix and Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel (above, n. 40), at pp. 157–158 n. 56; and see in this regard also Henoch (above n. 40), p. 417 n. 689.

⁴⁸ Another demonological idea related to Satan as the ruler of the desert – here meant as a place of destruction and desolation – that the Zohar developed, is that God chose to give the Torah to the people of Israel on purpose precisely in the desert, in the "kingdom" of the *Sitra Aḥra*, because God wanted to subdue Satan within his realm. See Isaiah Tishby and Fischel Lachower, *Wisdom of the Zohar: Texts from the Book of Splendour* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 363–364.

prosecutor on Yom Kippur by bringing a sacrifice to the *Sitra Aḥra*. The Zohar then describes Satan as being so occupied with the sacrifice offered to him, similar to the way a hungry dog is busy with a piece of meat thrown to it,⁴⁹ that he forgets to step forward as the prosecutor of Israel. The Zohar, speaking in an especially clear voice, says also at Zohar Pinhas (vol. 3, 248a, in the inner-Zoharic text called the *Raaya Meheimna*, a later level in the Zoharic literature) that this sacrifice to the *Sitra Aḥra* is specifically meant to serve as a bribe. And in yet another intriguing and enigmatic passage, the Zohar (Emor, vol. 3, 101b) compares the fact that the Torah required that the High Priest use lots on Yom Kippur to determine which goat was to be a sacrifice to God, and which is meant to flatter Satan, to an aspect of the sexual relationship between married spouses:

I have found in the Book of Enoch that he [Enoch] said that, just as on the first day of the month, the moon is purified to come close to her husband, so must one portion be given to the *Sitra Aḥra* and from the same type [this portion should be similar to the *Sitra Aḥra* himself, i.e., a goat is given to the *Sitra Aḥra* who has the form of a goat]; so also [in the same way] the woman when she is purified for her husband, one portion must be given to the *Sitra Aḥra*, and [should this portion – which is not specified – has to be as well] from its [i.e., the *Sitra Aḥra*] own type (Zohar, *ibid.*)⁵⁰

⁴⁹ On this image of Satan, see Zohar Pinhas, vol. 3, p. 248a.

⁵⁰ For a discussion on the precise dualistic perception of the Zohar and its sources, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* (above n. 48), vol. 1, pp. 285-307, and specifically in regard to the sacrifice to Azazel see *Ibid.* vol. 2, pp. 208-210; Joseph Dan, *History* (see above. n. 32), vol. II (The Zohar: The Book of Splendour, Jerusalem 2015), pp. 97, 350-353; Rosenberg, *Good and Evil* (above, n. 41), pp. 53-66. The Book of Enoch to which the Zohar refers is probably not any of the books that Scholars today refer to and First, or Second, or Third Enoch, but the question of the Zohar's sources is complex, and cannot be addressed here. Gershom Scholem was of the opinion that this book, as well as others that are mentioned in the Zohar, and are not in our hands now, are just "imagined books" that never really existed. Ronit Meroz, however, raised second thoughts in this regard. See Ronit Meroz, *The Spiritual Biography of Rabbi Simeon bar Yochay: An Analysis of the Zohar's Textual Components*,

This concept of evil (the *Sitra Aḥra*) as an active force lived on both in scholarly discussion,⁵¹ and in some popular practices of ordinary observant Jews. For example, keeping strictly the ritual of *mayyim akharonim* (“last waters”),⁵² an ancient Talmudic practice that involved ritual handwashing after eating, that was widely neglected in at least some places during the post-Talmudic era (cf., e.g., *Shulkhan Arukh, Orakh Hayyim*, 181:10), was now suddenly re-emphasized and was strongly maintained by those who took the special authority of kabbalistic sources seriously. Now, following the Zohar, it was explained that the water that washes the dirt from one’s hands after a meal is actually an offering to Satan (*Sitra Aḥra*), who is content not to cause mischief once he receives his portion of filth and evil.⁵³

(Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik), 2018, [Hebrew], pp. 21-22. Haviva Pedaya even called lately to the researchers to consider seriously the option that the writer (or writers) of the Zohar had owed a copy of a real book which was called "Enoch" (Pedaya suggested that this is the same book which is called sometimes "Sifra DeAdam Kadmaah"). See Haviva Pedaya, *The Sixth Millennium: Millenarism and Messianism in the Zohar*, Daat 72 (2012), [Hebrew], pp. 51-98 at p. 64 n. 46.

⁵¹ I will present here only one example which I have selected from many others in order to present this concept in its use as interpretive tool: Rabbi Meir Bikiyam (born in Salonika around 1700 died in Izmir in 1769) argues in his book *Meir Bat Ayyin* (Izmir: Yehuda Hazan Printing, 1755) [in the 'Hashmatot' to Simman 21], p. 100b, that the custom of wrapping the tefillin in the hairs of a calf (as it is not allowed according the *halakhah* to use any glue in this process) was established in order to “give a part” to the *Sitra Aḥra*, so that he [Satan] would not cause any harm to us when we put on us the tefillin (as he would be “busily occupied” with the “present” he got from us. Apparently, the author imagined that the hair of the calf in our tefillin pleases Satan because it reminds him how he “defeated” Israel in the Golden Calf story).

⁵² See for example the warnings regarding the need to keep this commandment strictly by R. Shalom Rokeach in his *Otzar Hamayyim: Al Hilkhotei Mayyim Akharonim* (Brooklyn, 1994; Hebrew), pp. 25-27.

