

Gods & Goa'uld's: An obligation to faith within the mythology of Stargate.

I would like, if I may, to take you on a strange journey.... (sorry, couldn't help myself.) a mythology in tone more modern than the myths we have studied in weeks past (but certainly adapted from those myths). It is mythology that creates itself knowing full well it is fiction, it is mythology as fantasy and science fiction.

The two script excerpts I present on the following pages are from two episodes of the TV sci-fi show Stargate SG-1, both these episodes deal with court proceedings of such that concern themselves with arguing *the rights of those that call themselves a god(s)*, and *the obligations/accountability of those that are asked to serve gods*. Before these excerpts I will attempt to give you a 'brief' summary of the races that we are concerning ourselves with here in the context that we look at them in; the races of the Goa'uld & the Ori/the Ancients.

The Goa'uld: the main 'villain' race for 8 seasons, the Goa'uld are a sentient parasitic race that infest a human host, taking control of the host's body. In the Stargate universe these Goa'uld once ruled earth as gods and are the basis of most of our mythology (eg. Ra, Apophis, Chronus, Ba'al, and Anubis). A major rebellion ended the Goa'uld domination of earth, and as they had already used earth to seed humans throughout the Goa'uld Empire, they felt no need to reconquer the planet. Those that serve the Goa'uld are used as slaves, worshippers and workers in mines, others are used as slave-soldier armies called the Jaffa, to serve as warriors and incubators for larval Goa'uld before they can take a proper host.

The Ori/the Ancients: Appearing in the 9th and 10th season of Stargate, this race split into two factions eons ago, a war sparked by a moral disagreement causing those who became the Ancients to flee their home galaxy for our own. In their independent galaxies, both factions advanced to a point where they were able to shed their bodies and ascend to a higher plane of existence, both have amassed great power and understanding of the universe.

The key moral point that separates these factions is that the Ori directly influence the beings of their galaxy while the Ancients refuse to. The Ori believe that as highly advanced beings, lesser beings should worship and follow them. The Ori rule their galaxy and those within it, offering knowledge and ascension (and hence immortality) to those that follow the way of the Ori. Priors of the Ori receive great power in life for dedicating themselves to spreading the word of Origin to other planets. Those that do not believe in the way of the Ori will be destroyed.

The Ancients refuse to interfere in the lives of lesser beings, feeling it would devalue the accomplishments of those beings. A lesser being must make the journey themselves to enlightenment, and will not be helped by an ancient under any circumstance.

Though the power, knowledge and understanding of the Ori is great, they cannot directly influence events in our galaxy, for as beings of equal advancement the Ancients prevent them from doing so. This however does not stop followers of the Ori from travelling to our galaxy in an attempt to convert those willing and strike down those who oppose.

Script exert one: an advanced race the Tollans capture a Goa'uld named Klorel, the host Skarra has asked the Tollans to be freed from the Goa'uld that infests his body.

The following trial takes place to decide who has rights over the host's body.

Scene: Courtroom/Meeting place.

Goa'uld representative is sitting at one table by himself, Human representative's Daniel Jackson and Jack O'Neill sit at another, Neutral representative sits in the table between Jack-Daniel and Goa'uld attorney. Skarra/Klorel sit in middle place while Travell sits facing everyone.

Travell: This dispute involves two sentient being who inhabit the same body. Both have requested sole use of the body, therefore we must establish the right of priority over the body to whom does it belong.

At this time I recognize the Goa'uld attorney and Klorel.

Goa'uld attorney: Until three years ago, the humans on Abydos live under Goa'uld law. Administrated by Ra. Now by that law, they were Goa'uld property. Lord Klorel merely took what was already his.

Jack: By force!

Travell: I understand your desire to defend your position Colonel. And I will give you that opportunity. I would first like to hear Skarra's perspective. *Light on Skarra's chest turns from red to blue. He slowly stands up.*

Skarra: I was born to this body. Free of the demon Klorel. He stole my body. On Abydos, I would have married, had children, grown old, and died. But the Goa'uld took more then my body. He stole my life.

Travell: Human representatives?

Daniel: (stands) Skarra, when you were born, did your people believe they were slaves?

Skarra: No.

Daniel: Just so we can all be clear, who was Ra?

Skarra: We believed him to be an evil god.

Daniel: So he enslaved your people through superstition and fear?

Skarra: Until you came, yes.

Travell: Goa'uld representative?

