Comparative Survey of Sacrifice in Some Major World Religion

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Abstract
In the book of Leviticus chapters 1 – 7 much emphasis is made on sacrificial rites. Again, with personal observation, available primary and secondary sources, the concept (sacrifice) has been critically examined in order to find out the impact on the life of a people. This paper discussed sacrifices done in some major world religions; Islamic religion, Christianity, Budhism and Hinduism. The paper discussed the primary purpose of sacrifice in the major religions, which was to acknowledge God as creator of the universe, the sustainer of life and great provider. It could also be offered to avert the danger of gods or the ancestors while, the purpose of sacrifice in Israel depended so much on their notion of God. To the worshippers in the major religions, God was unique, transcendent, all-powerful, supremely self-sufficient, personal and because he was personal, he called for a response on the part of his people. Finally, the paper reviewed many theories of sacrifice and concluded by comparing sacrifice in four major world religions.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Religion, World Religions, God

Introduction
There is lot of information on sacrifice. The Old Testament scholars like Migrom, Berard, Anderson and Bratcher among others had done extensive work on sacrifice; however their works lack some modern methodological instruments. Sacrifice is a religious phenomenon; therefore the position of the believer should be taken seriously in order to understand the reason(s) why he is involved in sacrificial rites. It is also to avoid misrepresentation of the believer’s view. The phenomenological approach stressed upon comparison as deeply relevant in the study of Religion. The particular method of comparison opened up is the principle of emetic vision; basically that of phenomenological typology is one of the possible ways of comparing sacrifice among religions (Whaling. 33). This method will allow ‘sacrifice’ which is a symbolic act, to speak for itself rather than be forced into any preconceived scheme. The phenomenological approach is at the same time, multi-dimensional, thus allowing the fusion of strengths of cognate approaches like those of social anthropology and cultural history (Ejizu, xx).

The consistent elements of sacrifice have been incorporated into the particular religions and cultures of the world in various and often-complex ways. A few brief observations that may illustrate this variety and complexity are as well given in this paper.
For most of history, man has believed in the objective existence of a world to his own, an unseen world dominated by gods, demons, ghosts and spirits. These might influence his life in innumerable ways. Although for much of the time the workings of the unseen world were unpredictably mysterious, it was nevertheless believed that there were points of contact between the worlds, and that some degree of influence could be exerted at these points. In effect, the two worlds had to be kept in balance, and this involved acknowledgement of his proper position in the universe, and of his as on the unseen powers that controlled life, growth and death. Sacrifice therefore, was the main means by which man sought to make acknowledgement. Sacrifice is a universal phenomenon in the history of religion; it could always be understood as a mode of communication between Man and the unseen powers, and an expression of his intentions in relation to those powers.

Sacrifice is a religious rite in which an object is offered to a divinity in order to establish, maintain, or restore a right relationship of man to the sacred order. It is a complex phenomenon that has been found in the earliest known forms of worship an in all parts of the world. A sacrifice is a religious act belonging to worship in which offering is made to God of some material object belonging to the offerer. This offering is consumed in the ceremony, in order to attain, restore, maintain or celebrate friendly relations with the deity. A sacrifice is meant to express faith, repentance and adoration. The main purpose of the sacrifice is to please the deity and to secure His favour (Mbiti, 1969).

A Survey of Literary Works on Sacrifice

It is necessary to examine the postulations, options, and suggestions of different scholars on sacrifice; with the view to determine where evidences lead to; and the gap created by their works. A lot had been written on sacrifice; however I believe that this work could still be relevant because of the dynamic nature of sacrifice. The literature of sacrifice could be divided into three groups namely; theories of origin of sacrifice; the works of the Biblical scholars, mostly the Old Testament scholars; and the literature of scholars on African traditional sacrifice. The scholars in the first group mostly anthropologists are likes of E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer. Henri Hubert, M. Mauss, G. Van der Leewuw, Evans-Pritchard, W. Schmidt, Adol E. Jensen etc.

