

A Study on the Meaning of *Kaparah* in the context of the Abrahamic Religions¹

Abstract

Jews, Muslims, and Christians have become estranged, because of historical barriers and conflicts, misperceptions, and ignorance of each other's belief systems. The implications of Jewish *Yom Kippur*, Muslim *Eid Al-Adha*, and Christians' atoning sacrifice can enrich each other's tradition and promote a greater understanding of each other's faith. Abrahamic tradition can be complementary rather than competitive to appreciating their versions of faith and cultures. In Islam, Muslims offer animal sacrifice at *Eid Al-Adha* following their annual pilgrimage, *Hajj*, and Jews start a new year with Rosh-Hashanah from which they find their identity and origins of Abraham. In the four Gospels, the perfect model of sacrifice on the cross is described as the equivalent propitiation for all humankind's sin that substituted men's offering of animal sacrifices. The divergences and convergences between sacrificial offerings and Jesus' sacrifice can reveal the crossroad of interfaith dialogue between three traditions.² Hence, by comparing the understanding of 'the son of Abraham's sacrifice' within each religion, this paper explores the origin of '*Kaparah*' in different religious contexts and finds its relation to the suffering servant.

Key Words: Atonement, Sacrifice, Abrahamic Religions, Interfaith-Dialogue, and The Servant of God

I. Intro: The Ritual Aspect of Abrahamic Religion

People are born and reared into the culture by the process in which they acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviours that enable them to become members of their society. Scholars define this process as enculturation.³ So the members of society are formed according to their standard and structure. In other words, every society depends upon a set of what Peter Berger calls "plausibility structures," patterns of belief and some

1 This paper was presented at the 2018 Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS) Annual Conference, 'Theme: Sacrifice,' in Brisbane at Emmanuel College, St Lucia 1st- 4th of July. The author revised her previous paper for the publication.

² Doukhan's previous research provides a ground for three religions' interfaith dialogue in light of the meaning *Aqedah* in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim controversy. His article can give a map of historical and theological debate on the meaning of *Aqedah* in three religions, "The *Aqedah* at the crossroad: its significance in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Spring 1994, Vol 32, Nos. 1-2, 29-40.

³ Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, eds., *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 76; Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Culture Counts: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2009), 23.

practices can be accepted within a given society, at a different time and place. He mentions that in any society, a belief can be held to be “reasonable,” and this judgment is made based on the dominant plausibility structure.⁴ The adherents of religion constitute their epistemology within their plausible structure and universal and immutable laws can be formulated as “a copy of reality” by empirical methods.⁵

According to the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, there are two dimensions in understanding religions. First, an analysis of key terms embodied within the religious systems and second, the relationship between key terms and those systems bring a clear understanding of social and psychological dimensions.⁶ Ninian Smart also elaborates the essence of religions, seven dimensions in each religion, which can be common to all religions through which people can analyze people, worldviews, and religious virtues systematically. She describes those seven aspects including the Practical and Ritual, Narrative and Mythic, Experiential and Emotional, Social and Institutional, Ethical and Legal, Doctrinal and Philosophical, and Material.

Many religious adherents observe rituals and practices from their childhood and give meaning to each practice that has developed their worldview. In other words, a way of developing patterns of behavior and habits is inextricably linked to a formation of their identity and a sense of belonging in their community or society. Hence, in what ways if any implication of each sacrifice has a meaning of atonement can be an initial step to move forward for interfaith-dialogue. In Abrahamic traditions, Jews, Muslims, and Christians know the significance of sacrifice although not all of them still practice the sacrificial offering literally, it is known that habitual behaviors of offering also inspire their spiritual ground. I believe that this comparative work will show the significance of a redemptive analogy to mutual understanding. This research analyzes the plausible structure that binds Abrahamic religion as one in common and illuminates the word, *Kaparah*, in light of the Hebrew Text, the book of Leviticus within the context of Abrahamic religious tradition.

II. Muslims' sacrifice at *Eid Al-Adha*

A sociologist Pierre Bourdieu identified Muslim culture as “Habitus” which generate patterns of actions and representations of structured structures or transposable one.⁷ Muslims' behaviors are shaped by the teachings of the Qur'an and Sharia, and the early

4 Peter L Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 47.

5 Paul G Hiebert, *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World*, 1999, 3.

6 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 125.