Goa'uld attorney: (Walking slowly over to Skarra) Tell me, did the people of Abydos hunt?

Skarra: Yes.

Goa'uld attorney: Did you also use animals as beast of burden for food, for clothing?

Skarra: Yes...

Goa'uld attorney: Do you also eat the flesh of humans?

Skarra: No! Never!

Goa'uld attorney: (walking back over to his table) Then you make judgment that animals have a lesser value then humans.

Skarra: We care for our animals. We worship them. We thank them for the gifts they give us.

Goa'uld attorney: Yes, but you keep them to do your will. And you kill them to survive.

Skarra: When we have the need.

Goa'uld attorney: As we do with humans. When we have the need. If a human has the right to take an animal's body as he pleases because he is a superior being, so does a Goa'uld. And by that argument alone, the Goa'uld has priority. And the host belongs to Klorei. (Sits down)

Travell: Do the human archons wish to respond?

Daniel: We do your Eminence.

Jack: (gets up and clears throat) Your argument is flawed in oh so many ways. Humans are self-aware. Animals aren't.

Goa'uld attorney: Animals are not, because you deem them not to be. Just as we deem humans, not to be.

Daniel: (getting up) What my colleague means is that humans have a more advanced intelligence than that of lower cast animals.

Jack: Exactly.

Goa'uld attorney: Is that not a matter of perspective? Just as a human would consider itself more intelligent than a pig. Or a pig would consider itself more intelligent than a... rat.

Jack: what's your point?

Goa'uld attorney: (getting up) My point is the Goa'uld considers themselves more intelligent than humans. Our technology is more advanced than yours, our mere knowledge of the universe is more advanced than yours.

Jack: You stole that knowledge!

Daniel: (walking over to Goa'uld attorney, Jack sits) You took human knowledge when you took humans as hosts. Just as you took knowledge from other species. The Stargate isn't your technology. You just, took it. As far as we know, nothing you have... came from you. So clearly the evidence isn't that you are more intelligent just... more parasitic.

Goa'uld attorney: The method of gaining the knowledge is not the question. We were able to obtain it. You were not.

Travell: Gentlemen. (Goa'uld attorney sits down) We seem to have wandered away from the central topic. Which being has priority over this body?

Daniel: If I may your Eminence I don't think we've wandered away from the central topic at all. What we're trying to point out is that the Goa'uld steal all they possess. As they have in fact stolen Skarra's body.

Jack: Can I... Sorry. Can I just say something? (Daniel sits down) Skarra? You once told me you'd rather die than live another day as a Goa'uld. Why?

Skarra: What I suffer each day is worse than death.

Jack: For example?

Skarra: I remember the demon stretching out my hand to kill Daniel. The husband of my sister. There was nothing I could do to stop it! And I have seen, many more far worse atrocities than this.

Goa'uld attorney: (quickly standing) I demand that the humans stay on topic!

Jack: It is on topic! You just want to avoid talking about all the nasty stuff he's witnessed!

Goa'uld attorney: The host witnesses nothing. Since nothing of the host survives. *[pause]*

Daniel: (is standing) Goa'uld representative, I would like to ask you a question if I may.

Goa'uld attorney: I hope I'll have the answer.

Daniel: I'm sure you will. (Walks over to Goa'uld attorney) Is... your host in there, somewhere?

Goa'uld attorney: Nothing of the host survives.

Daniel: Really? Than how do you explain Skarra?

Goa'uld attorney: What you call `Skarra' is nothing but a remnant. He can only speak now because the Tollan use their technology to silence Klorei.

Daniel: But, how could he speak at all if he hadn't survived?

Neutral representative: And he spoke well. His words were not those of a remnant personality. *[court proceedings interrupted by other matter]*

Scene: Courtroom/Meeting place.

Travell: We will resume. The Goa'uld attorney has asked us to reconvene early because he wishes to make a challenge.

Goa'uld attorney: (standing up) Tollan law does not provide for a penalty of death. Is that right?

Travell: It is.

Goa'uld attorney: Then I wish to point out the futility to this Trial. A Goa'uld needs a host to survive. This is a biological fact, beyond our control. If you allow priority to Skarra, it is of a death sentence for Klorei.

Jack: Of course, if you flip that around you got Skarra on death row.

Goa'uld attorney: Yes, but as you proved earlier in Trial, the host survives.

Jack: Yeah?