⁵³ For example, see Zohar vol. 2, p. 169a: “Therefore, we give the prosecutor his portion with the filth of the 'last waters.' And if there was no filth [on the hands that were washed] then his portion is in the food that his hand touched [because they have some residue of food on them]”. And see the list of sources in Zoharic literature on this topic in: *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, trans. and ed. Daniel Chanan Matt (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 287-288, s.v. “compulsory”; and see the explanation of this concept in the wider issue of the

G

Leaving aside the Zohar, the fact that Naḥmanides interpreted the Azazel ritual as a bribe to Satan caused, unsurprisingly a real shock to the leaders of modern Orthodoxy. For example, consider the comment of American Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, who wrote in the 1970's as follows:

According to Nachmanides, Azazel is Samael, meaning Satan. This is a shocking idea, God help us! How could Nachmanides even suggest such a thing? Surely to sacrifice a goat to Satan is idolatry! This is indeed a horrifying explanation of the word Azazel. As a matter of fact, Nachmanides tarries and stalls until at least he “reveals the secret” to the reader. How it is at all thinkable that the Torah should command us to offer up a sacrifice to Satan? “And we give Samael a bribe on the Day of Atonement” is how Nachmanides phrases it.⁵⁴

H

Zohar's perception of good and evil in Moshe Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: HaHistadrut HaZiyyonit), 1991, [Hebrew], pp. 134-146, esp. at pp. 140-141.

⁵⁴ Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, *On Repentance: The Thought and Oral Discourses of Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1996), pp. 294-295.

Despite its elegance, R. Soloveitchik's own clarification of this peculiarity seems to me to fall into the category of apologetic homilies. Soloveitchik claims that the “sacrifice to Satan” represents not an actual sacrifice to Satan, but rather only what is in reality happening in the mind of simple people during the year, when they “worship Satan” through the excessive pursuit of vanity (in the form of money, honour, etc.). For Soloveitchik, the Torah wants to teach us by this ritual that “The special measure of grace of the divine quality of loving-kindness of the Day of Atonement then intercedes and rules that all those sacrifices offered up by man to Satan which he regrets on the Day of Atonement and repents – these must all be regarded respectively as if they had been cast as a 'lot for the Lord'” (ibid., pp. 298-299).

Now, if I may, I will offer my own suggestion regarding the way to explain this puzzling ritual. The assumption I will make is that: even if we accept the suggestion of many Biblical scholars that this ritual was originally adapted from the Hittite world as explained above, that does not prevent us from further considering how it underwent transformation in the era of biblical Israel.

According to the suggestion I will now make, the Torah is well aware that man, even if he strives with all his might to overcome his “evil side,” often fails to do so and will therefore ultimately feel guilty about that failure.⁵⁵

Even if the Freudian theory to the effect that the unconscious acts in its own ways to thwart our attempts to do better was unknown in ancient times, I can still intuitively claim that the ancients also very often felt the fact of the existence of the unconscious as a sort of “dark material” within that can unexpectedly burst forth.⁵⁶

I believe, then, that the ancients understood very well, even without having a modern systematic theory to buttress their hunch, that these “dark energies” are the ones that hold us back and prevent us from reaching our perfect state of final inner correction.

⁵⁵ It should be said clearly now, at this point of our discussion, that the figure of Satan as an authority, separate from God, who can sometimes oppose the will of God – and even fight with him, is primarily a post-Biblical “innovation”. One of the common explanations for the necessity of this dualistic split, occurring in the Second Temple time, was the need to explain by this dualistic conception the reason for the troubles which seemed to have no other justification (why would God impose terrible punishments, such as destruction of the (first) Temple, upon his beloved people?); Although, as Licht concludes, in the Tanakh itself there is no sign for any need for such an explanation; only in a few late scriptural texts one can find hints for such a dualistic view. Those hints were later developed to be a dominant perception – especially in the Apocrypha (yet, almost fully rejected by the Talmudic rabbis). See Jacob Shalom Licht, “Satan”, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. 8 (Mossad Bialik: Jerusalem, 1982) (Hebrew), cols. 277-283 at col. 277.

⁵⁶ Regarding pre-Freud perceptions of the unconscious, see the discussion accompanied with several examples in supplement no. 2 below.

Following Maimonides⁵⁷ in a way (although my proposal is based on the Freudian method more than the Maimonidean),⁵⁸ I would therefore like to suggest that the Torah uses the image of the scapegoat to convey a message to the people of Israel, a message aimed to calm and ease the heavy guilty feelings experienced by an anxious people on Yom Kippur.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See above section E. In this line see also Josef Schächter, *MiMada LeEmunah* (Dvir: Tel Aviv, 1962), p. 168.

⁵⁸ In fact, my reading is based on Freudian understandings only in a quite limited sense, as it is distancing itself in many ways from the assuming Freudian classical doctrine would let itself treat this case. For a "purely" Freudian reading of the Scapegoat Ritual suggested by Géza Róheim see supplement no. 3 below.