⁷ You can also find a clear definition from the book of Pierre Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice*.

educational influence solidifies their Islamic religious worldviews. Until this Islamic plausibility structure is understood thoroughly, it seems unlikely that outsiders will be able to bridge the gaps between the religious systems and to show much progress in dialogues. Muslims enculturate themselves by practicing 'Five Pillars of Islam': Ritual prayer (*Salat*), Almsgiving(*Zakat*), Fasting(*Sawm*), Pilgrimage(*Hajj*), and the profession of faith(*Shahada*) which consist of the Muslims' structure of mind.⁸

In the book *Beyond the Mosque*, Parshall also cites how rituals impact the communal life of Muslims and how practicing rituals reinforce the Muslim identity.⁹ There are some rituals in Islamic tradition such as Ashura, the 10th of the month of Muharram, the prophet's birthday, the breaking of the fast, *Eid Al-Fitr*, in the month of Ramadhan, Fasting during the month of Ramadhan, and the Feast of Sacrifice (*Eid Al-Adha*). This Great Festival, called animal sacrifice, following the Pilgrimage serves Muslims to bind as one celebrating community, the whole household of Islam within and beyond their ethnic diversity.¹⁰ The feast of sacrifice, *Eid Al-Adha*, is on the 10th month of the Islamic calendar, called *Al Dhual-Hija*, celebrated as one of the biggest ceremonies during the end of Pilgrimage, *Hajj*. In terms of *Eid Al-Adha*, the meaning of *Adha* is coming from the meaning of 'slaughter', so the animal sacrifice has a literal meaning of 'Festival of Slaughter,' which downgraded the meaning of atonement. The Muslim version of narratives, *Kaparah* is not implied inasmuch as in its account the sacrifice was intended to be only symbolical. Although this festival is closely linked to Muslims, the Judeo-Christian version of Abrahamic sacrifice is remembered at different times compared to Muslims' calendar and represents varied meanings for them.¹¹

Nowadays the focus of the festival is upon the sacrificial ritual and animals' slaughter by killing and distributing sacrificed meats. Annually, Muslims slaughter a sheep, a goat, or a camel, or some purchase meats from a butcher as a sacrifice and distribute the portions to their family, and their neighbors or to the poor. These patterns represent self-sacrifice and obedience at a certain level, as visible modeling of obedience to Allah, but do not convey a deeper meaning of atoning sacrifice, *Kaparah*, implicitly. Muslims have organized their Islamic behaviors into a larger pattern that links all the parts of their practices together, this *Eid-Al-Adha* shows their commitment to Abrahamic lineage.

8 Ludwig W. Adamec Historical Dictionary of Islam, 98; Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements, No. 37. (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001); Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural anthropology: A Christian perspective*, 76.

9 Parshall, Phil. *New paths in Muslim evangelism: evangelical approaches to contextualization*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House. 9.

10 Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1956), 110.

¹¹ With respect to the action of binding, *Aqedah*, is previously researched by Doukhan in 1994.

The feast of sacrifice has long been celebrated as ‘the feast of slaughter’ since the evidence for the event occurs in the Qur’an, scholars treat its historicity as an open question. This tradition goes back to the story of Abraham who attempted to sacrifice his son at the command of God.¹² Unblemished animals are sacrificed in commemoration of the ram substituted by God when Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, as a test of faith. During this festival, only a portion, usually one-third of this animal’s meat is to be consumed by the family offering the sacrifice. The rest is to be distributed to the poor. For those who were not on a pilgrimage, the celebration includes visits to mosques and the graves of relatives. It lasts for three days and includes the distribution of gifts and sweets as well as receiving and visiting extended family.¹³

Muslims follow the example of the Abrahamic sacrifice, hoping to have faith like Abraham's and give their commitment to God. They copy his obedience through rituals and believe his sacrifice was a good model for all Muslims. In contrast to the biblical passage, Abraham had dreamt of his sacrifice of the son, and this revelation in his dream was practiced in real as he accepted it as a commandment of God; he truly acted with his faith. Also, Ishmael in the Qur’an, the first son of Abraham was aware of his father’s decision. In the Qur’an, when Allah asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, he was ready to sacrifice his son. So Abraham said to his son, “God has told me to sacrifice you,” and his son was also ready and answered to him, “I am ready, so father, do whatever God asked you to do.”¹⁴ Ishmael, who also consented to offer himself on the altar of Allah, became another example and voluntarily give himself according to Abraham’s submission to God. Thus Ishmael’s consent and willingness to sacrifice is emphasized in the Qur’an compared to other texts.¹⁵

Abraham's sacrifice has reinforced the unity of the Muslim community since Muhammad followed the forefather’s example at Mecca in the 7th century; every Muslim should practice this slaughter as a symbol of obedience. During my doctoral degree, I researched Muslims’ understanding of Allah and conducted my survey among the Ahmadiyyat Muslim community in the southern part of Texas, the United States. At the feast of sacrifice, about one hundred questionnaire responses were collected and as a result of research, it was clear that Muslims’ understanding of the Abrahamic Sacrifice was not closely related to the remission of sins. They hardly grasped a concept of atonement from this animal sacrificial ritual. Instead,

12 Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Islam: Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements*, 130.