Goa'uld attorney: We concede this point. The host does survive. There fore if you provide priority to Klorei, both host and symbiote live. (He sits)

Jack: Yeah, one lives freely, the other lives as a slave.

Daniel: (stands) We would put forth that life as a slave is not life at all.

Jack: (stand) And if you want to save both lives... give us Skarra, you take Klorei. You can... put him in another host for all I care.

Lya: Who Colonel? Perhaps you would volunteer?

Jack: Uhh... no.

Daniel: Perhaps you could find someone who would choose to be a host.

Goa'uld attorney: The Goa'uld rest our case and we are prepared to vote. Therefore Triad is over.

Travell: Triad is over when all parties agree, Goa'uld representative. Do the human representatives have any further arguments?

Jack: Nope. I think the Goa'uld made our case for us quite nicely.

Travell: Then bring in Skarra/Klorei. *Everyone sits down and Skarra/Klorei comes into the room escorted by two Tollan security guys.*

Travell: Klorei and Skarra, you can both hear the court's ruling?

Skarra: Yes, your Eminence. *Klorei takes control and eyes glow.*

Klorei: I can.

Travell: Human representatives. May we hear your vote?

Daniel: (stands up along with Jack) We find in favour of Skarra. (sits back down)

Travell: Goa'uld representative?

Goa'uld attorney: (stands) We're in favour of Klorei. (sits)

Travell: Neutral representative?

Neutral representative: (stands) After careful consideration, I believe that both Klorei and Skarra have the right to live. But, living as a host with no right of ones

own, is not life. Therefore, only one can remain in the body. To that end, I award priority to the original owner of the body. Skarra.

Travell: We will summon those who can to assist in the removal of the Goa'uld Klorel. He will be removed from his host and if he survives, will be sent to a Goa'uld world of his choice.

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Script exert two: Vala, a host who's Goa'uld Qetesh was removed many years ago, returns to a planet she ruled after her Goa'uld was removed. Vala had posed as her ex Goa'uld Qetesh who the planet's people in turn believed to be their god. This scene comes after Vala has confessed to not being a god, for she wishes to warn her people not to follow the new threat; the Ori.

SCENE: Next day on planet. The trial begins. Two tables have been set either side. A crowd surrounds them

AZDAK: Welcome and thank you all for coming... the final decisions of ...this trial will be yours, my friends. A general vote. After both presentations have been made we shall all decide what is to be done to the false God Qetesh.

AZDAK: we shall begin as always...with a reading of the claims. The first claim of seven. Mass murder.

VALA: uhm—(turns to Jackson) Wait a second

AZDAK: The second claim of seven. Mass Torture.

VALA: (to Jackson, whose nodding) I never killed...I never Tortured... that is Qetesh.

AZDAK: The third claim of seven—

JACKSON: (stands) uh...excuse me...Hi...sorry to interrupt. Um...the person seated before you didn't do those things...(Vala waves)

AZDAK: You will have your chance to make your presentation.

JACKSON: yes...um...I'm...I'm sure we will. I just wanted to make something very clear as we discussed when she confessed...Vala was a host...to a Goa'uld...a parasite that controlled her actions for many years. It was that Goa'uld symbiote named Qetesh that committed the atrocities that you are talking about...Vala herself can only be held responsible for the actions she did after that Goa'uld was removed...

AZDAK: When exactly was that?

JACKSON: Um...(looks at Vala, leans down so she can whisper in his ear) four ye---four years? (quieter) four years.

AZDAK: (goes to whisper with his co-council, comes back) very well. Assuming your assertion to be true. We shall begin again. (Vala grins at Jackson) the first claim of four. Planetary wide forced labor. (Jackson's face falls, looks at Vala, who nods)

MITCHELL: this is gonna be a long day.

AZDAK: I...perhaps more than any of you, feel great sorrow...at the fact that I devoted my love...and faith so freely to (turns to point at Vala)...an impostor, Who cared only for the minerals in our mines. With every breath... she lied. With every effort... she stole. At every chance she betrayed us. The conditions of poverty that we now suffer... are her fault and her fault alone. That is what you must consider!

JACKSON: (stands)...yes. She stole. She betrayed you. She used you as slave labour. All this is true. But the only reason you know about this is because she told you. She came forward knowing full well how you would feel...what the consequences would be...ask yourselves...why would she do this? She did it because there is a greater threat in this galaxy she thought you deserved to know about. She told the truth in order to open your eyes...to show you the dangers of giving away your freedom, your freewill...in the hopes...that given another chance you wouldn't make that same mistake twice. (Vala holds her head higher) we know that a prior of the Ori has come here, he's been sent to this village to convince you to worship beings more powerful than all of us, but you must know...that like Vala they are not gods.

