

Demonic Possession and Healing of Mental illness in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church: the Case of Entoto Kidane-Mihret Monastery

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Abstract The general objective of this study was to investigate and describe the conceptualization of demons along with the process of treatments for mental illness of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To meet this objective qualitative research approach, case study research method, was found to be appropriate. *Entoto Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery* was selected as a unit of analysis. From this unit of analysis, it was possible to draw sub units namely Exorcist/Priests, Treatments, and Clients. In fetching the required data, in-depth interviews were conducted with religious healers (n=4) and patients (n=2). Direct observation was also employed to study the available treatment processes and reactions of clients during treatments. A theme based frame work was followed to analyze the findings of the study; and the final reporting of the findings followed a linear analytic structure. Based on the posed research questions, eight themes that are grouped under three clusters, i.e. 1. how the story began comprising demons and possession as conceptualized in EOTC, origins of demons, possessing spirits, symptoms of a demoniac, causes of demonic possession, types of possession 2. the healing process in EOTC that include exorcism and healing rituals, and 3. Case presentations were developed. Demonic possession is believed to be the main reason of mental illnesses in the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Demons are recognized to be the archenemy of human race. In their aims and ways of attack, demons vary. There are many evil spirits or demons (including Zar, Buda, Ayine Tila, and Ye digimt Menfes) that are determined to possess human beings and inflict sickness. They possess people starting from their mother's womb or after they are born. Some evil spirits are catching. They transmit from one host to the other by using parts of the body, an eye for example, as a bridge or through other means like conjuration. Once people get possessed by the evil spirits, they show different common symptoms. Possessions may be of a different type. Pathogenic possessions for example are distinguished from executive possessions based on the way the evil spirits manifest themselves in/through the host. Because the EOTC considers mental illness as the result of demons mischief, different symptoms of mental illnesses are considered to be the tricks in manifestation of the demons. There are different treatments available for the various problems of the clients. The treatments include Holy Water, Holy Oil, Cross, and Holy Ash. The main objective of the treatments is then flashing of driving out the possessing demons from their host.

Keywords: *exorcism, demonic possession, Ethiopian orthodox tewahdo church, healing, Ethiopia, Holy Water, Traditional Healing*

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1. Introduction

Explanations of madness and/or mental illness have existed for much of our history: and have varied markedly over time. Early Chinese, Hebrew, and Egyptian writings ascribed bizarre behaviors to demonic possession [16].

Stone Age civilizations evidently believed that serious mental illness or abnormal behavior was due to possession of evil spirits [45]. In addition, beliefs also affected the type of treatments. In these early civilizations, exorcism was considered a major treatment tool. It was performed, usually, by a priest in churches [28].

Other literatures describe demonic possession based explanations as a widespread belief held at this time in the world, even in the western world with much modern ways of treatments and theoretical explanations for mental illnesses. For example, one literature [16] described demon possession as a recurrent and popular idea in medieval Europe and still a widespread idea in much of the world today.

In most African societies, mental illness is traditionally included within the scope of problems that are addressed by traditional healers [40]. These traditional healers assume mental illness as caused by demon possession and/or the result of an angry god or deity [10]. Traditional

healers in Africa are commonly classified as herbalists, who specialize in the use of plants, roots and herbs, or diviners, who use incantations and divinations and act as spirit mediums [40].

Regarding the use of traditional healing methods, Ethiopia is not an exception in light of the above argument. In Ethiopia, it would not be an exaggeration to tell the possibility of finding people with no knowledge of the scientific explanations for mental illnesses. These people are largely dependent on the treatments from exorcists and traditional healers for problems they face in their lives [35]. For example, one study conducted in Butajira regarding the attitude and practice of people towards mental illness showed that none of the informants thought that help could be obtained from modern medicine for problems caused by possession such as epilepsy, schizophrenia, and mental retardation [4].

Unlike modern medicine, however, people choose traditional means for complex mental health problems over clinical treatments. This is either there is a huge gap between the available mental health facilities and the demand for it or people are too rooted with their traditional beliefs. Though it is not possible to provide exact statistics here about the second presumed reason, statistics support the first.

In the country, there is only one dedicated specialized mental hospital with 268 beds for more than a population of 80 million. The total number of human resources working in mental health facilities or private practice per 100, 000 populations is 1.2. The distribution of human resources in urban and rural areas is unfair: all the psychiatrists work in the country (0.5 per 100,000 city populations versus 0.2 Psychiatrist per 100, 000 for the whole country) [25].

Due to this and other related reasons, scholars reported that people are highly dependent on traditional healers for their mental problems [4, 10, 11, & 35]. May be because of this healers are so spread in the country and even in the capital where a relatively better access to modern mental health facilities are available.

In Addis Ababa, for example, we find traditional healers in greater number and diversity. Among the many, few of them include Muslim sheiks, herbalists, traditional bonesetters, orthodox clerics etc. [23]. And, if not all, most healers give services to mental problems of people too. The belief of demon possession is the leading assumption for their treatments [35].

At this point, one may ask the effectiveness of these traditional healers in alleviating the problems of the mentally ill. Are they really effective? Or are they still surviving simply because there are no other options to turn to? This is to say that knowing the effectiveness or failures of the traditional or indigenous treatments is of paramount importance. Especially in countries like Ethiopia where modern mental health facility is in its infancy stage, people largely depend on traditional healing practices for mental health related problems [25]. Therefore, knowing whether the treatments are effective or not, give a chance for policy makers and concerned bodies to take action accordingly for the betterment of the people.

If this is so, the first step in understanding the effectiveness or either of a treatment is its full description, the main concern in this study. Thus, this study described the conceptualization of demons including what and how

they can cause and the treatments and their processes, particularly, treatments delivered by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in curing the infliction of the demons.

2. Methods of the Study

2.1. The Study Site

Among the available churches rendering healing services, Entoto Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery was selected as a unit of analysis for this study. This was decided because the Monastery has a long history of treatments for followers. But, there is no claim that one church is superior to the other. When consulting experts in the field, the process of church treatments is the same across different churches. Therefore, the selection was based on purpose, i.e. accessibility and history of well founded healing system.

Geographically, *Entoto Kidane Mihret Monastery* is located in Addis Ababa, Gullelie sub-city administration Woreda 1, on the North-East hill side of Mount Entoto. The healing section of the monastery is secluded from the main church. The section is found nearly 200 meters away from the main church. On the main gate of the healing section it is clearly written declaring that the place is Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Tsebel-Holy water.



Picture 1. the holy water site

2.2. Study Design and Sample

A qualitative study design, a single descriptive case study method was employed. The case study design was of an embedded nature rather than a holistic one. This was because there were sub-units the researcher formulated from the main unit of analysis. The main unit of analysis of the study was Kidane Mihret Monastery. Three important considerations (well established healing services, familiarity of the researcher to the monastery, and ease of access) were the basis for the purposeful selection of the above mentioned case. Once the case was formulated, following a pilot study in other monasteries, the researcher was able to formulate three sub-units (Exorcists, Clients, and Treatments). Interviews were used for the first two sub-units. In the first sub-unit (Exorcist), four religious healers, that were selected using purposive sampling and in the second sub-unit (Clients), two clients (limited size because of time constraints and unavailability of voluntary participants) that were selected using available sampling method participated in an in-depth interview. Direct observation was another equally

important instrument the researcher employed to collect data especially from the third sub-unit of analysis.