For Tylor, since the spirits resident in mature are indifferent to moral considerations and have but a limited sphere of power, they can be enriched by gift and thereby influenced; in order words, they can be bribed. Sacrifice was therefore originally a simple business transaction of ‘do ut des’ (“I give so that you will give in return”), and activity without moral significance. Sacrifice as homage and as abnegation or renunciation developed only gradually out of sacrifice as bribe; but even when it did, the ‘do ut des’ idea continued to be operative for a long time in the later stages of religion, especially wherever sacrifice was conceived as supplying the recipient with food (Gray, 1971: 550).

Many scholars that criticized this view have stressed that in archaic cultures the giving of a gift, even between human beings, is not a purely external transaction but at the same time establishes a personal relation between giver and recipient. Furthermore, the giving of a gift also involves a transfer of magical power for which, in a much generalized sense, they often use the term manna. This personal relation is even more important when a gift is presented to super human beings. Thus, it is understandable that sacrificial gifts of little material value can be quite acceptable. Such gifts need not to be interpreted as efforts to circumvent the higher
beings and their influence. In light of this consideration, later theories of sacrifice gave the ‘do ut des’ formula a deeper meaning and regarded the commercial understanding of it as a degenerate version.

**The Gift as Homage**

Schmidt (1922) understood the sacrificial gift in a way completely different from Tylor. He took as his point of departure the principle that the original meaning of sacrifice can be seen most clearly in firstlings sacrifices of primitive hunters and food-gatherers. These are sacrifices of homage and thanksgiving to the Supreme Being to whom everything belongs and who therefore cannot be enriched by ‘gifts sacrifices’ to the giver of foods that human beings does not produce but simply appropriate for themselves through hunting and gathering. These sacrifices consist in the offering of a portion of food that is often quantitatively small but symbolically important. In nomadic herding cultures this sacrifice of homage and thanksgiving takes the form of an offering of the firstlings of the flocks (young animals) or of the products of the flocks (e.g. milk). In good-growing cultures the fertility of the soil is often attributed to the living dead, especially the ancestors. They therefore become the recipients of the first-fruits sacrifice (Davies, 1985).

Schmidt’s historical reconstruction, according to which firstlings sacrifice are the earliest form of sacrifice, has not been sufficiently demonstrated. From the phenomenological standpoint, however, this kind of sacrifice, in which the gift has symbolic rather than real value and is inspired by a consciousness of dependence and thanksgiving, does exist and must therefore, be taken into account in an general definition of sacrifice.

**Sacrifice as a (Totemic) Communal Meal**

Robertson Smith in 1889 developed a theory of sacrifice for the Semitic world that he regarded as universally applicable. He saw the weakness of Tylor’s theory, which paid insufficient heed to the sacral elements and to the function of establishing or maintaining a community. Under the influence of J. F. McLennan, who had done pioneer work in the study of totemism, Smith proposed a theory of sacrifice whereby the earliest form of religion (among the Semites and elsewhere) was belief in a theriomorphic tribal divinity with which the tribe had a blood relationship (Daly, 1990).

Under ordinary circumstances, this totem animal was not to be killed, but there were rituals in which it was slain and eaten in order to renew the community. In this rite, recipient, offerer, and victim were all of the same nature. Sacrifice was thus originally a meal in which the offerers entered into communion with the totem. As a vivid example of such a ceremony, Smith cites a story told by Nilus of a camel sacrifice offered by the bedouin of the Sinai. It was the transition to a sedentary way of life and the social changes effected by this transition that gave rise to the conception of sacrifice as a gift comparable to the tribute paid to a sovereign, the later relationship being taken as model for the relation to the divinity. The burnt offering, or holocaust, was likewise a late development. Smith’s theory is valuable for its criticism of the grossly mechanistic theory of Tylor and for its emphasis on the communion (community) aspect of sacrifice, as a whole; however, it is unacceptable for a number of reasons. First, the idea of sacrifice as gift is already present in the firstlings sacrifices offered in the egalitarian societies of primitive hunters and food-gatherers; does not, therefore, presuppose the model of the offering of the offering of tribute to a sovereign. Second, it is doubtful that totemism existed among the Semites. Totemism does not occur universally as a stage in the history of human development, as was initially supposed in the
nineteenth century when the phenomenon was first discovered, but rather a specialized
development.

