

JOINING THE SCAPEGOAT

The theme of this paper is very simple and, in the same time, quite complicated. So this is again a first try. Maybe others will follow.

1. Who are the scapegoats

Scapegoats carry the guilt, the misery, the inadequacies, the violence, of the group, the community, they are scapegoated by. Being a, or the scapegoat always is the result of a group mechanism, of the mechanism of the community involved. All are agreeing, both the scapegoaters and the scapegoats, that the scapegoats are bad and that the group, the community, is cleaned by the scapegoating, the expulsion of the scapegoat.

The scapegoat him/herself is agreeing as well. He/she needs to agree, otherwise the mechanism does not work. One of the results is, that there are so many people amongst us, that so many of us are sure that fundamentally "they are bad". This feeling has nothing to do with original sin or even with committed bad or evil things. It is the result of scapegoating.

2. Scapegoats cannot any longer be ejected out of the community

Scapegoating as a mechanism is as old as culture itself. In fact culture was and is founded on it. It belongs to scapegoating that the scapegoat really is smitten out of the community, out of the group killed or at least exiled. Although still scapegoats are disappearing out of the scapegoating-group or community, by emigrating or at least living in another part of the country, generally we cannot any longer get rid of our scapegoats efficiently. There are two reasons for:

2.1 Scapegoats always disappeared into no land, the country of the barbarians, the country on the other side of the frontiers, where no living members of the group ever did. In our global village that no-land has disappeared, on the whole world we are together.

2.2 Once the whole cultural unit, a people, a tribe, had one scapegoat, putting right the life of the whole tribe, group, putting life right in all its structures. Because of the breaking down of structure, every big and small group in the structure, every aspect of life, needs its own scapegoats and so we have innumerable scapegoats around, probably every one of us being the scapegoat for one or more groups. We become more and more a mass of scapegoaters and scapegoats, everybody being both in the same time. The situation becomes worse still, just because structures are dwindling. Scapegoating always is used to steady structure, to regulate and normalize life. Dwindling structures means that we are scapegoating more and more frantically. We desperately seek the cause of our unhappiness elsewhere, in the scapegoat. And the result is more chaos. In fact, and it is worthwhile think more about that, no single problem nowadays can be solved in the old manner. The world is gliding more and more into chaos, as the life of all of us does.

3. rivalry and masochism

It might be useful to distinguish between the scapegoating mechanism and the consequences of rivalry and masochism. Scapegoating is done by a group, which unites itself against one member of the group. In rivalry, persons or groups are fighting for power. There person (or the group) in the down-position, being fascinated by the (for the moment being) winner (in fact, here is metaphysical desire for the superior being of the winner), making him, her in the same time a model-obstacle, is in the situation which is characterized as masochism. It is not the scapegoat situation, although the feeling might be quite near to it. The more so, because being in the “masochist-situation” does not exclude at all that we are in other relationships, complicatedly intertwining with this masochistic relationship, scapegoats.

4. The fear to be the scapegoat

It is clear that the fear to be the scapegoat is, in the given cultural situation, invading the totality of our existence and the totality of all relationships we are. The constant anxiety in which we live has as one of its roots this fear (another one being that we lose in the rivalry and so, deeper still, that we never achieve any existence at all).

This is made worse again because out of fear of becoming the scapegoat, we try to prevent it, we fight like mad, scapegoating everybody around, and fighting like mad to win. So necessarily we achieve just what we are so afraid about, we become what we don't wish to be. The plus and the minus are again the same.

In this fighting we achieve even more. Structures are destroyed even more again, the chaos deepens, the hunt for scapegoats becomes more fanatical.

5. The way out

There is in fact, only one way out: To take the decision to join the scapegoat, to take upon us that we are scapegoats and that that does not matter, we just are. This is, if it is existentially worthwhile, a decision. It is not resignation in the passive sense, it is not desperation because then we would still agree that the scapegoaters are right: “they are good, I, the scapegoat am “bad”. Taking the decision to join the scapegoat means to be honest: To take upon oneself that I am not being good, taking the decision not to have anything to do with what in fact is the issue fighting to show that others are worse than I am.

6. Consequences of this choice

Taking this decision, life changes fundamentally:

6.1 At last I become honest. I am out of the “good-bad” game, trying to show that others are worse than I am, with the only result that the fighting goes on and on.

6.2 This fighting becomes anyway worse and worse. We begin to understand, in culture, that the scapegoat-mechanism is dishonest in a very deep manner. The result is not that we stop it, the fighting becomes more fanatical. By deciding to take the

place of the scapegoat I decide at the same time to stop the fighting. In fact I don't even decide to stop the fighting, to get out of the vicious circles, it becomes clear to me that I simply stop. I do not need it any longer.

6.3 by deciding to join the scapegoats, paradoxically I am out of the system. I am not only any longer a scapegoater. I am neither a scapegoat. I know that eventually I will be scapegoated, but I can't be a scapegoat because I don't any longer partake in the presuppositions of the mechanism, that the scapegoaters are good people and I am bad.

6.4 Now at last I can be together with the scapegoats of society, the ill, the poor, the prisoners, all the unhappy people. As long as I am fighting I am opposite of them, not really in their world. Then I am doing good, as part of the fighting, am condescending. When I join the scapegoated, acknowledging the scapegoat-position as mine, I am one of them, their real brother, sister. Now I give them my freedom (and not my good intentions) and so healing.

7. Freedom and the following of Jesus

It becomes more and more clear that joining the scapegoat and so giving up the fighting means that we become free. Freedom is just that. We are, in this very joining, following Jesus. He did exactly that: he was with those who were rejected by the world, with the ill, the poor, the driven mad, the exasperated. He was with them by choosing to be in their position, with the scapegoats. Being there he was out of desiring, the origin of all scapegoating, and out of all fighting. Joining the scapegoat is the same as obeying the call to follow him.