2.3. Demographic Features of Respondents

The four respondents of the church declined to share their profiles for they have said it is a boast or something to share one's deeds, rather the deeds of God are enough if they are told. Telling one's story is considered by almost all of them as meaningless. They said, it is like fake praise, which is a sign of failure.

Unlike the above mentioned participants, it was possible to find profiles of the two clients. The two clients preferred a pseudo name not to disclose their identity. Their names will appear as AH and EM. Their characteristic in terms of sex and age is, AH male and 36 years old and the other is female and 33 years old. This variation is achieved merely by chance since the participants were included primarily based on voluntariness. In terms of religion both of them were followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church. This characteristic is important here because there are people that follow other religions but still take part in healing rituals. In terms of educational status, EM, the female client has achieved a diploma in teaching, and the later one AH has achieved his master's degree from a European university in social sciences.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

Right after two consecutive broad but less focused pilot studies in two different churches (Entoto Maryam and Saris Michael), the actual data collection was commenced in the study site. In-depth interviews were held with four priests and two clients in the monastery. The interviews were conducted in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. The researcher has conducted all the in-depth interviews. Four in-depth interviews were tape recorded with a range of 45 to 70 minutes record period. When it comes to the Clients, it was not possible to audiotape the interview for the participants refused to do so.

The first groups of participants were asked about the origin of the belief of demonic possession, what the demons can cause, how they cause what they cause, and the available treatment options and other related topics. Along with observation, the second groups of participants (Clients) were asked about their insight about their presenting illness, their reactions during and after treatments, etc. The direct observation of the healing rituals and treatments was conducted in the monastery and it lasted for one month.

2.5. Data Analysis

First, the researcher selectively transcribed the data collected from audiotaped interviews, for it was not possible to transcribe all the bulks of interview data. Those interviews, on which cases, that was not possible to audiotape, were developed from interview notes. Next, significant statements and phrases pertaining to the case being studied were extracted from each transcript. Notes from field observations were also combined to formulate meanings. Codes were formulated from the significant statements. Then, the meanings were organized into themes, and then into theme categories and eventually into

clusters to form presentation of the finding. Because the analysis was alongside with the data collection period, the coding was under a continuous revision to fit with other emergent codes.

2.6. Ethical Clearance

From the start the research objectives were clearly delineated and articulated to the participants. Then, the participants were advised of the voluntary nature of their participation and that at any time during the process they could decline to answer any question that they have assumed as too personal or religiously sensitive.

Another important thing, oral consent was obtained from each participant and agreements were formed concerning the limits of accessibility to audio records prior to data collection (for those that agreed for audio records). Last but not the least, written transcriptions and interpretations of the collected data were made available to the participants (only one who was interested in this case) to cross check misunderstanding in between.

3. Results

Three clusters namely, 1. how the story began (comprising origin of demons in EOTC tradition, demons and mental illness as conceptualized by the church, possessing spirits, symptoms of a demoniac, causes of possession, and types of possession), 2. Healing in EOTC (consisting Exorcism, healing rituals), and finally 3. Case presentations, were developed to organize the finding as follows.

3.1. How the Story Began

3.1.1. Origin of Demons in EOTC tradition

Regarding the origin of demons there is a story of the fallen angels that state where Satan came from. One of the respondents named Abba Yared begun the story as follows, *On Sunday, God created Angels. Among them was Satan, who was created as the head of all the other angels. After He created all the angels from fire and wind, He put them in three cities. The groups of angels under the lead of Satnael were on the first and the upper city of Errer. God put other angels in other cities too. After all these, in the first chapter, section two of the book of Aksimaros, it is written that God disappeared from their sight to test their faith in Him.*

In justifying this statement, he picked a verse from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, and there is a story that tells how God created the world and all the creatures in it (Genesis 1: 2-31). It is written that God used the six days from Sunday to Friday, and rest on the seventh, Saturday (Genesis 2: 2).

Abba Tesfa added to the story that

The angels murmured talking one another finding out who created them. Then, -Satnael tiibit belibu molach: qinatm aderebet; kezam yaltegeba negern lewurdetu aderege...-The head of the angels, Satnael was confused himself. He looked up, no one was there, and he looked down just the angels no special other. He understood that the angels were confused too. Then, a bad faith in his heart came. He then, checked if there is

someone above him. He couldn't find one, for God disappeared from their sight. Therefore, he wished to rule all the other angels and claimed that he created them.

Abba Gebre Maryam said that some of the angels immediately believed his word and bowed down to show him respect. Some were suspicious and were confused and other groups in the lead of Saint Gabriel remained where they were. St. Gabriel said to Satnael "your sword is like ours, your physical is also the same, how dare you say you have created us?" he replied that you are jealous of my power for you have refused to show me respect and accept I have created you. Because the angels were knowledgeable, they inquired and asked him to create other creatures again and to prove his ability. He failed to do that and failed in winning their heart.

To this story, Abba Gebre Maryam added that it is St. Gabriel that suggested they shall remain where they were until the one that created them gets back. In the middle of this situation, God showed up. Satnael was ashamed of what he did. However, he never asked forgiveness, nor he regretted his failure. Therefore, God cursed Satan and those who followed him. Abba Tesfa said that those who were suspicious now live in the air, and they are known as demons of the atmosphere (*ye` a`yer aganint*).

Those who were descended to the earth, Abba Tesfa added, are Satan and his angel warriors. Then, God created Adam in place of the devil, the fallen angel. Abba Yared said that because Adam took his place, the devil became jealous of him after that.

It is after this time that the devil begun to wander around the earth and inflict sickness upon the descendants of Adam, which cooperate with the devil to cause a disappointment to God and to take revenge against the children of Adam, an old enemy that took his place of honor in the face of the Lord.

Abba Tesfa added that the fallen devil has different angel warriors that tirelessly work to attack the human being. As it is written in Luke 8-27-33, they are many and incalculable. The warriors are the devil's angels with distinctive interest and mission to accomplish.

The classifications of spirits are not clearly demarcated, as Abba Yared reported, there are different classes of demons based on the area they live. As indicated above, those living in the atmosphere are called demons of the atmosphere, in the water-demons of the water and those in humans-demons of the flesh. In my observation period however I tried to understand that there are different names of evil spirits with distinctive mission and strategies.

3.1.2. Demons and Mental Illness in EOTC

Concerning the basic beliefs of mental illnesses, Abba Yared reduced the whole story in just two sentences. The first one is, "Demons are considered as the main archenemy as well as the major sources of disease and suffering." If this is true, he added, be it mental illnesses, anxiety, or any other form of illness all result from evil spirits."

The above two sentences clarify that all diseases including mental illnesses are results of demonic possessions. However, in the church, there are no clearly organized systems by which diseases are understood. However, in some cases, diseases are conceptualized

based on their causes. To clarify this, Abba Yared pointed out four types of diseases that are classified based on their causes. These are diseases of purification (Dewie Ze' Nitse), diseases of sin (Dewie Ze' Hat'yat), diseases of calamity (Dewie Ze' Meqseft), and diseases of value (Dewie Ze' Esiet). In these varieties of diseases, the possibility of mental illnesses to happen is the same. There is no a clear how and why for the occurrence of mental illnesses. Just like all other physical diseases, mental illnesses may happen to a person.