13 John L. Esposito, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 131.

14 Surah As-Saffat (37:102).

15 You can refer to Qur’an 2:177, 21:85, 37:112, 19:54 to see the differences of the sacrifice of Abraham’s son.

Islamic tradition was closely linked to Abraham's faith and his obedience, which are the key understanding the festival of slaughter. According to one of the interviewees,

This high level of sacrifice would not be required to our members because His offering, the only son, is what most people would consider something they would not be able to sacrifice. But he was willing to offer for the sake of God. This obedient family including Ishmael, Hagar, and Abraham gives a lesson of the right way to honor God's divine will and his providence...Muslim communities composed of a husband, wife, and sons must all be submissive to God and work together with cooperation, love, and kindness. Abraham's sacrifice was a model of how the members of a community all live together in total submission to God.

By following the model of Abraham, Muslims consider sacrifice as a law-binding practice on a daily basis and their willingness and obedience to Allah. For example, sacrifice can be offered in many ways through giving money to the poor, called *Zakat*, and committing their times to worship God, five times *Salat*, or devoting to their Muslim *Umma*. While Muslims perform five times *salat* they pray towards the direction of *Kaaba* to remember where Abraham's sacrifice was to happen; for Mecca was the place in which Abraham rebuilt the *Kaaba* as a worship place after he had brought Ishmael for sacrifice. Muslims also practice the ritual of 'Stoning the Devil' at Mina close to Mecca and regard the Mount Arafat as sacred places following the tradition of Abraham in the Quran. Thus, animals are also slaughtered using *Halal* methods to the *Quibla*, the direction of Mecca, acknowledged as the Holy place where they find their origin and spiritual lineage.¹⁶ Therefore, the Abrahamic sacrifice is very significant to form the collective identity of Muslims.

III. The Origin of the Jewish *Yom Kippur*

Like Muslims, Jews give a special meaning of the Abrahamic sacrifice on the day of *Yom Kippur*. Interestingly, every thirty-three years, the Jewish *Yom Kippur* is overlapped with Muslims' feast of animal sacrifice. In the Jewish calendar, the New Year, *Rosh-Hashanah* ends with the 10th day, called *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Repentance or Atonement. Especially, the Day of Atonement is a time of Jewish repentance for individuals and also for the group,

¹⁶ Surah Al-Baqarah (2:125-127).

the people of Israel. Through the *Kol Nidre*, Jews seek forgiveness from God and atonement from God.¹⁷

The origin of the Judaic ritual can be found in the Torah or the book of Genesis. As the name *Yom Kippur* is originated from *Kipper*(כִּפֵּר), meaning to cover. The Jews remember God's forgiveness as Adam and Eve was covered by the animal's skin in the book of Genesis 3. This verb 'cover' seems to have an origin from the noun *Kofer* (ransom) or make propitiation, or atonement. Thus, on the day of *Yom Kippur*, the Jews remember who they are before God. 'We are consecrated and forgiven by God; we accept our imperfection hoping to be healed by his compassion, love, and his divine work.'

Also, *Yom Kippur* is aligned with the atonement as it is written in the book of Jubilees. As Joseph was sold to Egyptian traders in the Bible, chapter 34 of Jubilees described "the establishment of *Yom Kippur* as a punishment for Jacob's son's actions against Joseph", for this reason, it was decreed that on the tenth day of the seventh month the children of Israel would make atonement for their sins with a young goat, so this becomes the day of cleaning once a year. In the book of the Temple Scroll, this is the day of affliction and remembrance and Day of Atonement, also a day of fasting.¹⁸ So for this day, the Israelites had saddened their father's feelings of affection for his son Joseph. In regards to Joseph's narrative, Genesis 37 has a connection with this atoning rite. The brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat in its blood, this Genesis 37:31 triggered the association of this event with *Yom Kippur*.¹⁹

Most importantly, the heart of *Yom Kippur* is repentance (Teshuvah) in Hebrew. *Yom Kippur* is the day of repentance for the Jews. Furthermore, the call of *Yom Kippur* is not only to be humble but also to have humility as the seeker of forgiveness, accepting who we are. The secular Jewish also keep this day and attend Synagogue, and fast this day with the sounding of the *Kol Nidre* from shofar or ram's horn at the end part of Kippur service.²⁰ Israelites would seek forgiveness from God, and from other people, for all the wrongdoings they have committed last year. Thus, forgiveness is needed from both the people and God. *Yom Kippur* effects atonement for a transgression between God and humans. Jews, therefore,

17 Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Modern Classics On Repentance* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books), 46-47.

18 Lawrence H. Schiffman, Florentino Garcia Martinez Eds., *The Courtyards of the House of the Lord: Studies on the Temple Scroll in Chapter seven the sacrificial system of the temple scroll and the book of Jubilees Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, Vol. 75 (Leiden& Boston: Brill, 2008), 116-118.

19 Andrei A. Orlov, *The Atoning Dyad: The Two Goats of Yom Kippur in the Apocalypse of Abraham* (Leiden& Boston: Brill, 2016), 833-34.