⁵⁹ I will present here below the difficult and problematic side of this human emotion, i.e., those heavy guilt feelings that might sometimes overwhelm a person in his or her inner life; superfluous and unnecessary loads of guilt feelings that no longer constitute a positive impulse for correction and repentance (cf. below, n. 63). In this respect it would be worthwhile to briefly mention the ideas of Hermann Cohen, who places great emphasis on the positive power of guilt. Hermann Cohen as a Jewish philosopher, explains that even though, on one hand, despite all of his or her efforts the human being finds himself (or herself) time and again falling into the pits of sin; on the other hand his or her sins are not his or her fate; a person can always choose to avoid committing sins; and even if he or she cannot – he or she still can turn sins upside down, from being 'Zedonoth' (intended actions) to be 'Shegagoth' (unintended actions) by bringing himself (or herself) back to God and repent. The free choice is always there, argues Cohen (see in this regard the clarifications to Cohen's teaching in Eliezer Schweid, *Foundations of Hermann Cohen's Religious Philosophy*, Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought 2:2 (1983) [Hebrew], pp. 255-306, at pp. 298-299). Guilt in the religious context, according to Cohen, means understanding that causing any harm to another person is at the same time causing 'harm' to God, since according to Cohen's understanding, there is a correlation between man as an individual and God. This correlation stems from the fact that "God created man in His image" (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, when a person comes to his judgment his sins are atoned in truth only by God; only God can forgive and atone one's sins; hence, the centrality of the theme of the atonement in Cohen's religious thought. In our context Cohen emphasizes that forgiveness of sin (in regard to our case of Azazel) is not the result of the fact that the scapegoat carries on his back all our sins to the desert, it is only a symbolic way to present in the Torah the fact that God is the one who "unpacks" those sins from our backs. (See Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*, Gustav Fock: Leipzig 1919, p. 255). Translated into English by Simon Kaplan (first published NY: Ungar; 1972, and reprinted, with additional introductory essays, American Academy of Religion, 1995.)

A clear example for this heavy guilt, which sometimes can haunt certain types of people, was kept in a rare piece of evidence from the second temple time in the Mishnah Keritot 6:3:

Rabbi Eliezer says: A person may volunteer [to bring a] provisional guilt offering [Asahm Talui, which was brought not because of any sin, but rather just to ease the guilt feeling!] every day, and at any time that he chooses, [even if there is no uncertainty as to whether he sinned, and this] type [of offering was called] the guilt offering of the pious, [as they brought it due to their constant concern that they] might have sinned.

They said about Bava ben Buta that he would [volunteer to bring] a provisional guilt offering every day except for one day after Yom Kippur [because of the atonement that have been already done in Yom Kippur itself].⁶⁰

Behind the ritual of sending the scapegoat to Azazel, therefore, according to my reading, stands the theological assumption that though human beings can **strive** to correct their virtues and actions as much as they can, full correction is not possible. Moreover, no matter how intensely we try, the truth is that any *real* mending of the inner state of mind is not in the end done by us; only the grace of God (*hesed*) can ultimately enable this correction to take place in our psychic reality. The insight of Martin Buber in this regard can be helpful because Buber argued that the basis for

Generally speaking, Cohen sees the challenge which stands in front of the people of Israel as "growing up" from the stage of their "infancy", in order to be able in the end to be lifted to a higher state, in which the "inmost soul work" would be put on the shoulders of the individual, while getting rid of what he describes as "mysticism and priestly secret art" of cleansing one's soul (see *Ibid.*, p. 256).

⁶⁰ And see in this regard the discussion of George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of Tannaim*, vol. 1 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson 1960), p. 499; Phillip Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel of Matthew* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), p. 5, and the detailed dissuasion of Tal Ilan in Noam Vered and Tal Ilan, *Josephus and the Rabbis* (Yad Ben Zvi: Jeruslaem 2017) [Hebrew] pp. pp. 376-406.

will and the basis of divine *hesed* (“~~grace~~”) are mixed together to the extent that it is impossible to differentiate one from the other given the real inner processes that are taking place and engender both:

It is senseless to ask how far my own action reaches and where God’s grace begins; they do not in the least limit each other. Rather what alone concerns me before I bring something about is my action and what alone concerns me after it has been accomplished is God’s grace.⁶¹

I propose, then, that this ritual conveys to the people of Israel the following message on *Yom Kippur*: if you have done what you can do, then you are clean and pure, because what remains unresolved and incomplete is not in your hands to resolve or complete; and this being the case, you must hand it over in faith and trust

⁶¹ Martin Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, ed. and trans. Maurice Freedman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), p. 105; and see my own observation in this regard in my essay, “Comments and Explanations to Buber’s *I and Thou*,” in Haviva Pedaya and Efraim Meir (eds.), *Judaism, Topics, Fragments, Faces, Identities: Jubilee Volume in Honor of Rivka Horwitz* [Hebrew] (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2007), pp. 511-524, at pp. 519-524.

In connection to this discussion it would be also necessary to add this note: On an extraordinarily high level of existence, an individual might find himself in a state of mind that is neither active nor passive, but instead in a unique state of mind that “melts” together elements from both at the same time. Abraham H. Maslow exemplifies it with reference to the case of the dancer: “A good dancer can let himself go, becoming a passive instrument fashioned by the music and played upon by it. He need have no wish, no criticism, no direction, no will [...] But few people can dance as well as this. Most will try, will be directed, self-controlled, and purposeful, will listen carefully to the rhythm of the music, and by a conscious art of choice, fall in with it. They will be poor dancers from the point of view of the onlooker and from the subjective point of view as well, for they will never enjoy dancing as a profound experience of self-forgetfulness, and voluntary renunciation of control” (Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), pp. 133-134). This ideal state of mind is well-known and well described in the Daoist teaching. See Edward Slingerland, *Effortless Action: Wu-wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China* (Oxford University press, Oxford 2003).

to the One into whose hands everything is given.⁶² The goat thrown from the cliff, which supposedly bears the sins of the people on its back, is therefore not a “bribe” to the harmful demon of the wilderness, but rather is a symbol of the guilt feelings of the individual and the national collective.