3.1.3. Possessing Evil-spirits: Prominent Types

In the following section, the researcher has listed four selected types of spirits. These are The **Zar** spirits, the spirits of shadow of the eye-**Ayine Tila**, the evil eye spirits (**Buda**), and conjuration spirits (**Digimt**). It was possible to get their names from observations in the showering room, and was further supplemented by interviews. Though the interviewee from the exorcist's sub-unit were hesitant to tell the researcher a clear distinction about the evil spirits for they claimed it is not found in books that belongs to the church, the researcher tried to dig information regarding the above mentioned evil spirits including their characteristics, what they can cause, and how. Unlike the interviewee's claim however, some writers [23,30] put their own classifications and claims about the existence of distinct evil spirits known in the EOTC.

A. The Zar Spirit

Abba Tesfa when talking about this spirit claims,

The Zar spirit is one that is believed to be handed down to human beings through ancestors. Zar is Amharic term, etymologically came from the term zer, which means lineage, or parentage a name that shows the Zar spirit is handed down from ancestors.

If a spirit is in a family's line, children or family members are exposed to the spirit. The ancestors care for the evil spirits by providing different materials including perfumes and foods and sometimes their newly born children. The primary aim of this kind of evil spirit, as Abba Yared said, is haunting and controlling people and making them their own property.

Abba Tesfa said that the gate of these spirits to people is sometimes the people themselves. In coffee ceremonies, people call the evil spirits that are believed to be the protector of their village or their neighborhood for good fortunes and even put foods on the floor in their names. He added that other times, for example, in the time of delivery people call them for assistance. In strengthening this, the researcher has heard in one exorcism process when a spirit in a kid speaks about how it possessed him. The spirit claimed that it is the kid's mother that has given the child for it.

Other times, the evil spirits may find their way to go into others during a ceremonial dancing, when the Zar spirit descends. It is the time, when the Zar spirits do not get proper treatment or is threatened by the presence of a rival spirit, the spirit of God. The researcher has observed this when a Zar possessed women shouted and claimed that the spirit had possessed her during a ceremonial period in her neighborhood. **Za'r Worede** that literally can be translated as the Zar spirit descended, is a term used to describe the process when the possessed individual begin talking in nonsense languages, which the person himself

cannot comprehend. It is also possible for Zar to descend during proper treatments, a sign that tells the host that he/she is under protection of the evil spirits. When the spirit in the women clarify this (in answering to the monk's question),

When I descend in her, she starts to speak (the host) in my language that other people cannot understand. They simply clap their hands for me; sing a song after her, and when I see a person of my interest I will jump and settle on them (Esefribetalehu).

B. The spirit of Ayine Tila (The spirit of shadow of the eye)

Abba Tesfa concerning this spirit said, "This spirit is another class that works to take down people by residing in their works, perceptions and understanding." (ሁሉም የሰውን ልጅ እድል መስበር ያሰቡትን እንዳያደርጉ ማስናከል ስራቸው ነው). They always work to cause failures, bring misfortunes and other kinds of problems in many facets of life. This kind of spirit does not manifest pathogenically, rather it is manifested in controlling and performing roles against the host. Abba Tesfa said that he distinguished feature of this spirit is that it acts through others, may be employers, colleagues, partners, family members etc, against the host.

To this Abba Yared added that,

This kind of spirit is capable of adapting to the host's behavior and able to easily identify their weaknesses. It is also capable to foresee where our life is heading, what we will achieve in the future, and how we are going to achieve that. Its ability to adapt to the host's behavior makes it the most dangerous for it prevents easy identification of the evil spirit.

Then, always presenting in front, it will track the people down and bring all the misfortunes to their life. In general, when the trouble they make can be condensed into two categories. These are: creating life obstacles and breaking success. In explaining the way the evil spirits create life obstacles, Abba Yared said that People who are under the control of this spirit find themselves struggling much but achieving little or nothing. Things are not easy, there is no such thing as fortune and good luck for them. Little things even require them to strive and struggle much. This is due to the obstacles of the spirits upon them. Even if an individual succeeds, passing the obstacles, the *Ayine Tila* spirits always come to the fore and make the success meaningless. The spirit does not inflict sickness; nor does it causes physical problems. Rather, it is specialized in controlling and attacking an individual's brain so that it can drive the individual wherever it wants to.

C. The Buda spirit-the spirit of the evil eye

This kind of spirit has a common characteristic with the Zar spirit. Both spirits can run in lineage. The Buda spirit is transmissible. The transmission uses the eye of the possessed person and the eye of a new host as a bridge to move into.

Since the evil spirit is in the family, all the fortunes of the family members are under the control of the Buda spirit. If a person is possessed by a Buda spirit, it takes seven years until he/she becomes capable of transmitting the evil spirit.

As Abba Tesfa stated the consideration that the evil eye people as cursed or as people with special gifts is not acceptable in the Church. The evil eye people do what they do for reasons beyond their control. They are

possessed by an evil spirit, and the evil spirits make them suffer, and make them causes for others suffering. Suggestions lie use of amulets as protection against the evil eye spirit is judged as evil in the church.

One can acquire the Buda spirit in either of the two ways: either it runs in families (the Buda spirit can be handed down from ancestors to family members) or can be acquired from possessed individuals outside of the family, initially the spirit rests in an individual. Then starts to explore and "eat" others of his interest. When it 'eats', the person being eaten will show different signs that show that the person is indeed eaten by others.

D. Digimt Spirits-Spirits from Conjunction

Sending evil spirits to victims of interest by the evil works of people is called *Digimt*. The spirits that are inserted are different depending on the mission they are required to accomplish. The spirits are called up by request of people that maybe are jealous of their friends, work colleagues or any other person in their way. To do that, they go to sorcerers, magicians, witches, and debteras (people with special church trainings) and pay money to send evil spirits that are supposed to cause problems to other people.

One of the spirits that magicians, sorcerers, and/or witches, send is called የመስተፋቅር መንፈስ-the spirit of affection. In this variety of spirit, people do not pay to cause direct problems. They would rather pay to let the other person love them against his/her will. It was possible to observe a girl possessed by this kind of spirit in the monastery. The process is, if people want somebody to fall in love to them, they simply pay to send evil spirits so that the evil spirits can finish all the work. This spirit first conquers the mind of the victim, and changes their mind the way it was supposed to do so.

There are two grand reasons why a man sends *Ye Mestefaqir Menfes*- the spirit of affection to another. These are either to win their hearts, just to initiate love affair and to benefit from wealthy individuals.