Early theorist of totemism used them, but they do not in fact match the original model of
sacrifice postulated by Smith. Finally, the supposed account by Nilus is not a reliable report
from a hermit living in the Sinai Peninsula but a fiction whose author is unknown shares with
the late Greek novel certain clichés used in depicting barbarians and cannot be regarded as a
reliable historical source (Henninger, 1995). Smith’s theory of sacrifice also contributed to
Freud’s conception of the slaying of the primal father, which Freud saw as the origin of
sacrifice and other institutions, especially the incest taboo conception is therefore subject to
the same criticism.

**Sacrifice as Link between the Profane and Sacred Worlds**

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss in 1889 rejected Tylor’s theory because of its mechanistic
character. They also rejected Smith’s theory because it arbitrarily chose totemism as a
universally applicable point of departure and reconstructed the development of the forms of
sacrifice solely by analogy and without adequate historical basis and, further, because
offerings is an essential element in the concept of sacrifice. Hubert and Mauss themselves
begin with an analysis of the Vedic and Hebraic rituals of sacrifice and, in light of this, define
sacrifice as “a religious act which, by the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of
the moral person who accomplishes it. Or that of certain objects with which he is concerned”
(Goetz. 129).

The victim is not holy nature (as it is in Smith’s theory); the consecration is effected by
destruction, and the connection with the sacral world is completed by a sacred mead. Implied
here is the view (which goes back to Emil Durkheim) of the French sociological school that
the sacral world is simply a projection of society. “Gods are representations of communities,
they are societies thought of ideally and imaginatively…” Sacrifice is an act of abnegation by
which the individual recognizes society; it recalls to particular consciences the presence of
collective forces, represented by their gods” (Evans-Pritchard, 1965: 70).

The objection was raised against this explanation that conclusions universally valid for the
understanding of sacrifice as such, especially in ‘primitive’ societies, couldn’t be drawn from
an analysis of two highly developed forms of sacrifice, even if the two differ among
themselves. Thus Evans-Pritchard, having called the work of Hubert and Mauss “a masterly
analysis of (Henninger, 552) Vedic and Hebrew sacrifice, ‘immediately adds’. But masterly
though it was, its conclusions are an unconvincing piece of sociologistic metaphysics…
They are conclusions deriving from, but posited on brilliant analysis of the mechanism of
sacrifice, or perhaps one should say of its logical structure, or even of its grammar” (Evans-
Pritchard, 70 – 71).

**Sacrifice As Magic**

Hubert and Mauss considered the recipient of sacrifice to be simply a hypostatization of
society itself. Other authors have gone even further, regarding the idea of a recipient as not
essential to the concept of sacrifice. They more or less explicitly presuppose that the idea of
an impersonal force or power, to which the name mana is given more frequently than any
other, is older than the idea of soul and spirit as understood in animism. For this reason, the
idea of sacrifice as a purely objective magical action (the triggering of a magical force that is
thought to be concentrated especially in the blood), accompanied by destruction of a
sacrificial gift (e.g. the slaying of an animal.), must be the basic form, or at least one of the basic forms of sacrifice. Sacrifices of this kind are said to be ‘predeistic’.

Phenomenologists, who claim in principle to be simply describing phenomena and not asserting any kind of development, also use expressions such as this, which imply a temporal succession. In this view the concept of sacrifice as gift is a secondary development in which gifts to the dead played an important role (Loisy, 1920). According to Gerardus van der Leeuw (1920-1921), sacrifice conceived as gift constitutes a transfer of magical force; the ‘do ut des’ formula describes not a commercial transaction but the release of a current of force (do ut possis dare, “I give power to you so that you can give it back to me”) (Beckwith and Selman, 1995).