This connection between the "carrying [sins] goat" and the way we carry out our guilt feelings can be supported by the way Juan Cirlot presented in his *Dictionary of Symbols* the Scapegoat in regard to its symbolic function in the ancient Greek culture – as

a symbol of the projection of one’s own guilt upon someone else,⁶³ and of the consequent repression of one’s conscience. Hence the traditional significance of the he-goat as an emissary, and its evil association with the devil".⁶⁴

In contrast to the Greek culture, however, in the Jewish tradition, these guilt feelings, according to my understanding, are going through two processes: a. One is commanded not to "throw" these guilt feelings on any other "scapegoat", but rather to take full responsibility for his/her own sins, in other words: to repent; and b. after he/she does what he/she can do in order to mend what should be mended, then he/she is guided to let the rest of the "load" of guilt feelings to be "sent to

⁶² In the religious life, one can regularly recognize clear tension between two “poles,” one representing the responsibility to be vigorous and active and the other to adopt a more passive attitude and submit oneself to God. (Finding the proper balance between them is an exceedingly difficult task; and see in this respect the citation from Maslow above, n. 61). The special term generally used for describing the last approach in religious life is “quietism.” For more clarifications see the supplement no. 4 below.

⁶³ One of the interesting observations of the modern psychology, is that nowadays it is quite clear that exactly as there are certain types who need to remove the burden of the guilt feelings from themselves and load it on others, there are also certain types who are attracted to the "complex of the scapegoat" and therefore are looking to accept this "load" and carry it for others. See in this regard Sylvia Brinton Perera, *The Scapegoat Complex: Toward a Mythology of Shadow and Guilt* (Toronto: Inner City Books 1986); Naphtali Bar-Ilan and Seymour Hoffman, “Rabbinic-Psychological Interventions in Cases of Pathological Guilt”, *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 42:1 (2003), pp. 5-11.

⁶⁴ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge 1971), p. 143.

Azazel"; in other words, to surrender himself in trust to God as the atoner. These “remainders” of guilt feeling should now be then “thrown off the cliff” on *Yom Kippur* in order to symbolize the fact that those emotions are no longer carried on one's back from one year to the next – and thus, as a community do we enter through the gates of the new year cleansed of our sins and calmed of our anxiety. The transition here is a delicate crossing of a narrow bridge from one side (i.e., the one in which takes place the work of the daily life, involving the weighty responsibilities that we must shoulder to be active in the world) to the other side (i.e., the one in which the religious life unfolds), a crossing that can only successfully be completed once we let the heavy burden we bear be “thrown to the desert,” and take a more passive position in directing our hearts to God as the one who is responsible for the final correction. This is, as I see it, the main idea of the holy day of *Yom Kippur*: to cross from one side of the bridge to the other. This ritual therefore has a cathartic role, in that it is intended to soothe the minds of the people who believe they are not sufficiently pure (in this context, meaning unsullied by sin) to stand before God at all on that holy day. But it also has an educational function which aims to maintain the **delicate balance** in religious life between an individual's dynamic effort to self-correct (which might conceivably engender a sense of arrogance, in which the Torah declares at Deuteronomy 8:17: “And you say to yourselves, ‘My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me’), and a passive attitude towards one's flaws and sins, that could easily lead to despair and inability to act.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ In regard to the demand of the Mishnah to ask the forgiveness of any other person whom we have sinned against before *Yom Kippur* [=Yoma 8:9: “For transgressions between man and God, *Yom Kippur* effects atonement, but for transgressions between man and his fellow, *Yom Kippur* does not effect atonement until he has pacified his fellow”], I would like to add a short clarification. Following the main point of my discussion here – and emphasizing the fact that quite often we are not able to do more than we have actually done – a question regarding this demand of the Mishnah might well be raised. And here the challenge for us is even greater, as this demand of the Mishnah can be viewed as humiliating: after all, as

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My suggestion here corresponds nicely with the name of the day that the Torah itself uses at Leviticus 23:27: *Yom ha-Kippurim*. The key here is that *kippur* originally meant “covering”, as one can see from the first appearance of this root in Scripture at Genesis 6:13-14, where we read that “God said to Noah, ‘I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it [כִּפְרָתָהּ אֶתָּה] inside and out with pitch.”⁶⁶ Keeping that meaning in mind and applying it to our context yields, then, the suggestion that, when it comes to atonement for sins in the Torah, the core meaning has to do with covering and concealing (by forgiveness, by understanding that now it is in the hands of the Mercy of God – and not as one might think by repression!) the unwanted deed itself, and not necessarily in its perfect correction.⁶⁷

explained above, we often feel that something bigger than ourselves motivated us to behave in the way that we did (people repeatedly say: “it’s in my character”!) and it therefore seems not right that we are now, before *Yom Kippur*, required to apologize. Nonetheless, this is in fact the great lesson of the day: we apologize neither for ourselves (much less to earn back our share in the world to come) nor for the sake of justice. We apologize to those whom we have hurt because we have the power to fix something that has been broken (even if it was not our fault) and for the sake of grace and mercy, namely, to give expression to the empathy we now (if we are really atoning) have for the other suffering person.

⁶⁶ And see in this regard: Joseph Lam, *Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept* (Oxford: York Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 80-81; Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 193-195; Yitzhaq Feder, On kuppuru, kippēr and Etymological Sins that Cannot be Wiped Away, *Vetus Testamentum*, 60 (2010), pp. 535-545.

⁶⁷ See Yonina Dor, *Were the Foreign Women Really Expelled? Separation and Exclusion in the Restoration Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), [Hebrew] pp. 185-187.

