The Way of Sacrifice in Different Cultures and the Logic Behind

Introduction:
Sacrifice is the submission of food, objects or the lives of animals to a higher purpose or to God or the gods as a work of propitiation or worship. An animal sacrifice in Arabic is called ḏabiḥa or Qurban. The term may have roots from the Jewish term Korban; in some places such as in Pakistan, qurbani is always used for Islamic animal sacrifice. In the Islamic context, an animal sacrifice referred to as ḏabiḥa meaning "sacrifice as a ritual" is offered only in Eid ul-Adha. The sacrificial animal may be a lamb, a sheep, a goat, a camel, or a cow.
Human Sacrifice

Human sacrifice is the act of killing one or more human beings as a part of a religious ritual. Human sacrifice has been practised in various cultures throughout the history. Victims were typically ritually killed in a manner that was supposed to please or appease gods, spirits or the deceased. Closely related practices found in some tribal societies are cannibalism and headhunting. By the Iron Age, with the associated developments in religion, human sacrifice was becoming less common throughout the Old World, and came to be looked down upon as barbaric in pre-modern times. Blood Capital punishment has also been described as a form of ritual human sacrifice. In India, Sati, the immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, continued well into the 19th century, but is now very rare.

Logic
Human sacrifice is intended to bring good fortune and to pacify the gods. Human sacrifice can also have the intention of winning the gods' favour in warfare.

Animal Sacrifice
Animal sacrifice is the ritual killing of an animal as a part of a religion. It is practiced by many religions as a means of appeasing a god or gods or changing the course of nature. Animal sacrifice has appeared in almost all cultures, including the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Aztecs. Animal sacrifice is also found in the Cuban religion called Palo.

Sacrifice in Islamic Culture
On the occasion of Eid ul Adha, which falls during the period of Hajj to Mecca, wealthy Muslims all over the world perform the Sunnah of Prophet Ibrahim by sacrificing a cow or sheep. The meat is then divided into three equal parts. One part is retained by the person who performs the sacrifice. The second is given to his relatives. The third part is distributed to the poor. The Holy Qur'an states that the sacrifice has nothing to do with the blood and gore (Qur'an 22:37: "It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches God. It is your piety that reaches Him..."). Rather, it is done to help the poor and in remembrance of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael at God's command.
Logic
Muslims revive the sunnah of Prophet Ibrahim A.S every year, in which God tested the faith of Ibrahim by ordering him to sacrifice his beloved son Ishmael (Ismail). The Prophet Ibrahim A.S used to see a dream, about sacrificing His son, Prophet Ismail A.S and being a Prophet, He had to fulfill his dream. He informed His son about the dream, about the Will of His Allah, and His patient son, agreed for sacrificing his life for Allah. But the loving Lord, Allah, who is most merciful, Who is really kind, didn’t want this way. It was just a trial. The life of Prophet Ismail A.S was saved, being compensated with another sacrifice, the sacrifice of a sheep. Over 100 million animals are slaughtered annually during Eid ul-Adha across the Islamic world within 3 days of Eid ul-Adha.

Sacrifice in Hinduism

Types of Sacrifice
1. Yagya
2. Ashwamedha.
3. Human Sacrifice for Kali Mata

1. Yagya

The Sanskrit Yagya is often translated as sacrifice especially used to describe the offering of ghee, grains, spices, and wood into a fire along with the chanting of sacred mantras. In Vedic times, Yagya commonly included the sacrifice of milk, ghee, curd, grains, and the soma plant—animal offerings were less common. In modern times, Yagya is often performed at weddings and funerals, and in personal worship. Classical Hinduism as it emerged in the medieval period de-emphasizes animal sacrifice, and indeed any meat processing, based on the doctrine of ahimsa. Such practices as are still current are mostly associated with either Shaktism or with local tribal traditions.
2. Ashwamedha

The Ashvamedha (Sanskrit horse sacrifice) was one of the most important royal rituals of Vedic religion, performed by Jai Singh II of Amber in 1716. However, the practice of animal sacrifice is rare and distasteful to the vast majority of modern Hindus. The Upanishads describe ascetic austerities as an “inner Ashvamedha”, as opposed to the “outer” royal ritual performed in the physical world, in keeping with the general tendency of Vedanta to move away from priestly ritual towards spiritual introspection.

3. Human Sacrifice for Kali Mata

Kali, a ferocious slayer of evil in Hindu mythology, the goddess is said to have an insatiable appetite for blood. With the law on killing people more strictly enforced today, ersatz substitutes now stand in for humans when sacrifice is required. Most Kali temples have settled on large pumpkins to represent a human body; other followers slit the throats of two-meter-tall human effigies made of flour, or of animals such as goats.

Logic

Sacrifice in Hinduism can also refer to personal surrender through acts of inner and outer worship. The offerings can represent devotion, aspiration, and seeds of past karma. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (a mystical appendix to the Shatapatha Brahmana and likely the oldest of the Upanishads) has a creation myth where Mṛtyu "Death" takes the shape of a horse, and includes an identification of the Ashvamedha with the Sun. Then he became a horse (ashva), because it swelled (ashvat), and was fit for sacrifice (medhya); and this is why the horse-sacrifice is called Ashva-medha. Therefore the sacrificers offered up the purified horse belonging to Prajapati, (as dedicated) to all the deities. Verily the shining sun is the Asvamedha, and his body is the year; Agni is the sacrificial fire (arka), and these worlds are his bodies.