The recipient is strengthened by the gift; the two participants, deity and human beings are simultaneously givers and receivers, but the central role belongs to the gift itself and to the current of force that it sets in motion. This theory then combines to some extent the gift theory and the communion theory, but it does so from the standpoint of magic. There do in fact exist rituals of slaying and destruction in which no personal recipient is involved and that are regarded as operating automatically; there is no evidence, however, that such rituals are older than sacrifice in the sense described earlier. The examples constantly adduced come to a very great extent from high cultures (e.g. Roman religion). An especially typical form occurs in Brahmanic speculation, where sacrifice is looked upon as a force that ensures the continuation of a cosmic process to which even the gods are subject. Other examples come from food-growing peoples. When human beings contribute by their own activity to the production of food, their consciousness of dependence on higher powers is less than in an economy based on the appropriation of goods not produced by humans. Thus it is easier to adopt the idea that the higher powers can be influenced and even coerced by sacrifice and other rites. For this reason, the firstlings sacrifices of hunters and food-gatherers do not fit in with speculations that give priority to magic, nor do such speculations take account of such sacrifices, and thus the full extent of the phenomenon of sacrifice is lost from view. Sacrifice and magic should rather be considered as phenomena that differ in nature; they have indeed influenced each other in many ways, but neither can be derived from the other. The personal relation that is established by a gift is fully intelligible bringing in an element of magic (van Ball, 163, 164, 167, 177 – 178)

Sacrifice As Reenactment of Primordial Events

According to Jenses (1951), sacrifice cannot be understood as gift; its original meaning is rather to be derived from certain myths found in the cultures of cultivators, especially in Indonesia and Oceania. These myths maintain that a primordial time there were as yet no mortal human beings but only divine or semidivine beings (dema beings); this state ended with the killing of a dema divinity from whose body came the plants useful to humans. The ritual slaying of humans and animals, headhunting, cannibalism, and other blood rites are ceremonial repetitions of that killing in primordial time; they affirm and guarantee the present world order, with its continuous destruction and re-creation, which would otherwise be unable to function. Once the myth had been largely forgotten or was no longer seen to be connected with ritual, rites involving slaying were reinterpreted as a giving of a gift to divinities (who originally played no role in these rites, because the primordial divine being had been claim); blood sacrifices thus became “meaningless survivals” of the “meaningful rituals of killing” of the earlier food growing cultures. Magical actions are likewise degenerate fragments of the originally meaningful whole formed by the mythically based
rituals of killing. This theory has some points in common with Freud’s theory of the murder of the primal father and with the theory according to which sacrifice originated in the self-sacrifice of a divine being in the primordial time of myth. The common weakness of all these theories is that they take account only of blood sacrifices, whereas in the firstlings sacrifices of hunters and foo-gatherers there is no ritual killing, and bloodless offerings are widespread in many other cultures as well (Henninger, 553).

**Sacrifice as Anxiety Reaction**

In the theories we have discussed above, except for the theory of sacrifice as a gift in homage, firstlings sacrifices receive either inadequate attention or none at all. Vittorio Lanternari in 1976 on the other hand, provides a formal discussion of these, but gives an interpretation of them that is completely different from that of Schmidt. Lanternari’s point of departure is the analysis of a certain form of neurosis provided by some psychologists; according to this analysis, this kind of neurosis finds expression in the undoing of successes earlier achieved and is at the basis of certain religious delusions. Lanternari maintain that a similar psychic crisis occurs among ‘primitives’ when they are confronted with success (hunters after a successful hunt, food cultivators after the harvest) and that this crisis leads them to undertake an at least symbolic destruction of what they had gained. According to Lanternari, then, a firstlings sacrifice is the result of anxiety, whereas for Schmidt it is an expression of gratitude. Hunters feel the slaying of the animal to be a sacrilege, which explains the rites of Siberian peoples that seek reconciliation with the slain animal and a repudiation of the killing. For cultivators the sacrilege consists in the violation of the earth, which is the dwelling of the dead, by the cultivation of the soil; they feel anxiety at the thought of the dead and worry about future fertility, even if the harvest is a good one. It is a secondary matter whether the symbolic destruction of the gain is accomplished by offering food to a higher being or by simply doing away with a portion of it. Critics of the psychopathological explanation have pointed out the essential differences between the behavior of neurotics and the religious behavior exhibited in firstlings sacrifices. In the psychically ill (those who are defeated by success), efforts at liberation are purely individual; they are not part of a historical tradition, are not organically integrated into a cultural setting, and do not lead to inner deliverance. In religious life, on the contrary, efforts to surmount a crisis are organically inserted into tradition and culture, tend to restore psychic balance, and in fact achieve such a balance. For this reason the ‘primitive’ people in question are not defeated by life, as neurotics are; on the contrary, their way of life has stood the test of ages. Whatever judgement one may pass on the value of the underlying religious views and modes of behavior of these peoples, one cannot characterize them as pathological; for this reason a psychopathological explanation of sacrifice must also be rejected. This is not to deny that fear or anxiety plays a significant part in certain forms of sacrifice; such feelings result primarily from the ideas of the offerers about the character of the recipient in question (Henninger. 176 – 180).