20 Lev Gillet, *Communion in The Messiah: Studies in the relationship between Judaism and Christianity* (London & Redhill: Lutterworth Press), 130.

obliged to make *Teshuvah* and seek forgiveness from their neighbors and friends. They ask forgiveness for their wrongdoings to return three times for forgiveness, by doing so, they enter *Yom Kippur* focusing on repentance toward God.

Second, according to the Jewish Rabbi, the core meaning of *Yom Kippur* is also “chosen from the identical offerings from God.”²¹ Although sacrifice was prepared well, *Adonai* the Lord could reject their offering as he refused Cain’s and Saul’s offerings.²² This Jewish dualism ritual of *Yom Kippur* is relevant in light of the dualistic imagery of the two lots found in the story of Abraham. For God provided another sacrifice a ram caught by its horns and chose the one prepared on his own, the God of Abraham suspended the sacrificial event of his son until the time of suffering servant. In the Old Testament, the book of Torah also describes the Day of Atonement in Lev 23:26-32, Num 29:7-11 and Lev 16. In Leviticus, each Israelite should observe a day of the sacred occasion when they practice self-denial and they bring their sacrificial offerings as atonement. The high priest took two male goats and placed them near the altar to God. One goat is chosen as a sacrifice for Azazel and the other one is chosen as a sacrifice for God.

The process of giving this offering to *Adonai* is described as following. The high priest hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all of the iniquities and transgression of the Israelites, whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and it shall be sent off to the wilderness. Sending the goat to Azazel has a meaning to abandoning their sins to the evil, on the other hand, however, they give their offering goat to *Adonai*. These identically prepared offerings go two different directions that imply the meaning of atonement to God and our neighbors. The modern Jews on the fasting days read the prophet Isaiah’s prophecies chapter 58 about *Yom Kippur* fasting. This meaning of renewal Israel passes down to their next generation in practice. During this day the Jews fast and keep this day holy, asking forgiveness about the vows and promised have not been kept before God. They, however, do not remain with their sad face but rejoice after the rituals and share their meals with their friends and family and celebrate the new beginning of the year.

IV. Etymological Origin of *Kaparah* and Its Meaning

21 Conversation with David, Messianic Jew on the date of May 23rd in 2018.

22 The message through the prophet Samuel is also applicable to nowadays, “the Lord does not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.” (1 Sam 15:22). No one knows how many goats of atonement through high priests can be accepted to Adonai.

K-P-R is a Semitic root, in Arabic ر ف ك in Hebrew script כ-פ-ר has the epistemological same meaning to 'cover'. According to Watts, the word *Kipper* appears forty-nine times in Leviticus and originally this refers to covering in the Arabic context, which shows the derivation of the word. The author notes that this word has a derivation from a Hebrew noun, *Kōper*, meaning to "ransom" or "payment." Thus, the best way to describe this particular priestly action on behalf of his people is *Kipper* as an offering action before God, which has a meaning of "purify" or "pay" at the service. "This rhetoric of atonement reinforced the Aaronide priest's legitimacy and exclusive rights over this ritual". Based on this assertion, the role of *Kōper* was given to specific priest's positions and privileged by those follow the descendants of Aaron, the Levites.

Meanwhile, from the origin of the root KPR, in Islam, *Al-Kaffara* in Arabic is used as Islamic religious donation in forms of food or money, time. Thus, this plays a role of replacement for a skipped fast or breaks of their fasts by giving their possessions to others; those donations are regarded as Muslims' sacrifice. Islam does not have any priesthood to administer religious rites, to propitiate the people's sins, or perform the mediatory agent role. Without the sacerdotal role, laymen or women perform the sacred works of almsgiving called "*Kaffarah*". There are many types of *Al-Kaffarah* practiced in Islamic tradition under the name of *Zakat*, as a form of the expiration of sin. This donation or a certain form of sanction compensates for the unintentional violation or offenses by paying or keeping the oath. Muslims pay *Sadaqah*, voluntary offering, or feed the poor, or fast for certain periods, or slaughter animals like a goat for their expiration. For example, if one person deliberately broke his or her fast during Ramadan, about \$10 per day about the price of one meal per day is calculated as *Al-Kaffarah* at the same daily amount. Either to feed sixty people or to fast sixty days is equivalent to provide 30 days of charity or \$300. By practicing those responsible actions, the benefits of donations are given to the needy or the poor, making the Islamic community, *Ummah*, more bountiful. These integrative approaches to rituals make Muslims' lives more practical but less doctrinal.

But still, the meaning of scapegoat, atoning sacrifice for humans' sin is concealed in Islamic and Judaic tradition in terms of innocent man's sacrifice and his atonement. This Abrahamic narrative was unveiled and illuminated by Jesus who vindicated His innocence by the resurrection from the dead, however, the earthly descendants of Abraham Jews and kins of Isaac's, Ishmael's seeds denounce Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross. Rene Girard who explained human's mimetic desire and the result of their rivalry social behaviors also noted that humans found a solution for these social conflicts by providing a scapegoat mechanism.