3.1.4. Common Symptoms of a Demoniac

In EOTC, Abba Gebre Maryam claimed that there is a belief that demons or evil spirits are many in number. This belief is justified in a number of verses in the Bible, like Luke 8: 27-33, as well as from different books that belong exclusively to the Church. Therefore, the symptoms that demoniacs show may vary depending on the possessing demons. For example Abba Tesfa suggested over or under eating, extreme anxiety, and madness. Abba Yared suggested absence of internal peace and domestic conflict. Despite this fact, there are recognized common symptoms that demoniacs show irrespective of the type of the possessing evil spirit. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, however, does not provide the list of the symptoms in a formally organized manner. The study came up with the following list from observations and interviews (N.B. there is no claim that the list is comprehensive).

a. Physical symptoms

Abba Tesfa claimed that most demoniacs suffer illness when they are under the control of an alien, evil, and hostile spirit. As it is in the New Testament, Abba Yared added that demons can cause muteness, blindness, fever, headache, and stomachaches. Furthermore, Demons can give ability to ignore pain or having pain with no physical

cause. These sicknesses sometimes have no medically evident cause, and do not respond to medical treatment.

b. Mental disturbance

Possessed people show unnecessary fears, unusual dreams or hallucinations (especially frightening and/or recurring ones), and mental problems that do not yield to normal treatment such as depression. Other symptoms Abba Gebremaryam mentioned include extreme sexual perversion, unnecessary guilt, auditory hallucinations, and visual hallucinations etc. other symptoms that are suggested by Abba Tesfa include extreme passiveness, overwhelming fear of evil, extreme confusion, cloudiness of thought and unusual or inappropriate emotional reactions such as laughter, sadness, crying, anger, etc. All forms of exaggerated passions, addictions to commit sin, temper, anger, quarrelsomeness and domineering personality, screaming, crying, and, in general, all deeds that are ethically evil are symptoms of a demoniac.

c. Supernatural abilities

In this section Abba Tesfa said “The demoniacs get the ability to speak in the language they have not learned or even heard.” Extraordinary strength is one of the characteristics observed. A change of voice occurs, for example a woman speaks in a man’s voice or the other way around is a common thing to observe.

3.1.5. Causes of Demonic Possession

For Abba Gebre Maryam, “Evil spirits may possess people for different reasons. The first could be temptations like Job, and other times people themselves will call for the evil spirits in bad faith.” Adding to this claim Abba Yared said that “Transgressions of God’s rule and ignorance of his guidance will lead to demonic possession.”

Like the symptoms of the demoniac, causes of demonization varies depending on the type of the evil spirits. However, as it was possible to understand from the interviews, categories were formulated for ease of understanding to show how demonization occurs irrespective of the type of the evil spirit.

They are categorized into three ways

a. God’s will

There is a belief that God himself can cause possessions. Abba Yared however claimed that God never send evil spirits to human beings rather lifts his protection away from those that transgressed his rules. For it written in 1Sam 16:14 saying “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.”

b. Evil works of people

People also cause possessions to themselves and to others. Personal involvement in the occult, Zar worship is the major causes of demonization. As Abba Yared indicated any involvement in magic, fortune-telling, astrology, etc. is also another way through which possession occurs. The other possibility is that people will pay for conjurers to send evil spirits to other people.

c. Sin

This third cause is clear. There are sets of rules that God put as a guideline to live by. Any transgression of these rules is considered sinful. Therefore, if one does not respect the rules, then he/she is cooperating with the devil, which makes it easy for the evil spirits to possess that individual.

Here it is possible to ask how people get possessed. Primarily, as indicated in the selected spirits section, the

way people get possessed is different; therefore, below grounds are proposed to see variations in how people get possessed.

3.1.6. Types of demonic possession

From the interviews, the researcher was able to draw that demonic possessions are of different forms. Some people acquire possession after they are born, and some others born possessed. Some people get the possession from their ancestors, while others get that being victimized by others. In this section, classifications are presented based on two main classifying criteria. The first one is based on how possession occurs, and the second one is by the manifestations of the possession. Possession, using the first criteria, can be classified as congenital and acquired.

a. Congenital Possession

Congenital possession refers to a possession that occurs through a bloodline. This type of possession occurs when ancestors transfer possession down to their kids. The pervasive developmental disorders are, according to Abba Yared, resulted from such kind of possession. Despite the fact that the natural causes are known why a down syndrome, for example, is present, some may claim that the causes may be a set up that are arranged for doctors to understand and to be deceived by the ‘scientific’ explanation.

b. Acquired Possession

This kind of possession is caused by sins and misbehaviors of people. When people intrude God’s laws and words, they are no longer under the protection of God, which in turn leave them exposed to the attacks and mischief of the evil spirits. In other cases, like the Digimt spirits, people acquire possession from sorcerers and magicians. In this case, other people are responsible for this kind of possession. The Buda spirit can also be acquired. As it is mentioned above, it is a transmissible spirit, so when it goes from one to the other we say that the new host acquired the Buda spirit from another.

The **second class of possession** is based on the manifestation of the evil spirits. For this classification, the main classifying criterion is whether the spirits present pathogenically or not. Here are the classifications.

c. Pathogenic Possession

The classification, as described earlier is based on manifestations of the evil spirits on the possessed individual. Pathogenic possession then is a type of possession in which the presence of demons is manifested in ailments. People who get this kind of possession either are bed ridden, severely sick, mad, physically disabled, or has got any other form of mental illnesses. In some cases, neither do they recognize their problem nor can people understand that the possessed individuals are sick. Another possibility is that possessed individuals have no insight about their problems, while it is all clear for significant others, a condition that makes the process to treatment difficult for the patients refuse to go to seek treatments. Treatments, however, possibly happen because significant others can notice when possessed individuals stay at home dysfunctional enough to force them to go to treatments in the church.

d. Executive Possession

Executive-possession is when possessing spirits are the boss. They are responsible to decide on matters related to

the host. The host has nothing to do with anything in life. Once they get redemption from their sufferings, people may not understand why they did what they did during the time they were possessed. As Abba Yared claimed all actions that the person has performed are believed to be actions of the possessing evil spirit. In this case, the main missions of the possessing spirits would be to possess the minds and hearts of individuals so that they can drive them the way they prefer. Mostly, they let the victims transgress God's rules, hate teachings of the church, hate families or significant others. In general, the evil spirits let the victims participate in evil works. However, Abba Tesfa extends for those who are awake; this possession is not a lifetime curse, or something that could last for eternity.

3.2. Healing in EOTC

"Ye Adam Lij Nuro min giziem Ke Erkus menfes gar tigid new". This was what Abba Gebre Maryam said when asked about how people get relief once possessed. It is to mean that, the children of Adam are in continuous struggle with the demons. Therefore, the friction is always there. Here under it is presented how exorcism looks like and the available healing rituals.

3.2.1. Exorcism

Since all sicknesses are believed to be the result of evil spirits, the EOTC has a means to heal the wounds and heart aches of its followers. Exorcism, the process of driving out evil spirits by a means of prayer, holy water, anointment of oil, and the use of emnet/holy ash is an umbrella term that encompasses healing rituals of EOTC. Exorcisms in the EOTC can be looked at into two forms. The first one is the one that involves a human medium, either a monk or a priest, and the second one is an exorcism without a human medium.

The exorcism that involves a human medium is just like all other known forms of exorcisms. The priest or a monk that has a prestige to baptize is responsible to perform the healing ritual. He, in general, serves as a medium to perform the healing.

The second category, however, is between a victim and a nonhuman medium. It is between just the holy water or/and saintly pictures and the victim. In Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery, it is common to see people screaming in front of pictures of the saints. No one is there talking to them, but it is possible to hear them talking as if they talk to somebody else. Abba Yared reported that they do this because the spirit in the demoniac is being questioned by Kidane Mihret-Saint Marry herself.

Irrespective of involvement of mediums, the process of exorcism in the church has a three stage process. This three-phase assumption is just this study's organization, and not a defined order in the church.

The first stage: Meyaz-to capture-: marks the presence of evil spirits: at this first stage, the victim can be observed screaming, yawning, agitating, crying, stretching, groaning, etc. The initial stage-*meyaz-* is the manifestation of the first sign in the whole process. The sign (s) could be triggered by different events. Among others, prayers, readings from books like Miracles of the virgin marry or any other sacred book of the church, preaching by the exorcist, a show up command from the atmaqi (healer), a touch of the cross, exposure to saintly pictures, showering

in the holy water, and a sprinkle of holy water on the body etc.