**Sacrifice as a Mechanism for Diverting Violence**

Whereas Jensen derived rituals involving killing, which were subsequently reinterpreted as ‘sacrifices’, from certain myths of food-growing cultures, Girard (1986) has proposed a more comprehensive theory that explains not only sacrifice but the sacred itself as resulting from a focusing of violet impulses upon a substitute object, a scapegoat. According to Girard, the peaceful coexistence of human beings cannot be taken for granted; when the desires of
humans fasten upon the same object, rivalries arise and with them a tendency toward violence that endangers the existing order and its norms.

This tendency can be neutralized, however, if the reciprocal aggressions are focused on a marginal object, a scapegoat. The scapegoat is thereby rendered sacred: it is seen as accursed but also as bringing salvation. Thus the focusing of violence on an object rise to the sacred and all that results from it (taboos, a new social order). Whereas the violence was originally focused on a randomly chosen object, in sacrifice the concentration takes a strict ritual form; as a result, internecine aggressions are constantly being diverted to the outside and cannot operate destructively within the community. At bottom, therefore, sacrifice lacks any moral character. Eventually it was eliminated by the critique of sacrifice that began in the Hebrews Scriptures and, most fully, by the fact that Jesus freely made himself a ‘scapegoat’ and in so doing transcended the whole realm of sacrifice. Girard supports his thesis by appealing to the phenomenon of blood sacrifice, which (especially in the form of human sacrifice) is a constant in the history of religions, and by citing the evidence of rivalry and violence, leading even to fratricide, that is supplied by the mythical traditions (especially myths of the origin of things) and also by history (persecution of minorities as scapegoats, etc).

A critique of this theory can in part repeat the arguments already advanced against Jensen. Apart from the fact that it does not distinguish between sacrifice and eliminatory rites, Girard’s concept of sacrifice is too narrow, for he supports it by reference solely to stratified associates and high cultures. It could at most explain blood sacrifice involving killing, but not sacrifice as such and certainly not the sacred as such, since the idea of the sacred exists even among peoples (e.g. in Australia) who do not practice sacrifice. The value of the theories here reviewed is that each of them highlights a certain aspect of sacrifice. It is unlikely that we will ever have a sure answer to the question of whether there was a single original form of sacrifice or whether, on the contrary, various forms developed independently (Henninger, 554).

Comparative Survey in some Major Religions

Sacrifice in Islam

In Islam sacrifice, commonly known as Qurbani, means slaughter of a permissible animal in the name of Allah on the 10th, 11th or 12th of the Islamic month of Zul Hijjah. It is Sunnah (a symbolic obligation) practised by Holy Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) in an essential religious rite in memory of the sacrifice performed by Prophet Abraham. God put Abraham to a most difficult trial, the details of which are described in the Qur’an. "O my Lord! Grant me (Abraham) a righteous (son)!" So we gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. "Then, when the (the son) reached the age of serious work with him, he said: "O my son I see in a vision that I offer you in sacrifice; Now say what your view is!" (The son) said; "O My father! Do as you are commanded; You will find me if God so wills, one practising patience and constancy!" So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), and he had made him prostrate on his face (for sacrifice), we called out to him; "O Abraham! You have already fulfilled the vision!" Thus indeed do we reward those who do right? "For this was obviously a trial and we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice; and we left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times; Peace and salutation' to Abraham! (37:100-109 (Vivekanand, 377)."
This is the origin of the Islamic precept of sacrifice in fulfillment of God's command provided in the Qur'an: "... to your Lord turn in prayer and sacrifice." (108:2).

The aim of sacrifice, like all other fundamentals of Islam, is to imbibe piety and self righteousness. It also promotes the spirit of sacrifice for a right cause. To explain its purpose, God says in the Qur'an. "It is not their meat, nor their blood, that reaches God, it is their piety that reaches God (22:37).

