

SCAPEGOATS AND SCAPEGOATERS (Some Aspects)

1. As long as we are in culture and we all are), we need scapegoats. We cannot get along together with all our human and inhuman possibilities, without laying the undesirable ones on people, in whom we see those possibilities, so getting rid of them we ourselves. Without this mechanism we, as long as we are in culture, destroy each other. Either we make scapegoats or we (or parts of us) are made scapegoats. Scapegoating the scapegoaters is a clear sign that we belong to culture and that we are not any better than those people whom we scapegoat.

2. We all are equal in our possibilities. No one is any worse or better than any other. So all the choosing of scapegoats always is random. We choose as scapegoats people who are different, who are weak, which can't defend themselves.

So the reasons scapegoaters give for their scapegoating are always secondary. The need to have a scapegoat, scapegoats is primary. The reasons given, are very often moralistic, but there are others. Nevertheless, in the end of rationalizations must be of a moralistic character, just because they always are used to explain the scapegoating, to justify it.

3. In myth all scapegoats trespass all rules, all laws. They simply are evil. If the scapegoating escalates, because of the tensions in the group or community, which scapegoats are rising, then this absolute condemnation of the scapegoats still always happens.

Parents can tell that their child, the I.P. of the family, is evil, "simply evil". Saddam Hussein, we all agree, is simply evil. In fact he too, he does not have other possibilities that we have.

4. Scapegoating is, because it is so violent, because the differences are disappearing, very deeply mimetic. When everybody is sure that the scapegoat is very bad, then, in the mimesis, the scapegoat is equally sure that she, he is bad. Being the scapegoaters, partly out of desperation. So in the end everybody, the scapegoat included, is and can be quite sure that the scapegoat in fact is a very bad person.

The big example nowadays is again Saddam Hussein. He obliges perfectly. Of course that does not mean that we should not stop him. Politically, for the future of the world, it is necessary to do so. In the same we never can do that with the good conscience of the scapegoaters. We have to do it because it is our duty, having in the same time very bad feelings about ourselves and our doings. Saddam Hussein as a person and all the possibilities he has to destroy come from us. Seeing Saddam Hussein before us we only can be very humble.

Another example: Scapegoats in families are bad. They won't disappoint the scapegoaters. And Jews in Western Europe were very often greedy, after we shut them out, for centuries, from all normal possibilities we earn a living.

5. Scapegoats, after having being driven out, always are in the same time gods and devils. This is already beginning during the process of driving out. We despise our

scapegoats, they being very, very bad. And we are afraid of them, they are untouchable, there is something around them of the sacred.

Of course again, Saddam Hussein is a very clear case. He is a devil and he is a god. The whole world is assembling around him to give him honour. All the riches of the world are brought at his feet. And again, Saddam Hussein obliges. He is the absolute devil. And he is (a) god, being able to destroy the world, having in his hands the lightning and the thunder.

The same, again, is very clear in anti-Semitism. These Jews are extremely bad, even slaughtering small children to drink their blood (in 1899 there was still a process about that in Bohemia). If they are not doing such silly things nowadays, what in fact they are doing must be worse. And they are capable of everything. They are gods.

And, to be honest, these devil-gods are around us, in our scapegoats, our children a.s.o. If we are a little bit sensible, we know about our own being devil and god, because all were and are scapegoats.

6. Scapegoating only runs well, smoothly, when it is an existential process, which “just” happens, without anybody being conscious of what exactly is happening. As soon as there is consciousness about what is happening, things again become more complicated.

Very, very long these processes were all unconscious. Only in the late XVIth century there came awareness of what happened. But this awareness only helps, when it is awareness about our own doing, as scapegoaters and, or as scapegoats. If we only see others doing it, we become better scapegoaters again, meta scapegoaters.

7. Awareness as such is not a help. Being aware that I am scapegoated I defend myself. This only makes things worse. I am not a scapegoat because I am bad. I am a scapegoat because a scapegoat was needed and because I am one, I eventually am bad. Defending myself means that the scapegoaters have to face their own badness, have to face their hypocrisy. The scapegoaters are many, the scapegoat is alone. So in the fight, which ensures, things become again worse. All the arguments of the scapegoat are used against him/her.

8. How to get out of the position of the scapegoat? In fact by being free, not in the mimesis with the scapegoaters, in which manner ever. By being in the mimesis of the scapegoat of the Gospel, Jesus, who stayed free. By following him.

Freedom is the only possible way to get out of it. It might be that we find this freedom by being, with our being, with Jesus, not only thinking about him but also trusting him, expecting everything of him. Incidental, when we are free, we might not know where our freedom come from. It is just given, out of the life experience, which is in us, eventually without our knowing. Of: On the evening of November 26, 1899 Gustav Mahler was conducting the premiere performance of his new production of Wagner's Die Meistersinger. Anti-Semites were, during the performance, protesting against a Jew conducting Wagner. Mahler tried to calm them down by raising his arms without any result. “At last, he resigned himself to letting it pass over him. He sat there with head bowed, as if it all had nothing to do with him, looking as if he were quietly waiting for an unavoidable heavy rain shower to stop pelting down on his back”. Larry Wolff,

Postcards from the end of the world (London, 1989), P.105/6, where he quotes Natalie Bauer-Lechner, recollections of Gustav Mahler (Cambridge 1980).

9. How to stop to be a scapegoater, how to get out of the scapegoating? First of all by knowing, with the whole of our being, that we are not good (cf. Matth. 19, 17 where Jesus says about himself that he is not good. It is one of the key-texts of the Gospel. Any time we meet somebody, whoever, we only can be sure that we are no better than the other. If he is a terrorist, he certainly too is a scapegoat and he is only doing what I myself could do in his situation. This again means that we meet everybody without phantasies about her or him, even forgetting what we know about her or him, just letting her, him come, giving them in trust entrance into our being. All of ours are as trustworthy as we are trusted. And by trusting we are in for surprises.

In fact there is no reconciliation, and no reconciliation work without being in this manner with everybody. Reconciliation means reintegration of our scapegoats into our life, reintegration of our life in theirs.

Beside that, and as an extension of that, there are rules, which, if we stick to them, prevents scapegoating e.g.

9.1 Never talk about somebody not being present, neither bad nor good.

9.2 Always talk to a person directly, when she or he is present, always using her, his name, ever talking to the others about "she", "he".

9.3 Stop all mind reading, never supposing anything but always asking.

9.4 Never interfere when the other tells, explains something.

9.5 Put always very clear questions, explaining what is meant with them and ask explanation when something is asked, before answering.

9.6 Use clear, not hiding language (see enchiridion Ch. 26 & 27).