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As a nice support for my reading of the biblical scapegoat ritual, it would be most appropriate, I believe, to end this essay with the magnificent poetic words of Yotam Benziman on the deep meaning of *kapparah* in the Tanakh, that I find corresponding so beautifully to my suggestion regarding the ritual of the scapegoat:

The transition to the metaphysical meaning [i.e., from covering the ark in Genesis to atonement for the altar later in the Torah, and then atonement of the people of Israel themselves] allows us to speak about atonement for sin and not just for an altar. But the original meaning of the word remains the same. There is no atonement, only cover [i.e., only an act of sacred covering up] [...] The past cannot be changed. He who atones for sin covers it. He spreads a layer over it of blood, of sweat, of tears. Who is the one who achieves atonement for a sin? In truth, the sinner. He is the one who is required to do something [...] Yet not only him, but also the person, or entity, against whom the injustice was directed. This is why the people can call to God with the words: “When all manner of sins overwhelm me, it is You who forgive our iniquities [=For our transgressions You will atone]” (Psalm 85:4); Thus, one can say of God: “But He, being merciful, forgives iniquity”. Atonement is essentially similar to carrying it [...] The two ~~ones~~ who are involved in the atonement, the two who carry it, do not nullify the past; they cover it together. They apply layer upon layer upon layer. Every layer is another bit of suppression of the sin; at the same time, though, it is also another contact with the painful place, with the irreparable sin, with the injustice and with the sorrow included in it. In contrast to the longing to change and erase the past, there is in the atonement a remembrance of the injustice, of the shame and terror involved in it. It is difficult to find more poignant verses to describe this situation than the following: “Nevertheless, I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish it with you as an everlasting covenant.

You shall remember your ways and feel ashamed, when you receive your older sisters and your younger sisters, and I give them to you as daughters, though they are not of your covenant. I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD. Thus, you shall remember and feel shame, and you shall be too abashed to open your mouth again, when I have forgiven you for all that you did – declares the Lord God” (Ezekiel 16:60-63). Here she [=Israel] remembers and is ashamed. But he [=God] is atoning her. He offers her an everlasting covenant. This covenant will be based on a willingness to live with the past. She [=Israel] will be built from shame. It will be a joint conversation of layer after layer. The mutual carrying [=of God and Israel together] is also a joint activity. So where is the difference between carrying [תשא תטאתם] ⁶⁸ and atonement? I believe that the atonement can be described as occurring at the same time as the carrying. The shared burden establishes a renewed relationship. Both carriers discuss past sins and deal with the burden. This coping gradually covers the wounds. It is the atonement, the covering, the covering the matter. This is the embedding of the scars [...]. The wounds crust over slowly, but the scars remain.⁶⁹

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Supplement 1: (to footnote no. 7):

Why was the Sacrificial Animal a Goat?

⁶⁸ Cf., e.g., Exodus 32:32. On the scholarly linguistic aspects of נש"א עון in the Tanakh see Bruce Wells, “Liability in The Priestly Texts of The Hebrew Bible”, *Sapientia Logos* 5:1 (2012), pp. 1-31.

⁶⁹ Yotam Benziman, *Forgive but Do Not Forget: The Ethics of Forgiveness* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2008), [Hebrew], pp. 158-159.

One can ask at this point of our discussion: why was the sacrificial animal specifically a goat?

The answer seems to be quite obvious: in the Tanakh, and not only here, the goat is called *śa'ir* or plural *śe'irim* (e.g., Isa. 13:21) which "describes a group of creatures which are usually identified as 'hairy demons, Satyrs'".⁷⁰

The following sources, which are coming from post-biblical periods, obviously do not explain this fact in the Bible itself; however they explain well why this fact, i.e., that the goat was considered as having demonic characteristics, was accepted by many commentators as a natural and evident fact.

The goat as demon was well-known in Greco-Roman culture.⁷¹ This ancient attitude viewing the goat as a creature that is demonic and harmful, might have somehow inspired even the later rabbinic sources.⁷²

The Zohar, however (Wa-yeshev, vol 1, p. 185b), describes the goat, whose blood is perceived to be similar to that of humans,⁷³ as emerging from the "side of judgment" (*sitra de-dina*), meaning the side of harsh judgment, which is the source of the punishment meted out to Jacob, symbolized by the goat that his sons slaughtered and whose blood they "offered" to him (see Gen. 37:31-32).

In another homily in the Zohar (Shemini, vol. 3, p. 38a-b), the question is asked why the Torah requires a goat (*śe'ir izzim*) as a sin offering (see Lev. 9:3). The answer given is that in the past Israel offered sacrifices to goats, meaning to the

⁷⁰ Bernd Janowski, "Satyrs," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demonyms in the Bible* [=DDD], eds. Karl van der Toorn et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 732-733. at p. 732.

⁷¹ See Konrat Ziegler und Walther Sontheimer (eds.), *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike auf der Grundlage von Pauly's Realencyclopädie*, vol. 5, (Stuttgart: Druckenmüller Verlag, 1964), pp. 1529-1553 (entry: "Ziege").

⁷² Regarding the limits placed on raising goats in the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods see Admiel Kosman, "Goat. II. Judaism" in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* [=EBR], eds. Dale C. Allison Jr. et al., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), vol. 10, cols. 372-377.