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) said: "On the 10th of Zul-Hiyah, there is no better act in the view of Allah than shedding the blood (of Slaughtered animals). And verily sacrifice earns the approbation of Allah even before the drop of blood (of the slaughtered animal) falls on the ground. Hence you should offer it in good spirit. For every hair of the sacrificial animal, there is a blessing." We propose to deal here with the precepts and practices pertaining to Qurbani, according to Hanafi Fiqh. Upon whom due Qurbani, like Zakat, is essential for one who has the financial means and savings that remain surplus to his own needs over the year. It is essential for one's own self (Vivekanand. 379). However, a slaughter of animal can also be offered for each member of one’s family. It may be offered, though it is not essential, for one's deceased relations, too, in the hope of benediction and blessings for the departed souls. Generally, slaughter of goats, sheep, rams, cows, and camels is offered. Sharing it is permissible for seven persons to share the sacrifice of a cow or a camel on the condition that no one's share is less than one seventh and their intent is to offer Qurbani (Vivekanand. 380)

Distribution of meat One should eat the meat of the sacrifice; give it to relations and friends, (to non-Muslims also) and also to the poor in charity. One third should be given in charity, but if it were less it will not be a sin.

Injunction as to sacrifice giver
It is commendable that one who intends to offer a sacrifice should refrain from having a haircut, a shave, and pruning of nails, from the 1st of Zul-Hijjah (up to the time he has performed the sacrifice). Intention in the first instance, one who proposes to offer sacrifice must make an intention to that effect.

Method of Sacrifice
A slaughtered animal should be laid on its left side seeing Ka'bah and its throat cut open with a sharp knife, and its blood allowed to drain. In the case of a camel, it should be allowed to remain standing after its left for leg has been stringed. A sharp spear should then be thrust in its breast and in both sides of its neck and the blood allowed to drain. The best days of the year to a Muslim, is the first 10 days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah. Allah rewards any act of worship offered during the days; much more generously than the same act done on any day. The Prophet says that these days are better than 10 days spent on a campaign of struggle (Jihad) for the cause of Allah. No day is superior in the sight of Allah to the day of Arafat.

Id-ul-Zuhu - A Call for Sacrifice
The two festivals enjoying sanctions from the Shariat are Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Zuhu. In the strict sense of the term these are the only two Islamic festivals. Some others, which are popular among the Muslims, are prompted by local, national and social traditions, which have no religious background. Id-ul-Zuhu means an Id of sacrifice. It is often referred to as Baqra-Id, which is incorrect. The Islamic name is Id-ul-Zuha, which gives importance to sacrifice.
This is observed on the 10th day of Zilhij, the last month of the lunar calendar. On this day, congregational prayers are offered along with qurbani (sacrifice) and, good offered to others. In short, spread the word about Allah (Vivekanand. 388). Both these festivals, however, are not meant for fun and games or mindless boisterousness. They are there to remind the believers of solemn acts. The month of Ramadan is for patience and tolerance, which is like a training course in self-discipline, at the end of which comes Id-ul-Fitr. This highlights that the Muslims have successfully completed the month-long regimen of fasts and denial. Id-ul-Zuha also has a similar tale. It is a lesson in sacrifice exhorting the believers that they have to be prepared for self-sacrifice, without which the responsibilities of life cannot be fulfilled and neither can one be among Allah's chosen few.

Sacrificing an animal is only a lesson in sacrifice. The personal sacrifice should be made in particular circumstances. But even in our lives there is always enough scope for sacrifice. At times a leader has to deny his personal ambitions for the community. At others, some have to sacrifice personal needs for the others. Sometimes the present generation has to live in difficulties only to provide a better life for the future generations. Or one group has to surrender its happiness for that of the others. Id-ul-Zuha is a part of Hajj. Whatever is performed during the annual pilgrimage is but a recreation of Hazrat Ibrahim's days. He wanted to usher in a revolution, that's why he gave up everything for Allah. For this, whatever he had to undergo, the present day pilgrims relive. The message of Id-ul-Zuha is "get ready for sacrifice". Like the animal sacrifice one should be ready to give up everything for common good. In fact, animal sacrifice is a vow for personal sacrifice. And it becomes a supreme sacrifice only when one is able to do it in one's life.