PRIOR (enters trial room): You speak well Daniel Jackson of the planet Earth. What is a god? What power is great enough to make you bow down in humble reverence?

PRIOR: There is only one measure. The only question you may ask yourself is why must I believe? What is there for any or all to gain by choosing the path of origin? Those seeking eternal salvation can follow the word of the Ori. Those that do not shall die as mortals. It is as simple as that. The day of reckoning approaches. Your destiny awaits.

VILLAGER: (steps forward, dropping to his knees) I have told them of the Ori, Prior. Many of us believe.

JACKSON: But not all of us.

PRIOR: You doubt the power of the Ori?

JACKSON: No. but I understand how they got it...and because I do I'm not willing to abandon my own freewill and worship them for it.

PRIOR: The Ori healed this man. This man that was sick. This man that could barely walk.

JACKSON: This man was healed through Knowledge. We have medicine. We have...tools that can do much the same thing. This device (picks up healing device from other table) has the power to heal...if you know how to use it. But not by power (holds it up) it's called technology.

PRIOR: Technology.

JACKSON: yes, knowledge. Understanding. Of the way things work. Of the science... of the universe.

PRIOR: Maybe so...but consider this. There are two men. One is starving and the other has a plentiful crop. Is it not wrong...for the fortunate man to hoard his harvest? Should he not share with his hungry brother? It is the same with knowledge and understanding...as you have said the Ori have a greater understanding of the universe but most importantly they are willing to share it with us. Out of their love for us...their creation...only a fool would turn away.

JACKSON: Just because the Ori know more than we do, doesn't make them gods...they are beings who were once like you and me...but they evolved...they learned of humanities potential...eventually over time they used that knowledge to shed their physical bodies and live as energy on another (raises hand) higher plane of existence.

VALA: (mutters to Mitchell) which side is he on?

PRIOR: you are all children of the Ori! But you've been raised by evil...the true nature of the universe has been kept from you by powers that would have you stray from the path of origin...it is time to open your eyes...let origin show you the way.

JACKSON: no...you're right...(walks) maybe hoarding the knowledge is wrong. Or maybe its not...maybe learning for yourself is part of the journey to enlightenment. But killing someone for not worshipping you...regardless of your power. Is wrong. Very wrong. Knowledge is power...but how you use that power defines whether you are good...or evil.

PRIOR: The choice is yours.

VILLAGER: Give us another chance I beg you. Please...spare us all

PRIOR: (puts hands on Villager's head) Believe in the power of the Ori...or be laid down in the dust (glares at Vala).

The prior leaves, some of the crowd following.

AZDAK: Escort the prisoner back to the cell...

JACKSON: wait...

AZDAK: we're done with the trial...we must vote now on her punishment and...discuss other issues...we now face...

JACKSON: Azdak...I know what the Ori seem to be offering you might sound very tempting...

AZDAK: We are poverty stricken, as a society we may not be able to survive much longer...we thought our god (waves at Vala) would provide for us. Why should we reject the knowledge and education to better ourselves...?

JACKSON: But you can have all that without giving up your freedom. Don't you see how wrong it is to enforce belief by threatening your people with their very lives?

AZDAK: As the Ori said...would we not be ignorant and deserving of punishment for failing to see the plain truth before us? (looks at Vala shaking head) Leave us...we shall deliberate.

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Short Exerpt from later episode, the ex Goa'uld warrior turned rebel Teal'c talking with newly made Prior Gerak, who Teal'c has fought besides.

Teal'c: What is the measure of a god, Gerak? Is it the scope of their power, or how they choose to wield that power? Would a god who is prepared to lead us on the path of enlightenment so contradict this divine benevolence by destroying all those who refuse to believe in him?

Gerak: Those who refuse to believe must die.

Teal'c: I understand how difficult this must be for you, Gerak. Nearing your final years, you so desperately long for the enlightenment we all seek. This is not the way to save yourself.

Gerak: I only want to avoid bloodshed, to enlighten my people.

Teal'c: Stay this course, and you will have no choice but to spill the blood of your brothers. And you may start with me. For if I have a choice between resistance or returning to a life of slavery, then I choose to die free.