The adoration of our desires and others can intensify and aggravate the situations, making the false models of imitation and sacrifice violently against each other.

According to Rene Girard, this antagonistic anger and violence spread over the nations and people practice their vicious model by honor killing or *killing Kafir* or infidels among the Muslims and the Jews. Jesus became an offering Himself to people in need of protection from their selfish and devouring sins of desires to mitigate their anger and violence. This social cycle of mimetic violence was permanently ceased by the voluntary offering of Jesus he became the scapegoat for all humans. The Jews and the Muslims, our brothers and sisters in the Abrahamic tradition, reenact these sacrificial scenes annually.

According to Kaufmann, the Israelites' sacrifice has a different implication compared to other neighbouring countries' rituals, in particular, in the Old Testament; there was no such an evil force intervention in divine healing and offerings.²³ Israelites were called to come closer to God with their sacred offerings. The sacrificial offering has also a meaning of *Korban or Qarban*, a ransom or propitiatory gift, which can hardly be found in the Qur'an text. In relation to *Eid Al- Adha, Dhabihah*, the ritual slaughter is more often used compared to the meaning of sacrifice. Only one time the Qur'an describes the behavior of sacrifice, Qaraba, and offering, Qarbarna, as it was exactly written in the context of Abel and Cain in the Bible. "They both offered a sacrifice, Qaraba-Qarbana (قربًا قربانا), but Allah only accepted Abel's".²⁴ Unlike the connotation of sacrifice can be flexible in the Islamic context; the meaning of sacrifice can be extended from the narrow meaning of slaughtering. Muslims are not aware of this sacrificial offering, Qubarna concept, linked to their *Kaparah*, instead, they use 'a meaning of slaughter' more often at a place of atonement. So, in the Qur'an, when Abraham said to his son, sacrifice of the Arabic root Qarb(قرب) "I will sacrifice you", *Adhabuka* (اذبحك) replaced by saying "I will slaughter you".²⁵

In the Christians' view, the cross is more than Jesus' subordination to God, and not merely obligation was imposed upon the victim. "The scapegoat, in which evil is eliminated from a community, not by executing or exiling guilty persons, but by symbolically conferring guilt or pollution on to a sacrificial victim which is then killed or driven out of the community."²⁶ "In Christianity, the sacrifice is infallible because it is 'ordained one' and 'voluntary gift' because Jesus, the ordained servant, chose the cross, and gave his unique thanking offering to God

23 J.W. Rogerson "Sacrifice in the Old Testament" in *Sacrifice*, 46. He quoted Y. Kaufmann's work in 1963 from 560-74.

24 The Habil and Qabil Story, Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:27).

25 اذبحك I will slaughter. Surah Al Kawthar (108:2).

26 M.F.C. Bourdillon and Meyer Fortes Eds., *Sacrifice* (London: Academic Press for the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1980), 18-20.

through his death.”²⁷ His sacrifice was more like a voluntary gift and his expression of self-sacrifice as the Servant of God, just as Abraham gave willingly his son to God.

In Judaism, Isaac’s *Aqedah*, meaning to ‘binding’, has not only implication of sacrificial lamb but also connects with the Passover, so that the Jews remember the expiatory sacrifice God of Passover.²⁸ Thus, Abrahamic sacrifice and Isaac’s voluntary submission were passed down to bless all families on earth (Gn 12:1-3). As God tested Abraham and recognized his faith through this extreme experience, God bound his only Son, *Yeshua*, or *Isa Al-Masih* as his chosen atoning sacrifice and ordained him after testing his obedience as He did to Abraham. This son of Man humbled himself and became obedient to death on the cross for the sake of all humans (Phil 2:7-8). In contrast to the Arabic Qur’an, Arabic Bible, however, often uses the root of three semiotic letters of *Kipr* (كفر), as used in the Hebrew Bible *Kipper* (כִּפֵּר), in a form of a verb meaning to ‘He atones-*Yukapr*’ (يكفر) or noun ‘The Atonement-*Kaparat*’ (كفارة). This clearly shows that the remission of sins and the Jewish tradition of *Kaparah* atonement can be possibly explained in the context of Muslims. Despite the vague meaning of sacrifice in Muslims’ context, they partially understand animals’ slaughter through their sacrifice ritual and the distribution of those sacred offerings to their neighbors.