Sacrifice in Christianity

In Christian tradition, bread and wine, offered in a liturgical ritual, transforms into the "Real Presence," (the literal Body and Blood of Jesus Christ). Receiving the Eucharist is a central part of the religious life of Catholic and Orthodox Christians. Most Protestant traditions do not share the belief in the Real Presence but otherwise are varied, for example, they may believe that in the bread and wine, Christ is present only spiritually, not in the sense of a change in substance or that the bread and wine of communion is a merely symbolic reminder. Although early Christians in the Roman Empire were accused of being cannibals, practices such as human sacrifice were abhorrent to them Christ's crucifixion is comparable to animal sacrifice on a large scale as His death serves as atonement for all of man's sins. Sacrifice of a lamb, or less commonly a rooster, is a common practice in Armenian Church. This tradition, called matagh, is believed to stem from pre-Christian pagan rituals.
Logic
Christ is referred to by his apostles as "the Lamb of God", the one to whom all sacrifices pointed. In Christianity, it is believed that the sacrifice of Jesus, whose sacrifice and resurrection allowed the sins of mankind to be washed away. The beliefs of most Christian denominations hinge upon the substitutionary atonement of the sacrifice of Jesus, which is necessary for salvation in the afterlife. Each individual person must participate in, and/or receive the benefits of, this sacrifice for the atonement of their sins. Early Christian sources explicitly described this event as a sacrificial offering, with Jesus in the role of both priest and victim, although starting with the Enlightenment.

Sacrifice in Judaism
Many Jewish Sacrifices were either blood sacrifices or bloodless offerings grain and wine). Blood sacrifices were divided into the burn offerings in which the whole animal was burnt, guilt offerings in which part was burnt and part left for the priest and peace offerings in which similarly only part of the animal was burnt and the rest eaten in ritually pure conditions. The Prophets point out that prayer and sacrifices are only a part of serving God and need to be accompanied by inner morality and goodness.

The Samaritans, a group historically related to the Jews, practice animal sacrifice in accordance with the Law of Moses. In Kapparot, a rooster literally becomes a religious and sacred vessel and is sacrificed on the afternoon before Yom Kippur. After the destruction of the Second Temple, ritual sacrifice ceased except among the Samaritans. The teachings of the Torah and Tanakh reveal the Israelites's familiarity with human sacrifices, as exemplified by the near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham and some believe, the actual sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, while many believe that Jephthah's daughter was committed for life in service equivalent to a nunnery of the day, as indicated by her lament over her "weep for my virginity" and never having known a man.

Logic
The logic behind sacrificing an animal was as a punishment for the rebellion against God inherent the sin, but God mercifully accepts the animal sacrifice in his or her place. Furthermore, it is considered fitting that an animal is used as a sacrifice because at the moment of sin, the individual in question disregarded his elevated human soul, effectively acting as an animal. The Jews would believe that sacrifice was a necessary part of the relationship between God and man. The purpose of the sacrifice being the expiation of the sins of the man as the chicken symbolically receives the man's sins, which is based on the reconciliation of Isaiah.

Sacrifice in Maya Culture
Animal sacrifice and blood-letting was a common feature in many Maya festivals and rituals. A large number of their festivals and rituals on fixed days of the year involved animal sacrifices and blood letting. Human sacrifice was far less common, being tied to events such as ill fortune, warfare and the dedication of new leaders or temples. The practice was also far less common than in the neighboring Aztec societies. The Maya people would sacrifice their prisoners. The prisoners were most often from neighboring tribes. Human sacrifice was a religious activity in Maya culture, involving either the killing of animals or the bloodletting by members of the community, in rituals superintended by priests. Sacrifice has been a feature of almost all pre-modern
societies at some stage of their development and for broadly the same reason: to propitiate or fulfill a perceived obligation towards the gods.

**Logic**
The logic behind sacrifice was that the only way for the sun to rise was for them to sacrifice someone or something everyday to the gods. Their prisoners were mainly attackers from other people. Mayans people believed that the Gods wanted blood. They had many different ceremonies. One was how they ripped a sacrifices heart out while he is still alive so it will beat for the Gods.

**Sacrifice in Aztecs Culture**
The Aztecs were particularly noted for practicing human sacrifice on a large scale; an offering to Huitzilopochtli would be made to restore the blood he lost, as the sun was engaged in a daily battle. Human sacrifices would prevent the end of the world that could happen on each cycle of 52 years. In the 1487 re-consecration of the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan some estimate that 80,400 prisoners were sacrificed. According to Ross Hassig, author of *Aztec Warfare*, "between 10,000 and 80,400 people" were sacrificed in the ceremony. Tlaloc would require weeping boys in the first months of the Aztec calendar to be ritually murdered.

![Aztec burial of a sacrificed child at Tlatelolco.](image)

**Method of Sacrifice**
The Aztecs would first take a knife and open his stomach and rip out the heart and show it to the sun. then the priest would occasionally chop the head off for the god the sun the Aztec human sacrifice was they killed innocent people for there empire and for there gods and goddess.

**Sacrifice in Buddhism**
Human sacrifice, including cannibalism, was thought practiced in Tibet prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the 7th century. The prevalence of human sacrifice in medieval Buddhist Tibet is less clear. The Lamas, as professing Buddhists, could not condone blood sacrifices, and they replaced the human victims with effigies made from dough. The Buddha condemned ritual animal sacrifice. The First Precept of Buddhism prohibits any type of killing. More specifically, Brahmanism, the dominant religion in northern India at the time of the Buddha included sacrifice (Yajna) including animal slaughter. The Tipitaka records one sacrifice where 'five hundred bulls, five hundred steers and numerous heifers, goats and rams were brought to the sacrificial post for slaughter’. The Buddha criticized these bloody rituals as being "wasteful, ineffective and cruel"
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