The most difficult part in this stage is that possessed people do not want to participate in churches. They continuously avoid invites of friends and families. However, if the problem is of a complicated nature families or friends may force them to participate in churches. To this exception, some people with better mental conditions refer themselves to church treatments; some even claim that they have seen a command from God or other saints in their dreams.

In one or another way, people go to church. However, Abba Yared claims that, going to church is not a guarantee for the presence of the evil spirit to be identified. The primary reason is that God has his own time to heal. Some are healed from all their worries and miseries the day they begin treatments in the church, some take a year, two or more than that. Abba Tesfa holds that this is because God do things in ways that benefit people. He added that primarily people come to churches in search of cure for their physical ailments and problems, and most of them do not understand their spiritual ailments. God withhold his will against the healing of their physical problems for he prefers to heal their spiritual problems first, and want them get redemption.

Stage two: Maslefef-Questioning- talking with the devil through the victim: Here, the victim speaks when asked. Yet, the host speaks as if someone else is created in him/her. This dualism thing happens. The man can switch from the speaking evil spirit to the original host. The important part of this stage is that it involves question and answer between the healer and the victim. Abba Tesfa holds that the possessing evil spirits are those that do the talking and shouting through the host. According to Abba Tesfa the patients may be conscious, half-conscious or completely unconscious when this happens.

Stage three: the resolution (*Maswotat*, driving out): This is the final stage. In this stage, the spirit is asked if it is ready to go out of the host. Some spirits inquire additional days, may be a week or two. The reason that they claim additional days, a week, or two, may be because God or other angels ordered them to do so. In this case, the exorcists order them to cause no harm, and to stay. For Abba Yared they do this because they believe that God made this set up. They swear in the name of Jesus, St. Marry, Michael, and other Saints too not to harm the host.

As Abba Yared said, in most cases, the exorcists order the evil spirits to go out and be imprisoned in hell. When doing so, they let the evil spirits swear in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Abba Tesfa said that what exorcists do in this final stage differs depending on their style. Some order the evil spirits to go out by screaming seven times, some three times, and some others let them taste the cross etc.

3.2.2. The healing rituals in Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery

From observations and the interviews the healing rituals in the monastery can be categorized into **Tsebel, Emnet, Cross and Qiba Qidus.**

a. Holy Water/Tsebel

Holy water is the main treatment ritual in the monastery. Abba Yared said that *Tsebel* is a procession of the Holy

Spirit. *Tsebel* is water, but water under a Holy Spirit. It is different from ordinary water in that the Holy Spirit rests upon the water so that the power of healing is there. To strengthen his argument, he picked a verse from the book of Genesis. In Genesis 1:2 it is written as "...And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the water." Therefore, the justifications come from verses of this kind from the Bible.

Abba Tesfa said that any ordinary water can be transformed to *tsebel* by the chant of the priests and by the cross, a cross that belongs to God's priests. According to Abba Gebre Maryam, laypersons cannot bless water by using a cross or a chant for they are not given the power to do that. Only a priest has a prestige to convert ordinary water into *Tsebel*. The Bible is the primary reason why the holy water ritual is practiced to drive out the devil in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church. Many verses indicate the use of holy water to heal wicked people. Like any other healing services of the church, *Tsebel* is used to heal all kinds of illnesses including mental illnesses.

As Abba Yared claimed, the source of the holy water in Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery is found inside the temple of the main church. It then flows down out of the church and makes its way to a compound that is nearly 200 meters away, which is exclusively dedicated for healing services. In the compound, the researcher was able to observe that two water tankers are used to accumulate the holy water. Near to these tankers, three rooms are used as a shower room for patients. The first room is classified into two sections. While the front section of the room is for females, the section that is found at the back is used by males. The exorcist in this room is Abba Gebre Egziabher, the monk that was mentioned in the first section as a participant. He is responsible for exorcising the demoniacs including questioning the devil, and finally driving it out of the patient. Next to this showering room, another room is found that is used only by monks, priests and other bodies from the church. Ordinary EOTC followers (people that have no special role in churches) are not allowed to enter to that room.

The third room is used by both sexes. However, if there are women showering with the holy water inside, males are not allowed to enter into the room. The exorcist in the second shower, as the monk Abba Gebre Egziabher told me, is Kidane Mihret-Saint Marry herself. This should not be confused for she is not there in person; rather her spirit will do everything in driving out the demoniac. The demoniacs will shout, scream, and answer to questions. Though it is not possible to listen to the questions first hand, it is possible to guess from what the demoniacs answer. There is a picture of Saint Marry in front of the showering wall. Under her picture is the outlet for the holy water. Then, if a person is demon possessed, he/she will scream, shout, giggle, and insult people there around etc. Other demoniacs are restless and there are attendants that stay in the showering room the whole time until all people come and showered. They protect people from falling and get hurt. In this showering section, it is very common to see people talking and answering questions as if they are talking with someone.

After they get out of the showering room, they will go to the priest who is waiting there to bless by patting their back with the Cross. Most people do not remember what they were saying after the holy water treatment.

There are rules that people should always follow before coming for Tsebel/Holy water treatments. The rules are written in one of the canonical books of the EOTC. The book is called, according to Abba Tesfa, the *Fetha Negest-Kings' Justice*. Among the lists, a woman in her menstruation period shall not approach the holy water before seven days after the end of her period, a man who ejaculated in his nightmare, or had sex with a female (can be his wife or not), should not take shower by the holy water for three days, are some.

However, these rules are not applicable all the time. Abba Gebre Maryam holds that there are times in which respecting these rules may become impossible for the demoniac. If a demoniac is out of his/her mind for example, said Abba Gebre Maryam, "how can you tell him keep these rules and forbid him not to take the treatments?" In support of this argument, Abba Yared added that if the reason why you come to the church is what is forbidden, for example if a girl's problem is issue of blood, one of the rules mentioned in books, she is exempt from that. To strengthen this argument, Abba Yared picked a verse from Matthew 12:20. It says that "And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment..."

There is nothing holy or blessed better than the son of the most high God Jesus Christ, Abba Yared added, and if she could approach him unclean there is no way that it is forbidden for those in the same problem to approach the holy place. Another support is also found in the same book Matthew 9:12. It says that "...But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." This shows that people that are sick needs treatments and uncleanness is the main reason that people seek treatments.

Apart from showering, holy water is used in the form of drink. As Abba Tesfa claimed the drinking is believed to drive the evil spirits out from the body in the form of sweat, vomit, and/or defecations.

b. Cross/Mesqel

The cross is another means of exorcising the demoniac. Most of the time, it is used during and after holy water treatments. When saying during, it is used in combination with the holy water. Abba Yared said that there is no treatment that is delivered without the use of a cross, directly or indirectly it is used to bless everything.

Abba Tesfa reported that every day priests carry a pocket size cross with them so that people could be blessed by it. Followers of EOTC approach and ask priests for blessing, then they will kiss the cross, and say *Yiftugn beseraw hatyatie*-absolve me from my sin. This time a dwelling evil spirit is supposed to go far away from the person mysteriously. On the other hand, during or after holy water treatments, the cross is used to exorcise a demoniac. During the treatment, priests or monks use it to question, to scare, slap, the demon inside the demoniac. Abba Gebre Maryam added that at the end of most exorcisms, priests let the demoniac taste the cross for they believe it will burn the evil spirits. Furthermore, he added that cross is, in combination with prayers and chants, one way through which Holy ash and Holy Oil are blessed.

In Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery, there is one priest responsible for blessing people with the cross. This man is responsible to attend in the healing compound every morning. He stays at the gate of the house of prayer.

People either after holy water treatment or before entering into prayer or at any time in the morning approach the man and get blessed by his cross. He massages their different body parts with the cross so gently, and at the end pats their back a little bit harder. When he encounters a demon possessed person, he questions them and exorcises it using the cross. See picture 2 below.



Picture 2. Blessing by the cross

c. Holy Ash/Emnet

Emnet is the use of ashes as a means of healing. The ashes are either collected from the burned incenses during services or purposely made from charcoal for curing purpose. *Emnet* in the form of incense/charcoal ash is used in two different ways. First, it is taken in dry form and applied on the forehead, all over the face, or on to any part of the body to bless oneself or heal the areas where one feels ailment. Secondly, it can be taken in concoction with holy water for drinking.

In the same way as holy water on its own, Abba Tesfa added that such a concoction is thought to flush out the evils living inside the body. This can be possible in the form of defecation, vomit, and sweat.

As Abba Yared described, *Emnet* is an Amharic term, and literally it means faith. Therefore, any form of dust, which is found in the churches compound, a blessed place, can be used for healing purposes. However, these materials are of no use without proper combination with prayer. He closed saying “አምነት የሁሉም ነገር መሰረት ነው”-Faith is the base for everything.

d. Holy Oil/Qiba Qidus

Holy oil, or *Qiba Qidus*, is one of the ways in which ailments heal. The use of this oil is of different value. The oil is made from forty different plants. Abba Gebre Maryam did not say about what plants are used in the making of the oil, but that the oil is brought either from Alexandria, Egypt or from Jerusalem, Israel. According to him, it is not possible to make the oils here in Ethiopia. However, there is no clear answer to the why of that. All the churches of Ethiopia either get it as a gift from the Egyptian churches or from Jerusalem, Israel or must pay to get the oil from the churches in these countries.

Holy oil, once imported from either Israel or from Egypt, must be blessed before it is used. In the process of blessing the oil, according to Abba Tesfa, Priests read many different books including, *Metsehafa Qandil*, the book

of the lamp. According to Abba Gebre Maryam, The book of the lamp, which is written in Ethiopic language, specifically is a comprehensive description of the details of the rituals associated with *Qiba Qidus*, Holy Oil. After reading the books, priests will spend a week or two, praying to make the oil Sacred. After these whole process, it is said that the oil becomes Holy.

Any one in need of cure can use the benefits from the holy oil. However, in this particular point different views from two different Monks were observed. The first monk, Abba Tesfa, reported that *Qiba Qidus* could not be used by those people that do not follow the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church. However, the head of Hammere Noah Kidane Mihret Monastery told me that any one, whether Muslim, a Jew, a protestant, or whatever can use that through the Church. In clarifying this, he added that God does not prohibit people since they come to the monastery with a faith in their heart to get redemption from their suffering. Therefore, everyone can come to get treatment from the holy oil.

This later argument is then strengthened by the idea of Abba Yared. He holds that since a man is there, in the monastery, believing in his heart that the miracles of the Lord can heal him/her, he/she could get the treatment.

In anointing the sick with oil, Abba Gebre Maryam believes that the Egyptians have the expertise in identifying the specific body areas that they consider through which evil spirits pass. The monk added that the oil is mainly applied onto the eyes and ears of the sick, so that the evil spirits will go out through these body parts.

3.3. Case Presentations

a. Case 1. The lonely Woman

The first of the two participants from the Clients sub-unit is a woman with an anonymous name of EM, who was demonized for more than 22 years. The spirits that caught this woman were the **spirits from conjuration**. She is 33 years old. She was born and brought up in a place called *Mota*, in Amhara region. As she reported, she lost both of her parents while she was eight. After that, she had to live with her older sister and younger sister in *Mota*. Twelve years after her parents died another thing happened, her little sister who was very close to her died of unknown reason. This also creates another problem in her life. Then after 3 years that her little sister died, she married to a man she knew back at a college. After five years, her husband died of a car crush. That was the most painful moment of her life.

Things changed after her uncle took her to the monastery for treatment. She claimed to be free of the captivity of the demons after 3 weeks of treatments. Though the symptoms were there somehow, they were fading and her life quality improved so much.

b. Case Two: Fantasy of Erotic Nights

This case is about a young man with a code name of AH, possessed by the spirit of *Ayine Tila*-shadow of the eye. He is a well-educated man, who has a European masters in social sciences. He is now 36 years old, married and has no kids. He married his wife by the age of 25. He has been keeping his suffering from sexual fantasy for over 20 years. In his own words:

“*A’nd Sew Yewesib Chigir Alebet Sibal Yasafra!*”, which literally means, it is a disgrace to disclose that a

man has sexual problems. This way he was ashamed enough to keep his problems for more than 20 years, since the time he had realized that he has sexual problems.

During these twenty years he has been witnessing a range of problems, he claimed, that cannot be treated through modern means of medication.

He has a strong belief that demons are the main reasons for his sickness. Regarding evil spirits he reported that he has different experiences. In his own words,

In the area I used to live, it is a common thing to see possessed people suffering from some form of illnesses. Though I am educated enough to understand biological explanations for diseases, it is something odd if I say I don't believe things that I see with my own eyes. I have observed people that are possessed by the Zar spirit; I have seen people suffering from other different spirits. I think these experiences have influenced me so much. I even visited a Debtera in my area, though I could find nothing for my problems.

After 44 days of treatment in the monastery, the spirits inside him were revealed. The spirits were male and female Ayine Tila spirits. When asked by the monk, the male and the female spirits switch turn by turn and speak through the host in different, exclusive style. The monk then let them swear to go out of the man and did all the same procedures when driving the devil like letting them taste the cross, letting them swear by the name of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary and other saints. The spirits could talk one another. The male spirit blames the female that it was the reason that they are caught. The female spirit cries and regrets for losing its husband. Then finally, the monk asked both spirits if they were ready to go out of the host. They said they are ready, one after the other, and the monk ordered them to go out and never reenter into the person.

About the effectiveness of the treatments, he said that since the first week of his treatments, he observed a significant reduction to his fantasies. This was another factor that pushed him to persevere in the treatment. Not only the symptoms, but also his life at home has changed. “አሁን ሁሉም ስላም ነው ክብር ለ እግዚአብሔር”- “now everything is peace glory to God” were his final words.

4. Discussion

This part of the research will be devoted to discuss the main selected themes. The discussion mainly focuses on two major areas. These are conceptualization of demons and mental illness and available treatments in the church.

a. Demons and Mental illness as conceptualized in the church

Demons are believed to originally come from God. They are considered as fallen angles that tirelessly work to fight the descendants of Adam. As indicated in the finding, the basic beliefs of EOTC concerning mental illnesses follow a top-down approach. Basically, Health is believed as a gift of God. The only way that patients get suffering follows the will of God. Be it in science or in spiritual way, if a patient gets better after treatment, it is considered that God had mercy on him/her.