⁷³ See Gen. Rabah 84:31, ed. Judah Theodor and Chanokh Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1965), vol. 2, p. 1024.

demons that ruled in the high mountains using their demonic powers. To purify themselves from this sin, they were required to offer goats as sacrifices at that time. In a different homily in the Zohar (Wa-yiqra, vol. 3, p. 25a), Rabbi Simeon is even quoted as stating that the word, 'ez (goat) is a "bad name," indicating that it comes from the "side of evil" (*sitra bisha*). For that very reason, it is necessary to offer it as a sacrifice to God ("And if his sacrifice is a goat, he shall bring it before the Lord," Lev. 3:12). If an individual is invaded by an impure spirit, then his sacrifice must come from the same "kind" of animal that belongs to the level of impurity that infected him. In another interesting comment, the Zohar (Tetsaweh, vol. 2, p. 185a-b) assumes (without any linguistic basis) that a *śa'ir* is younger than a mature 'ez. (In reality, both Hebrew words are synonyms for goat). On this basis, the Zohar asks why the Tanakh commands to offer a *śa'ir* and not an 'ez as a sacrifice on the New Moon and on Yom Kippur. The answer is that the hair of a young goat, a *śa'ir*, has yet to grow long, indicating that it had yet to be deeply immersed in the side of evil, the *Sitra Aħra*. On the other hand, the long hair of a mature goat, an 'ez, symbolizes its deep immersion in the impurity of the evil side, the *Sitra Aħra*. (See Zohar, Aharei mot, vol. 3, p. 79a for a further discussion of hair as an expression of the elements of punishment and impurity).

Consequently, it is possible to understand why the Zohar Ḥadash (Toldot, p. 27a) concludes that there is no apparent danger in herding sheep, while the goatherd is in danger of meeting the forces of judgment while tending to them.⁷⁴

It is interesting also in this respect to note that in the modern period, R. Abraham Isaac ha-Kohen Kook's approach reflects that of the Zohar, refracted through the prism of his own modern understanding that seems to be influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer. R. Kook posits that the goat symbolizes the lowest level soul that causes certain people to choose to act in a base manner. In addition, he sees the

⁷⁴ See also Henoah (above n. 34), p. 419-420 and n. 712. On the world view of the Zohar in this respect see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* (see above n. 48), vol. 2, pp. 208-209.

goat as a general representation of a “cosmic *thanatos*” that functions constantly below the surface to destroy the reality of existence (in keeping with a hidden agenda) in an effort to repair it – in order to allow for a loftier renewal in the future.⁷⁵

Supplement 2: (for footnote no. 56):

Pre-Freud Perceptions of the Unconscious: Several Examples

It is not hard to find evidences for the simple fact that, even before Freud, ancients and later scholars learned in one way or another about the unconscious, as Simon Goldhill summarizes in a general way regarding the Greco-Roman world:

There have been some serious attempts to look at the history back to antiquity – not just of madness but also of how the mind’s structure is imagined. Although it is evident that the term ‘unconscious’ has no equivalent in Greek or Latin, and that the function of the unconscious is inaugurated as a theoretical concern only in Freud’s writing, it is nonetheless possible to excavate how the hidden recesses of the mind – its blindness, self-deceptions and misperceptions – are articulated either in the extensive medical and philosophical discussions of antiquity or in the broader literary representations of mental life. If dreams provide a royal road to the unconscious, there are both the ancient dream books, from which archive Freud focused on Artemidorus, and plenty of literary and philosophical versions of dreams and their analysis to explore. Above all, there is much recent critical investigation of ancient engagement with a theory of memory.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ See Yosef Kelner, *Dictionary of R. Kook’s Writings* [*Millon HaReaya*; Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Ateret, 1999), p. 301.

⁷⁶ Simon Goldhill, “Review of Vered Lev Kenaan’s *The Ancient Unconscious: Psychoanalysis and the Ancient Text*,” in *Psychoanalysis and History* 22:2 (2020), pp. 247–250, at p. 247.

Many have written about this topic, and not solely with respect to the world of classical antiquity. I will refer here, however, in the interest of brevity, only to three pre-Freudian examples from the context of Jewish thought:

A. Regarding Spinoza and his notion of the unconscious, see Isidor Silbermann, “Some Reflections on Spinoza and Freud,” *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 42:4 (1973), pp. 601-624, esp. pp. 611-612.

B. Regarding the notion of unconscious in Hasidism, see: Gershom Scholem, *Habilti-muda umusag 'kadmud hasekheh' besifrut haHasidit*, in Gershom Scholem, *Explications and Implications: Writings on Jewish Heritage and Renaissance* [Hebrew], ed. Abraham Schapira (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990), vol. 2, pp. 351-360; and see the list of publications regarding this topic in Aryeh Wineman, “Hasidic View of Dreams, Torah-Text, and the Language of Allusion,” *Hebrew Studies* 52 (2011), pp. 353-362, at pp. 355-356, esp. at p. 356, n. 16-17.

C. Using the idea of “*kokhot kehim*” (“dark energies”), which in Mussar Movement texts bore the same meaning exactly as the unconscious of Freud; see, for example, letter no. 6 of R. Israel Salanter [1809-1883] in Izhak Blazer [ed.], *Or Israel* (Vilna, 1900), pp. 24b-26a at p. 25a, regarding several Biblical figures (as they were perceived, of course, in the rabbinic tradition). R. Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986) explained the behaviour of these figures by the idea of *kokhot kehim*; namely, that these figures were moved unconsciously by those “dark energies”. See, for example, Yaakov Kamenetsky, *Emet leYaakov on the Torah* [Hebrew] (New York: Emata leYaakov Institute, 1996), pp. 88-89, on the question of why Lot chose to live in Sodom, and the gap between his conscious-rational explanation and his unconscious desires. (For several similar additional explanations, see Akiva Weisinger, “The Hidden Motives of Biblical Characters and Their Interpreters: On the Possibility of Freudian Readings in R. Yaakov Kamenetsky,” available at <https://yeshiva.academia.edu/AqibhaEtc>.)