In the book of Hebrew 2:17, the highest priest, is described as the one who made propitiation for the sins of the people in Arabic²⁹. God in the Bible acts his way of sacrifice through the faithful servant, the highest priest Jesus *Yeshua, Al Masih in Arabic*, at the event of the crucifixion. God himself chose his atoning sacrifice or his faithful servant; thus, the promised Messiah became an offering and being slaughtered. It was through tearing his body and shedding the blood that the humankind’s sins were pardoned. By understanding the similarities between three faith traditions, Christians can be a medium of conveying the significant message of this servant's sacrifice in which three traditions can reconcile and go back to a common patriarch Abraham. If Jews and Muslims comprehend the deeper meaning of Messianic work, and his fulfillment of sacrifice, these implications can also allow them an opportunity to evaluate their own belief system and to search for the truth in Jesus.

According to scholars, like Melito claims the sacrifice of Jesus not only alludes the sacrifice of Isaac but better than Isaac's incomplete sacrifice because he physically suffered and died by finishing His father’s mission became a model in the context of the Levitical

27 Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt, & Fred Naiden, *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, Chapter 32 (London: Oxford University Press, 2015).

28 Doukhan quoted scholars like Spiegel, Davies, Chilton in order to explain the meaning of the *Aqedah* and its variable implications in Abrahamic religions. Besides, he researched the connection of Isaac’s voluntariness of the sacrifice with the Lamb of God.’ He also quoted Melito’s claim of Jesus’ sacrifice as an effective model to Abrahamic religions.

29 يكفر خطايا الشعب

sacrifices which corresponds more to the lamb slaughtered. As this typology was developed theologically as a model of atoning sacrifice by Church fathers, the parallel between Isaac's obedience and Jesus' obedience on the cross can lead our dialogue more open to each other's faith with a commonly shared faith in the Abrahamic obedience.³⁰

V. Abrahamic Covenant and the Servant of God in the Christian Context

Throughout history, the Abrahamic covenant continues "as the framework within which relationships between God and his people are presented."³¹ God made a covenant with Abraham that he would send the Messiah through the seed of Abraham.³² It is significant to understand a key promise to Abraham, and the apostle Paul's interpretation of his key promise to Abraham,

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise but come by faith so that it may be by grace and may be granted to all Abraham's offspring- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all because God made Abraham for all nations (Rom 4:13-17).

As the Torah was given through the seed of Abraham, not seeds plural, but a seed, *Bani-Israel*, the people of God (Romans 9-11) is supposed to be blessed through him. In Abrahamic tradition of sacrifice, the genealogical connection is involved differently so each religious people undermine other's genealogical sons, and Jews and Muslims interpret differently about whose sacrifice was. In the traditions of Jews, Isaac was under the trial but Ishmael was the origin of this faith story to Muslims, so they claim their practice of sacrifice superseded others. Nonetheless of this ethnic argument, both Jews and Muslims emphasize the value of this narrative and open to hear the story servant of God, the sacrificial Lamb although they do not have a full understanding of the Messiah's true identity.

As Isaac's sacrifice and Ishmael's sacrifice are regarded as effective as the sacrifice of Jesus, Abraham's remnants would come back to God through the seed of Abraham, Jesus, which alludes to the lamb of God at the Passover (in Gal 3:16; Ex 12:1-14). The forgotten people of Abraham, the members of the broken family of Abraham must be remembered as

³⁰ Jacques Doukhan, "The Aqedah at the crossroad," 3-4.

³¹ Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. O'Brien Peter, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 32.

³² God's mysterious plan of universal salvation which had been promised to Abraham, has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Paul wrote that anyone belongs to Christ is Abraham's seed and an heir according to the promise (Gal 3:29); Ralph D. Winter, "Seeing the Big Picture," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 13/1 (1996): 41.

the beneficiaries of the atoning sacrifice of the Passover lamb. There is a barrier embedded in the Jewish and the Muslims' context in explaining the concept of *Yeshua's* divine sacrifice and *Isa's* atonement for all human beings.

In the Bible, the servant of the Lord is the great priest over the house of God (Is 7:14; Heb 10:21). Although the house of Judah and Israel broke the covenant, the servant of the Lord stands for those people who have followed their forefather's sin so that these unrighteous people can come before God (Is 59:20). This suffering servant on behalf of Israel was prepared on God's purpose to transform its old condition, so "the new spiritually reborn Israel will exist in the first place for God and His glory."³³ The priesthood of Israel will be restored among the nations,³⁴ so nations would be blessed and be an assembly of Israel through him (Is 60:4).³⁵

The servant of the Lord is of more value than other sons of Abraham who had to completely fulfill the mission of God and suffered and resurrected from the dead, unlike Isaac and Ishmael. He was sent to destroy all the fallible of institutions, which were bound up with temple, priesthood, and kingship in His body and restore the relationship and the covenant with God. In Matthew 27:46, this servant of the Lord cried out in a loud voice to his father, by saying "*Eli, Eli, Lema Sabachthani.*" God did his miracle on his divine way, he inflicted himself and became a model of self-sacrifice on behalf of humankind. According to this Aqedah, binding of God in *Kaparah*, a typology of the Passover which corresponds to the Rosh-Hashanah and *Eid-Al-Adha* shows us the intersection where these religious groups can meet and initiate our dialogues.