The basic assumptions as indicated were like the ancient beliefs [16,45]. However, the researcher doesn't believe that it is still possible to conclude the beliefs

themselves are syndromes of a mental problem. Psychiatrists may argue against possession beliefs and may call them possession syndromes [8]. However, the author holds this as a way of distancing the ‘supernatural’ thing, something that scholars assume as either denying its existence or colonizing the traditional beliefs [19, 41]. Otherwise denying what works by favoring what is meaningful is not something a science wise profession wants. At least, from the study, it is possible to say that people do believe in possession, and it will be illusory to assume a normal functioning community as abnormal by setting some criteria. At least, it is possible to assume that the assumptions may be, just may be true.

Evidences of possessions are available [49, 19, & 17]. Possession is also evidently observed in this study. Therefore, what is the reason not to believe about its existence? The author shares Stafford's [49] question here, “For if they (evil spirits) were not real, then why would an exorcism work?” (*‘Evil spirits’ in bracket was added, p. 22*) Well in short, it is because of placebo, another means of distancing, disproving, and colonizing other traditional treatments [19]. People have been asking why a consensus is needed to understand mental illness. The researcher is one of these people to ask this need for consensus. Scientific treatments of mental illnesses, for example, psychotropic medications as treatments for mental illnesses have their own setbacks, they do not work all the time effectively for everyone [49]. They may seem meaningful; however meaning without effectiveness will never be advantageous.

b. Types of Demonic Possession

The second section of the finding deals about types of possessions. The categories as shown above are based on two different grounds. The first ground is based on how evil spirits possess people. Based on this ground either they acquire evil spirits or get it congenitally. To clarify this, one may have the Zar spirits congenitally, or acquire evil spirits from other people i.e. the spirits from conjuration or Buda Spirits.

The second category conforms to Cohen's [19] classification. The categories are pathogenic and executive possessions. Pathogenic possessions are those that are manifested in different forms of diseases. The bad lucks, misfortunes, and continued failures are for the executive type. The significance is then in understanding that a person who is not sick also may be possessed by evil spirits. This is because some evil spirits do not occur pathogenically. The example for this type, as indicated in the finding section is the spirit of **Ayine Tila-or shadow of the eye**. This spirits' major purpose is not causing illnesses. Rather, they want to create misfortunes, and make people suffer by creating obstacles. Therefore, even if people have no direct signs of pathology or illness, there is a possibility that they are possessed, and that they should seek treatments for their misfortunes and bad lucks. This category directly conforms to the definition of Guiley [32] of demonic possession. Her definition says that possession is a state when a demon takes up the residence in one's body and influences or controls his or her thoughts, words and actions etc. As indicated, the executive type controls all the actions and performs on behalf of the host against the will of God.

c. Symptoms of possession

A symptom of possessions is the other topic discussed in the finding. Most symptoms that this study found match with the lists in the literature. For example, Guiley's [32] and Girma's [30] list of symptoms like auditory hallucination, suicidal ideation and others are also found in this study. Apart from the symptoms, causes of possession that Girma [30] listed, more or less, are similar with the finding of this study.

d. The healing process

The healing process is about driving the demons out of a demoniac so that 'normal' functioning will be restored. In this exorcism process, there are many things to discuss from the findings. The Indian exorcism process that was indicated by Stafford [49] has many things in common with the process observed in this study. For example, both involve a human medium, most of the time a spiritual father called *Baba* in India, and *Abba* in Ethiopia. Both ways work while the patient is completely possessed by the dwelling spirits. Here, however, there is a slight variation how patients react during the actual exorcism process. In India it was indicated that patients will fall into cataleptic trance [49]. Unlike this, however, during the actual exorcism it was observed that the patients could stand without swinging if ordered by the priest.

Obviously, miraculous cures are evidently available in the EOTC. The cures are, most of the time, the result of exorcisms. As Stafford [49] described, exorcisms across the world share some characteristics. However, Exorcisms in EOTC have unique and distinguishing features in their nature. One distinguishing characteristic is that exorcism could happen without a human medium.

At this point, the other insight the study claimed to understand is the stages in the process of exorcisms. As indicated above, three steps were formulated to capture the whole treatment process. Considerations of the steps are important for different reasons. For instance, in mass prayers, in the midst of preaching, and in other important events, evil spirits may be caught and hosts may fail because of that. Without understanding the process people may not know when to hold the demoniacs. During this time, they may let the demoniacs fall on the ground so that the hosts get hurt. With the understanding of the important markers of the beginning that the evil spirits are caught, however, it is possible to prevent such problems.

Concerning the healing rituals, all of the described treatments conform to the biblical references discussed in the literature. The use of Holy water for example is justified in the Bible picking the verses of Exodus 15:24-27, Mark 6:7-13, and John 5:4, etc.

The use of Holy ash on the other hand is traced from the verse of John 9:6. However, in the verse there was no a clear story that the treated man was possessed by evil spirits. It just tells the story when Jesus healed a blind man with clay that he spit on. In the church, this is associated with the **Holy Ash** and any other soil that is found in the churches compound that conforms to Anderson's [10] suggestion. In use of the cross as a healing instrument, however, it was possible to observe something that needs clarification. A cross, as indicated in the finding, can be used to bless people everywhere outside the church. In addition to this it can be used to exorcise demons in the healing compounds. The game is that outside the healing compound people will not shout even if demon possessed, by simply kissing the cross of a priest. However in the

church, where the researcher believes that people have high chance of suggestibility, they cry or scream simply by kissing or being back patted by the cross. This may be because of the psychological effect of the healing compound or because of something that needs beyond description.

The use of **Holy Oil** is also another ritual that the church uses to heal the demoniacs. In the Bible, holy oil is indicated when used to heal illnesses. For example in Mark 6:13, it is written that people were healed after they were anointed with oil. The main verse that directly justifies the use of the holy Oil however is found in James 5:14. However, in the use of Qiba Qidus, it is not clear about the kind of oil used. There is nothing written in the Bible about the kind of oil that should be used as unction. In the finding, however, it was possible to find out that the oil that is used for healing must be imported either from Jerusalem or Alexandria. The ingredients, though are not clearly known, are estimated to be forty different plants. This shows, in one or another way, the use of some form of herbal medicine in the church, though the church, as Anderson [10] claims, denies the use of one of a kind.

Treatment approaches, be it scientific, supernatural, or another are better in outcome when patients' views conform to explanations of treatment providers [1]. Sometimes, it is believed that one's perceived causes of illnesses highly determine treatment seeking behavior. This is because as Kahsay [35] indicated that 90% of the study participants in his study strongly believe that possession is the cause of their problems. From this, he concluded that the patients have poor insight about the nature of their problems for they seek treatments from traditional means. The researcher does not agree with this conclusion here. This is because, the participants in this study are educated enough to understand the scientific explanations of their problems. However, they sought treatment from religious healing setting, not from a modern scientific setting. From this, it is still possible to consider or at least leave a room for 'the belief' thing rather than simply tagging poor insight and/or unscientific.

The point that needs consideration at this juncture is that the researcher doesn't want to make the exaggerated impression on the miraculous cure of the healing rituals. There are some setbacks as well. For example when patients stand naked, that may create psychological problems for some people with poor confidence of their physical appearance. In addition to this, whenever demon possessed people start to shout there may be a possibility that patients may fall down and get hurt if not attended carefully. The final stance goes along with Stafford's [49] suggestions that exorcisms and traditional healing rituals should be studied and explained fair enough to say that they work or they don't.

5. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation in this research is about the samples concerning the clients unit of analysis from which only two cases were consulted. This was due to involuntariness of other possible cases. The researcher considered this as limitation of the research for many cases could have brought better understanding of the posed questions regarding the reactions of clients. The other thing was, in

some cases, it was not possible to videotape and audiotape interviews and direct observations for it was not allowed by participants, which may have hindered successful interview and observational process because of note taking interruptions.

6. Conclusion

The basic assumption in EOTC about mental illnesses holds that they are caused by Demons. The question here is what the demons, the major causes, are according to EOTC. Related to this question, Demons are conceptualized as Adam's old enemies. Therefore it is believed that all illnesses including mental illnesses are the result of the inflictions from the evil spirits. Demons are many in number and incalculable. They are different in their missions and their ways of manifestations. For example, this study identified and described four different types of spirits. The first of these four spirits is the Zar spirit, which is considered to run in lineage. The second known spirits are called the spirits of *Ayine Tila*. This spirits are considered as luck spoilers and believed to bring misfortunes and obstacles in human life. The third spirits are the Buda spirits, the spirit of the evil eye. Most people regard this spirits as they are abilities of some specific probably cursed people, however in this study it was revealed that people considered as evil eye are just victims of the spirit of the evil eye. Furthermore, they do not possess any special abilities nor are they cursed. They are just the victims of the spirits. According to the teaching of EOTC wearing amulets and/or trying to ward off of this evil spirits by other traditional methods do not work. The last spirits indicated above are the spirits sent to people through conjuration. If these are the demons, then how do they possess people? This will lead to touch the second question.

Regarding the second question, the study described types of possessions based on two classifying criteria. The first criterion is the way in which the spirits possess people. It was reported that people get possessed by evil spirits either congenitally or acquire them some time after they are born. Based on the way they manifest in people is the second criterion to classify the evil spirits. Pathogenic and executive possessions are the two ways in which evil spirits manifest in people.

Then, here it is possible to answer what kind of illnesses the demons inflict and how-The third question of the study. Demons are conceptualized as capable of bringing various illnesses ranging from mild misfortunes to complicated mental illnesses. As described above, possession types tell us how they create these illnesses and misfortunes. For example, the dwelling spirits may primarily be interested in creating misfortunes, then that will bring an executive role that most of the time is not associated with illnesses rather with just misfortunes. When it comes to the pathogenic type, the demons may possess a person from the start, in their mothers' womb, a condition that may create a kind of pervasive developmental problem and/or other forms too. How do the redemptions from possessions, according to the church, occur?

Related to the fourth question of the study, it is possible to conclude that there are four kinds of healing rituals.

These are the use of holy water, the use of holy ash, the use of the cross, and the use of holy oil.

Holy water as a healing ritual is used in the monastery. Many cases are indicated being alleviated by the use of holy water in the monastery. Holy water takes its healing effects in any of the three ways namely sprinkling, showering, and drinking. Showering and sprinkling of the holy water are most of the time attended by a legitimate monk and/or a priest. The other healing ritual is the use of Holy Ash. Holy ash can be applied to different parts of the body and can also be used for drinking in concoction with holy water.

The cross in most cases is used in combination of all the healing rituals. It is used to bless and/or exorcise the demoniacs. The last one, Holy Oil, is another healing ritual in the church. It was reported that it is made out of forty different plants. It is imported for the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Churches from the churches of Alexandria and Jerusalem.

In relation to the fifth question, that is the process of the rituals, in EOTC exorcism through prayer, holy water, holy ash, holy oil, and the cross is the main treatments for people with mental illnesses. As mental illnesses are considered to result from the evil spirits, treatments are primarily directed towards identifying and warding off the dwelling evil spirits out of the person. Three stages of exorcisms were identified. These are Meyaz, Maslelef and Maswotat. In the first phase, demoniacs show specific signs suggesting the presence of evil spirits. The second phase is about the process of diagnosing the problem and identifying the possessing spirits through questioning. The last phase is the process of evicting the spirits out of the person that may involve different styles including letting the demoniacs test the cross or letting them swear in the name of the Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost or by other saints. The EOTC consider other indigenous healing practices such as healings through *Debtera*, *Zar cult* etc., as evil and are strictly condemned. It is believed that these indigenous healing practices just present an enticement for the possessing spirits by ordering the victims to act in their favor, and doesn't mean to bring everlasting cure for the victims.

The sixth question is about how clients react before, during and after treatments. There are a lot of clients that visit the monastery in search of cure. They do visit believing in the assumption that their problems are results of demonic possessions. This assumption, most of the time, influences their treatment seeking behavior. During church treatments, the possessing demons are considered that do the talking and the question and answer through the hosts. After treatments, a demon possessed individual may know what was going on or will never have a memory of what happened during the treatment process.

7. Recommendations

From this study, it can be deduced that the EOTC has much potential to give to the healing profession. Followers of the EOTC are highly dependent on church healing rituals. This means there is a strong working alliance between the two.

If this is so, it is wise to assume that working with modern means of treatments like psychotherapy will

definitely add to the effective treatments of the clients in the church. For example, EOTC uses healing rituals to help clients overcome their addiction problems.

This is because the addiction is believed to be caused by demonic possessions. However, without altering this belief, it is possible to add some scientific ways with spiritual content. For example, with addicts and alcoholics, the church can arrange an alcoholic anonymous group. By considering the possibility of revising the 12 principles of Alcoholic Anonymous groups, I believe that it is possible to provide a more effective treatment for addicts.

This study is just a beginning. This is a one step to understand the potentials of the indigenous treatments in this country. Indigenous treatments like acupuncture and aromatherapy are among the most widely accepted forms in Asia and some part of the world. The researcher assumes that this wide acceptance is achieved from vigorous research and study of these treatments scientifically. Therefore, it is recommended to the concerned bodies or researchers who are interested in this area of study remain open minded to the potentials of the indigenous treatments.

The other thing here is about the process of the treatments. The first step in treating the illnesses at the church involves confession of sins to a priest. This first step creates a better opportunity for those people that are in need of cure to create internal harmony. Therefore, if this assumption can be utilized in psychotherapy as one step, it will be a major blast in creating sense of responsibility from the client's side. However, cautions should be taken so as to seriously avoid judgments (that are evident in church treatments), which are believed to hamper a therapeutic alliance in therapy.

Saying a treatment is not scientific will never make it scientific. If it works, then the next step should be exploring meaning out of the treatments, hence the possibility to make them scientific. Obviously, it is not wise to use the healing rituals of EOTC exclusively; it is rather recommended the use of scientific treatments in combination. This is because there are proved scientific treatments for different kinds of illnesses. Therefore, the recommendation to the followers of EOTC is, because both treatments do not contrast each other, to use both scientific and church treatments in combination.



Picture 3. Tsebel does not prohibit medication (unknown artist, photographed on April 17/2015 at Immanuel Hospital)

The other recommendation goes to Ministry of Health. Here the study calls for serious attention to consider funding studies about the indigenous healing practices of the country. It is possible to assume either way. If the treatments work, then it is possible to find a better way of

utilizing the indigenous treatments by minimizing problems involved. If the treatments proved to be invalid, and then measures will be taken to save millions from these kinds of treatments so that people will never suffer.

Finally, here under is presentation of a portrait art the researcher found at Immanuel hospital rehabilitation section. The drawing was from an unknown artist. The message is tsebel/Holy water and medications can be used together.

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