**Sacrifice in Christianity**

Christianity knows but one sacrifice, the sacrifice that was once offered by Christ in a bloody manner on the tree of the Cross. But in order to apply to individual men in sacrificial form through a constant sacrifice the merits of redemption definitively won by the sacrifice of the Cross-, the Redeemer Himself instituted the Holy Sacrifice to be an unbloody continuation and representation of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary. This Eucharistic sacrifice and its relation to the sacrifice on the cross are central to Christianity. In view of the central position, which the sacrifice of the cross holds in the whole economy of salvation, we must briefly discuss the reality of this sacrifice.

**The Dogma of the Sacrifice of the cross**

The universal conviction of Christianity was expressed by the Synod of Ephesus (431), when it declared that the Incarnate Logos "offered Himself to God the Father for us for an odour of sweetness" a dogma explicitly confirmed by the council of Trent (Sess. XXII cap. i-ii; can. ii-iv). The dogma is indeed nothing else than a clear echo of Holy Writ and tradition. If all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and especially the bloody sacrifice, and so many other types of the bloody sacrifice of the Cross (Cf. Heb.10), and if the idea of vicarious atonement was present in the Mosaic bloody sacrifices, it follows immediately that the death on the Cross, as the antitype, must possess the character of a vicarious sacrifice of atonement. A striking confirmation of this reasoning is found in the periscope of Isaiah concerning God's "just servant," wherein three truths are clearly expressed:

1. The substitution of the innocent Messiah for guilty mankind; (Bannwart, 122),
2. The deliverance of the guilty from sin and punishment through the suffering of the Messiah;
(c) the manner of this suffering and satisfaction through the bloody death on the Cross (cf. Isa. 53: 4ff).

The Messianity of the passage, which was unjustifiably contested by the Socinians and Rationalists, is proved by the express testimony of the New Testament (cf. Matt. 8: 17; Mark. 15: 28; Luke. 22: 37; Acts. 8: 28ff; 1 Peter. 2: 22ff). The prophecy found its fulfillment in Christ. For, although His whole life was a continuous sacrifice, yet the sacrifice culminated in His bloody death on the cross, as He Himself says: "He came to give His life as redemption for many" (Matt. 20: 28). Three factors are here emphasized: sacrifice, vicarious offering, and expiation. The phrase, "to give his life" is, as numerous parallel passages attest, a biblical expression for sacrifice; the words, "for many", express the idea of vicarious sacrifice, while the term, "redemption", and declares the object of the expiation (Eph. 5: 2; II Cor. 5: 21). As in the Old Testament the expiatory power of the sacrifice lay in the blood of the victim, so also the expiation for the forgiveness of sins is ascribed to the "Blood of the New Testament", There is thus nothing more precious than the Blood of Christ: "... you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver . . ., but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled" (I Peter. 1: 18ff), While the foregoing considerations refute the assertion of modern "critics" that the expiatory sacrifice of Christ was first introduced by Paul into the Gospel, it is still true that the bloody sacrifice of the Cross occupied the central position in the Pauline preaching. He speaks of the Redeemer as Him "whom God hath proposed to be propitiation, through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3: 25).

Referring to the types of the Old Testament, the Epistle to the Hebrews especially elaborates this idea: "For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto, cleanse our conscience from dead works" (Heb. 9: 3). With the multiplicity and variety, the inefficacy and inadequacy of the Mosaic bloody sacrifices is contrasted the uniqueness and efficacy of the sacrifice of the Cross for the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9: 28; "So also was Christ once offered to exhaust the sins of many"; 10: 10: "In the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once"). The bloody death on the Cross is specially characterized as a "sin offering": "But this one man sacrifice for sins, forever sitteth on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10: 12; cf. II Cor. 5: 21). The "heavenly sacrifice" of Christ, the existence of which is assumed by Thalhofer, Zill, and Schoulza, cannot be deduced from the Epistle to the Hebrew. In heaven Christ no longer sacrifices Himself, but simply, through His "priestly intercession", offers the sacrifice the Cross (Heb. 7: 25; cf. Rom. 8: 34).