Despite the controversies of narratives in Abraham's tradition and interpretation, his faith and the obedience of his son would impact upon the entire people's propitiation collectively. As the God of Abraham prepared a burnt offering on behalf of Abraham's family and descendants His redemptive plan through this sacrificial lamb, could be regarded as effective as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of blood only if this was accepted by faith in *Kaparah*"

As a result, "many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 8:11). Israel will behold this beautiful scene that every nation brings 'offerings' to the Holy One of Israel, and they will become thousands, multitudes of nations before God. The servant of God for his people can also be

33 J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1960), 69.

34 The servant of the Lord will recover Israel's position, God's priest, a holy nation, among the nations (Ex 19:5-6) and the restoration of Israel's priesthood indicates "the full demonstration of the priesthood" of all followers of Christ in Walter C. Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament* (Pasadena: CA, 1998), 67.

35 John Corrie, *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 272.

explained as a typology of an obedient priest who suffered himself by God's will. Imagine, there remain millions of Jewish and Muslims who still think this man, Jesus, is merely died because of his blasphemy, but this obedient servant did not carry his own sins on the cross "who then is Jesus?" It is worthwhile to the open-up question of why shedding of this innocent man's blood implies a meaning of expatriation and propitiation and to give a lesson of faith trans-culturally.

As a good example of subordination to God, the suffering servant's sacrifice, His *Kaparah*, can be remembered by the Jews and Muslims, reminding them of the perfect obedience and fulfillment of God's mission on the cross as the prophets promised in the book of Torah and the book of Prophets like Isaiah and Zechariah. Therefore, Christians have possibilities to get involved in Interfaith Dialogue making a good connection with Muslims and Jews with culturally grounded knowledge. The divinity of Jesus Christ and his vicarious death was regarded as a big challenge to Muslims or Jews, however, this innocent man's obedience happens to a resurrection that indicates the extension of narrowed understanding. The value of Abrahamic son's obedience and his voluntary heart must be taught to all families of Abraham with Christian's complementary interpretation.³⁶

Considering this parallel context of monotheism in modern Jewish and Muslim religious and cultural backgrounds, firstly, Christians can make a common ground with them by reminding them of the God of the patriarchs.³⁷ As we all know the Jews, Muslims and Christians are the descendants of Adam and Abraham. Thankfully, Toraic tradition was shared with Jews and Muslims which affirms the message of God's prophets like Abraham, Isaac, and also the promise of God that is foretold by his prophets or servants are written in each religions' sacred texts. The Qur'an 2:136 and 3:84 states,

We believe in Allah, and the Tribes, and that given to us, and Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah in Islam.

It is a noticeable fact that the apostle Peter particularly emphasized the Messianic title of 'servant of God' which was foretold by Isaiah to account for Jesus' death and suffering among the majority of a Jewish audience.³⁸ He confronted the controversial to convey the real

36 Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 18-19.

37 Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 59.

38 Regarding the expression of the servant of God Jesus, "παῦλα", a *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* also notes that the word παῦλ, the original form of παῦλα, is interpreted in the slave, servant of God in Acts 3:11-26.

sacrifice of the righteous one (53:11), who was handed over (53:12; 52:13)³⁹ and became the atonement for the finite people of Israel and suffered for the salvation of them.⁴⁰ The good news of this suffering servant's messiahship can be delivered to today's Jews and Muslims⁴¹ as Peter wove the prophecies foretold by Moses, Samuel, and all the later prophets as a "united testimony," then he applied this fulfillment to Jesus explicitly, in showing His covenant with David and Abraham.⁴² By doing so, the Abrahamic tradition can be enriched and be proved more valuable through this seed of Abraham's sacrifice. This inflicted servant's sacrifice, the meaning of *Kaparah*, can be complementarily used as the fulfiller of the first prophet, Abraham's blessing, and the successor of the kingdom of David.

VI. Conclusion

For these reasons, the analysis of narratives in the sacred texts opens doors to have a dialogue between Jews, Muslims, and Christians in light of true understanding of their faiths. The God of Abraham never forsakes his chosen people, *Bani-Israel*, despite their ignorance of the covenant through Abraham's seed. Abraham becomes the father of all those who respond to God in faith not only to those who are biologically or ethnically descendants of Abraham (86-87) but to those who call Abraham their forefather of faith. As aforementioned, the Judaic tradition and the Muslims apologetic refer to many implications of the ritual of sacrifice. They perform sacrifice annually at different times but commemorate Abrahamic Sacrifice and his obedience; however, both Jews and Muslims recognize Abrahamic seed, Jesus, and His sacrifice on the cross or his subordination to his Father God. Unlike a large number of monothetic belief, the main purpose of ritual in atoning sacrifice is 'not only to pay off their sacrifice but to be accepted as a sacrificial offering, the Passover, by God' on behalf of his people's sin.