Supplement 3: (for footnote no. 58):

On the Freudian Reading of the Scapegoat Ritual of Géza Róheim

In a completely different way, Géza Róheim suggests⁷⁷ that we should view the element of repression as central to the Yom Kippur scapegoat ritual – while I, in contrast, interpret that ritual not as an instance of simple avoidance or repression, but rather as one expressive of mindfully conscious welcome.

In his essay, Róheim proposes a psychoanalytic explanation for the duality that one finds in this ritual – one goat to the devil and one to God – as related to initiation ceremonies, where there is a built-in duality, according to his Freudian perception, between, on the one hand, punishment for the sin of Oedipal lust of the child towards his mother and, on the other, the desire to push the child through the initiation rite into a new world of sexual activity as an adult male.

Róheim believes that the Biblical ritual should be understood to be expressing of the sense that the “rebellious child” must be punished, i.e., must “go to hell,” that is, his desire must be repressed into the unconscious, since it represents the sense of sin. On the other hand, the child now is entering into a new stage of adulthood that symbolizes the child’s readiness to be consecrated unto God. From now on, he is to represent the values and virtues appropriate to a mature man in his society. Being sacrificed on the altar to God means, then, according to Róheim’s Freudian psychoanalytic reading of the Torah, being from now on the victim of his own

⁷⁷ in his *Animism, Magic, and the Divine King* (New York: International Universities Press, 1972), pp. 311-380, esp. at p. 363.

Géza Róheim (1891-1953) was a Jewish-Hungarian psychoanalyst and anthropologist. Considered by some as the most important anthropologist-psychoanalyst, he is often credited with founding the field of psychoanalytic anthropology. Róheim was the first psychoanalytically trained anthropologist to do field research, and later developed a general cultural theory. See Ephraim Fischhoff, "Róheim, Géza", in Fred Skolnik (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Second Edition), vo. 17, Thomson-Gale, Detroit 2007, pp. 369-370.

controlling super-ego. According to his explanations, the “goat” in this Biblical ritual symbolises both sides, and therefore the duality of two "goats". On one hand, the goat "to God" leads to the ego-ideal (the “*Ichideal*”), meaning that the child must henceforth become identical to his father (mature, a man); but at the same time there is also "a goat to Azazel" that is “led into the desert” which means that the ancient, wild instinct of incest, is thrown into the desert, “the land of repression”. Concerning Róheim's psychologically dualistic way of interpretation, I will only comment briefly here by saying that, in principle, I do not oppose this way of reading our ritual. My disagreement is only with the tone of absoluteness with which it is presented in his writing which seems to negate any other way of reading the ritual. Róheim's approach is of course that of the typical Freudian, suggestive of psychological reductionism.⁷⁸

On the other hand, interestingly enough, the modern rabbinical apologetic approach can also be interpreted against the background of the same stand of psychological dualism. For example, I will summarise here shortly what is stated in regard to our discussion by R. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888). Hirsch argues that the goat sacrificed to God symbolizes the person who decides to dedicate himself to God in contrast to the “scapegoat,” which symbolizes the person who refuses to hear the voice of God. The power is given to man, as Hirsch explains, because man can surrender himself to the authority of God, and this means to resist all internal and external stimuli that tempt him to depart from the path that God commands us to walk. But man can also decide to be like the “scapegoat,” that is, to use his power of will in order to be in opposition to God, simply by refusing to hear His voice.

Hirsch explains that God gave man the power of resistance, but man is the one who decides whether to direct this power towards the choice of good, namely by

⁷⁸ For Róheim's extreme adherence to Freud's theory, see Paul A. Robinson, *The Sexual Radicals: Reich, Róheim, Marcuse* (London: Paladin, 1970), pp. 64-81, esp. at pp.74-75.

resisting the evil inclination, or, vice versa, to use it in order to oppose God and indulge in sensuality, symbolized here by the scapegoat.⁷⁹

I, nevertheless, believe that true respect for the ancients' text must not derive only from the dualistic perspective (whether psychoanalytic or rabbinic). Instead, I am trying to present a monistic, non-dualistic, interpretation of this ritual, one which, at least in my eyes, can make sense. Even if one is not willing to accept this suggestion in regard to the Torah itself, perhaps it can be still accepted at least as the preferred explanation for the reading of the Talmudic sages on this topic. In addition, it is essential for me to emphasize that in reading any texts of the ancients, I – as a person who comes to the text from literary point of view – do not see any *a priori* obligation to accept one way and reject the other. Nor does the way of reading the text that I present here necessarily contradict the one offered by Róheim.⁸⁰ It is permissible to say that both options exist at the same time in reading this text; and perhaps – in a mysterious way – we have personally touched on those two options again: for God and for Satan...

Supplement 4: (for footnote no. 62):

On “Quietism” and Activism in Religious Life and Different Examples from the Jewish Tradition for this Tension

David Macarthur defines quietism in these words:

⁷⁹ See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Ḥamishah Ḥumshei Torah: Sefer Vayikra* (Jerusalem: Mossad Yitzḥak Breuer, 2002) in his commentary on Leviticus 16:10, pp. 256-258.

⁸⁰ Another point where it seems to me that Róheim's argument is right, is the resemblance he sees between the rites of "Tashlikh" (in *Rosh haSanah*) and "Kapparat" (in the eve of *Yom Kippur*) in later Jewish customs as a sort of replacement to the ancient biblical ceremony of sacrificing the scapegoat to Azazel (see Roheim Ibid.)