While the Apostolic Fathers and the apologist Justin Martyr merely repeat the Biblical doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ, Irenaeus was the first of the early Fathers to consider the sacrifice of the Cross from the standpoint of a vicarious satisfaction". This expression, however, did not come into frequent use in ecclesiastical writings during the first ten centuries. Irenaeus emphasizes the fact that only a God-Man could wash away the guilt of Adam, that Christ actually redeemed mankind by His Blood and offered "His Soul for our souls and His Flesh for our flesh" ("Adv. haer.", V, i, 1, in P. G. VII, 1121), Though Irenaeus bases the redemption primarily on .the Incarnation, through which our vitiated nature was restored to its original holiness ("mystical interpretation" of the Greeks), he nevertheless ascribes in a special manner to the bitter Passion of the Saviour the same effects that he ascribes to the Incarnation: viz. the making of man like unto God, the forgiveness of sin, and
the annihilation of death (Adv. haer., n, xx, 3; III, xviii, 8). It was not so much "under the influence of the Graeco-Oriental mysteries of expiation" (Harnack) as in close association with Paul and the Mosaic sacrificial ritual, that Origen regarded the death on the Cross in the light of the vicarious sacrifice of expiation. But, since he maintained preferentially the Biblical view of the "ransom and redemption", he was the originator of the one-sided "old patristic theory of the redemption".

Sacrifice in Hinduism

While very uncommon today and looked down upon by many Hindus, animal sacrifice was a common part of the traditional worship of Vedic Hinduism. This ritualistic sacrifice of an animal is called Bali. Often times, vegetable and fruit sacrifices are given, and most all Hindus find these acceptable. These sacrifices are taken to the temple, blessed by the deity, and then bought back to the home for consumption by the family. Hindus feel the goal of sacrifice is to begin contact with the divine in order to start a relationship ("Vedic Hinduism and sacrifice," (Ehrlich, 18). Early Vedic peoples sacrificed animals as a means to feed their ancestors in the after world or Yama, in exchange for good blessings for themselves from the gods. While human sacrifices were outlawed in 1780 in Nepal, the world's only Hindu kingdom, animal sacrifices are allowed to satisfy the god Kali. Only male castrated animals are sacrificed. They are sacrificed for many events such as to sanctify a wedding, to keep a newly bought car from crashing by sprinkling blood on it, and many more reasons (Ehrlich, 19).

Today, by some reports, it is even estimated that over 100 human sacrifices occur each year in India in honor of Kali. Kali is the manifestation of Shakti, which is a wife of Shiva. Shiva is one of the most popular Hindu gods. Tens of thousands of goats, pigs, water buffalo, ducks and chickens are all sacrificed to Kali each year in temples that flow with blood, The Hindu caste system dictates what animals a particular people can sacrifice. The upper caste or Brahmins sacrifice goats, while the lower castes sacrifice less expensive chickens (Anguez., 636).

Sacrifice in Buddhism

Though Buddhism originated in India, it unlike Hinduism does not condone and never has condoned human or animal sacrifice. Some Buddhists in Nepal occasionally sacrifice animals. Buddhists consider sacrifice to be unethical and cruel; it opposes the law of ahimsa, or non-injury. However, there are accounts in the Buddha's previous lives of his acts of self-sacrifice. These self-sacrifices, or ethical sacrifices, are acts of self-discipline for the benefit of the individual and not for the benefit, appeasement, or approval of some sort of god. Buddhists do not believe in a Supreme Being or god. However, some acts such as burning incense to the Buddha do occur in Buddhism.

Conclusion

As earlier observed in this paper, sacrifice is a religious rite in which an object is offered to a divinity in order to establish, maintain, or restore a right relationship of man to the sacred order. It is a complex phenomenon that has been found in the earliest known forms of worship and in all parts of the world. From personal point of view, sacrifice is gift but a gift to which God had an imperative right, since anything that people could offer had first come from the bountiful divine hand. In returning a part of God's property to him, either as in votive, expiation or propitiation sacrifice etc, people symbolically acknowledged God's right to it all, and thereby acquired a right to use the rest of it, under God, for their own purposes.
From another point of view, since the offerings were staples (meat and vegetables) by which people sustained their lives, the victim represented the life and being of the one offering. In sacrificing, a person symbolically surrendered to God, and God, by accepting, bound Himself in some way. The essence of sacrifice did not consist in the destruction of the victim but rather an act of worship to God or the object of worship.

References

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