VanGemenen differentiates the title of God's servant from the Greek expression of *Doulos* in *A guide to Old Testament theology and exegesis*. VanGemenen explains that $\mu\alpha\tau\rho\sigma$ is mostly used to identify Jesus with Isaiah's servant figure indicating the ministry of Jesus, Jesus' suffering and exaltation. On the other hand, *Dulos* is mostly used to designate "epistolary authors, Christian workers, and Christians in general...referring the idea of calling and election from God rather than that of duty and submission" in Willem A. VanGemenen, *Interpreting the prophetic word* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1996), 1196-1197.; Hanna Hyun, "Acts 3: 11-26, The fulfillment of God's Covenant through the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and its Significance in Ahmadi Muslim Context" *Sydney Theological Reflections*. Vol.2. Sep. 2016. 257-278.

39 The prophet Isaiah foretold the Servant of God $\epsilon\gamma\omega\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma\ \mu\alpha\tau\rho\sigma\ \alpha\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\omega\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, "my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted and shall be exalted" (Isa 52:13) in Charles K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Clark, 1998), 194.

40 Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament*, 51.

41 F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles; the Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 86.

42 John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 94.

The last but not the least, we, as the descendants of Abraham, should remember our iniquity, and fallible identity, so is more responsible for our polemics and controversies against each other's faith before the God of Abraham. A restoration of Abrahamic promise *Tikkun Olam* is needed among the people of Abraham regardless of our different religious stance. As Abraham brought his Qurban with his zeal for the creator of his people, His intended sacrifice, this atoning sacrifice, the essence of Passover, should not be neglected but be worshiped and recognized as equally or more valuable than Isaac's or Ishmael's sacrifice. For this righteous servant who suffered for his people and gave his full submission to God satisfy the ransom and expiation and glorified his father. This ordained sacrifice and the idea of *Kaparah* through the story of sacred texts in common, hopefully, indicates the deeper meaning of atonement for the Jews and the Muslims as equally as for the Christians, bringing the messianic hope.

Among three religions, the spiritual lineage of Abraham's faith and his obedience to God must be taught and understood profoundly along with the Judaic roots of sacrifice, *Kaparah*, the atonement. The faithful action of our forefather passed down to the servant's great faith in Yahweh and even to us. This tradition of Abrahamic faith has preserved through the rituals of animal sacrifice until now, so all descendants will see Abraham as the forefather, aspiring to model the seed of Abraham. This great blessing must be overflow by the suffering servant and his messianic sacrifice. When men and women are called for repentance, *Teshuvah*, and remorse of our sins on the first day of the year, *Yom-Kippur* for Jews and on the last month of the year for Muslims, they may remember through the animal sacrifice, there must be the infallible and fulfilled atonement.

한글 초록

유대인, 무슬림, 기독교인은 갈등 및 오해와 같은 역사적 장벽으로 인해 관계가 오랫동안 소원했고 서로의 신념과 믿음에 대한 무지가 갈등을 악화시켜왔다. 아브라함의 신앙과 전통을 함께 공유하고 있는 유대인 욥 키푸르와 무슬림 이드 알 아드하 축제는 서로의 신앙에 대한 이해를 높이고 서로의 전통을 풍부하게 하며, 종교 간의 대화를 열어주게 한다. 이슬람에서 무슬림은 매년 순례를 하면서 이드 축제에서 동물 제물을 통해 아브라함으로부터 그들의 정체성과 기원을 찾으며, 유대인은 로쉬-하샤나로 새해를 연다. 십자가에서 예수님의 완전한 희생은 죄에 대한 유일한 가능한 화해를 제공하고 모든 대체 동물 희생을 중단했고, 유대 토라에서 '마지막 선지자'에 관한 예언을 성취했다. 그러나 무슬림뿐만 아니라 유대인은 메시아의 역할과 아브라함의 자손인 예수의 희생적 의미를 깨닫지 못한다. 세 가지 신앙 전통의 유사점을 이해함으로써 기독교인은 세 가지 전통이 조화를 이루고 공동의 조상인 아브라함에게 돌아갈 수 있는 예수 희생의 중요한 메시지를 전달하는 역할을 할 수 있다. 또한 아브라함 아들의 희생은 유대인과 무슬림이 종의 고난의 더 깊은 의미와 그의

희생으로 인한 하나님의 언약적 함의를 그들 자신의 믿음 체계에서 평가하고 예수를 재평가 할 기회를 열어 줄 수 있다. 따라서 각 종교 내에서 '속죄제'에 대한 이해를 비교함으로써 이 논문은 다양한 종교적 맥락에서 '카파라'의 기원을 밝히고 각 종교에서 속죄라는 역할을 알아본다.

키워드: 속죄, 희생제사, 아브라함의 종교, 종교간의 대화, 하나님의 종

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