In its original use for a form of heterodox Roman Catholic theology, ‘quietism’ referred to a withdrawal from worldly affairs and intellectual activity together with a doctrine of self-annihilation. Religious quietists held that through the constant contemplation of God one could overcome the self and merge with Him.⁸¹

Macarthur also cites in his discussion Patricia Ward’s definition of quietism:

Quietism emphasized the abandonment of self to God, annihilation of the will in union with God, pure love, and a form of inner prayer.⁸²

This tension is indeed one of the difficult issues in the study of religions. I cannot deal with this topic specifically in Judaism at length here, therefore I will only mention here three central crossroads from three different periods of time in the history of the religious ideas in Judaism that were connected powerfully to this tension:

A. According to Alexander Rofé, the Ephraimite school in the Tanakh (referring specifically to the ancient Ephraimite text that stretches itself from Joshua 25 to 1 Samuel 12) tended to endorse quietism by stressing that the only king Israel has is God, not any flesh and blood king.⁸³ This Ephraimite school opposed any preparation for war against any enemy as they held an extreme passive position out

⁸¹ David Macarthur, “On Metaphysical Quietism and Everyday Life,” in G. D’Oro and S. Overgaard [eds.], *The Cambridge Companion to Philosophical Methodology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 249-273, at p. 250.

⁸² Ibid., p. 268, n. 3. On this tension see also Bernard McGinn, “Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,” in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), vol. 9, pp. 6334-6341, esp. pp. 6337-6338.

⁸³ See Alexander Rofé, “Ephraimite Versus Deuteronomistic History,” in Daniele Garrone and Felice Israel (eds.), *Storia e tradizioni di Israele – Scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin* (Brescia: Paideia, 1991), pp. 221-235.

of a deep sense of trust in God as the one who protects the righteous on earth. On the other hand, Rofé claims, the Deuteronomistic school advocated an activist view, arguing that the people of Israel must establish an army and fight against their enemies. According to the Deuteronomistic school, then, God will only help one who dares actively to act on his own behalf. This school perceived the institution of monarchy as positive (with limitations, of course), for the first role of the king was to lead the army into battle.⁸⁴

B. Between early Judaism and early Christianity, this tension manifested itself in the disagreement that in the end tore one from the other, that is the tension between Pauline doctrine and the opposing view of the Sages. In contrast to the Pauline view of works (the law) and grace as mutually exclusive, and grace as the sole effective means of achieving justification (i.e., freedom from sin), the Sages (and even the members of the Qumran sect) understood both works (law) and grace (*Hesed*) to be essential elements of the divine-human relationship. But, as opposed to the people of the Qumran sect and the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, who meticulously observed the Torah commandments, Paul took this idea of the “choice of grace,” which emphasizes divine activity and human passivity, to the furthest possible extreme, and taught that a person chosen by a primordial decree from God is already protected by divine grace and is thus no longer required to observe the commandments.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See Alexander Rofé, *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2006), [Hebrew], pp. 154-161, at p. 156, translated into English by Hervey N. Block and Judith H. Seeligmann (Jerusalem: Simor Ltd; 2009) [Jerusalem Biblical Studies Vol. 9].

⁸⁵ See David Flusser, *Judaism and the Sources of Christianity: Research and Essays* (Tel Aviv: Poalim, 1979), [Hebrew], p. 324; And cf. also my article “*Hesed* in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* [EBR], ed. Dale C. Allison Jr., et al., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), vol. 11, col. 962-69, at col. 970.

C. The third interesting case I would like to present here regarding the way this debate was argued within Jewish circles has to do with the way Hasidism was understood by Martin Buber, versus the way it was understood by Gershom Scholem and his students. I will shorten the long discussion that was held in this respect by numerous scholars later, by citing here only the summary of Israel Koren, who describes in his consideration the main point which is important for our discussion here. In order to justify Martin Buber's interpretation of Hassidism against the severe attack of Gershom Sholem and Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, Koren writes:

The sources I have brought [=in his book earlier] from the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, R. Yaakov Yosef of Polonnoye, as well as the description of the life of the Baal Shem Tov in *Shivhei ha-Besht*, the teachings attributed to him (such as the doctrine of alien thoughts), and the mystical experiences of the Baal Shem Tov (*'aliyat neshamah*), are all indicative of great activity. Even if we agree with Scholem's claim that the Hasidic doctrine of sparks referred to the redemption of the sparks and not to that of the concrete world [...], extended activity in the realm of sparks *per se* indicates that it is impossible to identify Hasidic mysticism exclusively with passivity or with an all-inclusive desire to arrive at a state of annihilation. The perception of mystical experience as one thing and its practical derivatives as another, as suggested by Schatz, is artificial and has no real basis. It does not take into consideration the different fields in which the mystic acts, as from the outset she [=Schatz] defined mysticism in a narrow way, and thereafter assumes her conclusions on the basis of this narrow definition. But if there is in fact a certain tension in the soul of the Zaddik between his spiritual enterprise and his earthly activity, or

between times of greater consciousness (*gadlut*) during prayer and times of more limited spiritual awareness (*katnut*) when he is among people in the marketplace, this tension is itself a basic component of his spiritual enterprise, and there is no reason to see one as secondary to the other, or to designate the one as mystical and the other as external to the definition of mysticism. An artificial separation of this type characterized Buber himself during certain periods of his life, although, as I have shown [...] he recognized the activist and concrete component of Hasidic mysticism in his essay 'The Baal Shem Tov's Instruction' (1927).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Israel Koren, *The Mystery of the Earth: Mysticism and Hasidism in Buber's Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 339-341, at p. 340.