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K.r.s.na, Buddha and Christ : reformers of sacrifice.

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KRISHNA, BUDDHA, AND CHRIST:
REFORMERS OF SACRIFICE

by

John Merritt Ostrander

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Religious Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor

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1976
ABSTRACT

Of all religious activities, perhaps the most universal is sacrifice, a phenomenon that has occupied the centre of cultic expression throughout the history of religions. Initially, sacrifice had been a simple expression of man's self-surrender; a gift to the Divine. Yet with the rise of civilization, the process of institutionalization effected religious phenomena. Sacrifice became specialized, and a whole realm of particular actions developed around this special cultic activity. Sacrificial paraphernalia, formulae, regulations, treatises, etc., were deemed necessary in order to ensure a successful offering. Priestly supervision dominated the cult, and what had at one time been a simple gesture became a complicated ritual institution.

In India and in Israel, the sacrificial cult received some sharp criticism from the Upaniṣadic thinkers and from the (pre-exilic) prophets, respectively. The polemic of these "anti-ritualists" centred on the spiritual invalidity of the sacrificial system. These religious thinkers suggested various substitutes, replacing ritual sacrifice with contemplative and moral behaviour.

An analysis of the texts reveals that Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ articulated their attitudes towards the sacrificial cult, somewhat along the lines of the anti-ritual Upaniṣadic and prophetic thinkers. Yet instead of completely opposing sacrificial activities, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ recommended sacrificial behaviour. They have altered the meaning of sacrifice by expanding its content. Instead of a sacrificial system comprised of particular, external rituals, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ formulated religious systems in which all actions are rendered sacrificial. Actions are sanctified if the proper spiritual intention is operative; according to these three individuals, true sacrifice consists of completely unselfish behaviour.
Textual study indicates that Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ have provided a synthesis which reconciles the spiritual intent of the former sacrificial cult with the insights of its critics. The true sacrifice recommended by these three reformers enabled worship to flourish, but cultic regulations, complex and detailed rituals, and priestly government were not essential to this type of sacrifice. Anyone could worship by living an unselfish, sacrificial life.

Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ's reform of sacrifice can be seen as a factor contributing to their popularity. Since they have abolished the constraints of the esoteric sacrificial cult, worship is thus rendered more available to the masses. The people could now offer true sacrifice patterned on the lives and teachings of these founders.

The phenomenon of sacrificial reform provides a pivot which facilitates a viable comparative study of Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Christ. A comparison of these three important individuals becomes fruitful because their backgrounds, creative ingenuity, and messages afford an understanding of their roles. These reformers of sacrifice have initiated a great transformation in the spirituality of the world.
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J.M.O.
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ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
AN Āṅguttara Nikāya
BG Bhagavad Gītā
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Ch. U. Chāndogyya Upanisad
DH Dhammapada
DN Dīgha Nikāya
ERF Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
Mund. U. Mundaka Upanisad
PTS Pali Text Society
RGG Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
RV Rg Veda
SBB Sacred Books of the Buddhists
SN Samyutta Nikāya
Sn Sutta Nipāta
TS Taittirīya Samhitā
yat karoṣi yad aṣnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dādasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
sa ṣa kurusva madarpnām

— Bhagavad Gītā 9:27

("Whatever you do, whatever you eat,
whatever you offer, whatever you give,
whatever austerities you practice;
do that, Arjuna, as an offering to Me.")

hitvā aham brāhmaṇa dārūdāham
ajjhattam eva jalayāmi jotim

— Saṃyutta-Nikāya 1, 169

("I lay no wood, brāhmaṇa, for fires
on altars. Only within burns the
fire I kindle.")

poreuthentes de mathete ti estin
eleon thelo kai ou thusian

— Matthew 9:13

("Go and learn the meaning of the words:
'What I want is' love, not sacrifice."
INTRODUCTION

This study explores the attitudes that Krsna, Buddha, and Christ held towards ritual sacrifice. They can be seen as spokesmen who have emerged from a tradition of anti-ritual thought. Yet they do not completely reject "sacrifice"; on the contrary, they recommend sacrificial behaviour. They can be seen as "synthesizers" who have recognized the spiritual importance of sacrifice, yet at the same time have expressed their disdain for the mechanical ritual of the priestly cult.

The synthetic character of the sacrificial systems professed by Krsna, Buddha, and Christ consists in their reconciliation of two extremes, namely, the priestly cult and the prophetic rejection of it. Both in India and in Israel, sacrifice was the prominent mode of religious activity. It was, needless to say, held in high esteem; it had a sacrosanct character. Subsequently, however, religious thinkers voiced their criticisms of the sacrificial cult and questioned its spiritual validity. We now have a dichotomy; on the one hand, the sacrificial tradition maintained the importance of ritual sacrifice, and on the other, the anti-ritual thinkers opposed its performance. This dichotomy is resolved by our three reformers who recommend the performance of sacrifice and at the same time share the anti-ritual sentiment of the critical sages and prophets. But this is not merely a compromise. Krsna, Buddha, and Christ have not merely concerned themselves with offering a solution, a mean between
the "pros" and "cons" of sacrifice; they have done much more. They have altered the meaning of sacrifice, and have prescribed a sacrificial system of human behaviour centred on the true essence of sacrifice itself.

Etymologically, the word "sacrifice" is a Latin compound consisting of sacra, "holy, sacred" and facere, "to make, to do". Sacra (like hagios and ἅγεις) originally referred to things which were "set apart" or distinguished from everyday use. In Roman religion, sacra referred to the process of consecration, devotion and sanctification of things for divine use.¹ Sacrifice, then, originally meant activity which relegated an object to a special realm so as to distinguish it from the ordinary.

The victim on the sacrificial altar was regarded as "sacra"; it had been placed apart from the herd and distinguished, in this realm, from ordinary animals. It is at this time—after having been taken from the herd and before its immolation—that the victim is extremely special, set apart, sacra. By performing a sacrifice, the officiant is "making holy"; more specifically, he is "consecrating" the victim.

E.O. James defines sacrifice as action "involving the destruction of a victim for the purpose of maintaining or restoring a right relationship of man to the sacred order."² This is misleading, for "destruction" seems to be regarded as having primary importance in the sacrificial act. This is not necessarily true in all cases. For example, vegetable offerings are not destroyed when sacrificed. And in animal
sacrifice, does not the ritual killing indicate transformation more than destruction? By concentrating on the aspect of destruction, the rich symbolic of sacrifice are not taken into account, and we are left with a definition stressing the "negative" quality of sacrifice. It is unfortunate that these negative connotations have been forced upon the word "sacrifice", and that we find this occurring in modern (secular) parlance. 

Sacrifice is a positive act. "It's essence", writes E. Underhill, "is something given; not something given up. It is a freewill offering, a humble gesture which embodies and expresses with more or less completeness the living heart of religion; the self-giving of the creature to its God." This virtuous motive is the sacrificial ideal; it is the proper intention of the symbolic action of sacrifices. Yet sacrificial performance has had the tendency to become ritualistic (which is what occurred in India and Israel). As an institution, regulated by the priests, the performance of a sacrifice concerned adherence to numerous cultic laws. The emphasis on precision and accuracy in the performance of sacrifice and the "obsession" with detail are among the issues raised by the anti-ritual critics.

The symbolism of ritual sacrifice involves communion: man gives to deities who in turn give to man. The problem here, however, is that the "giving" often becomes a type of "bargaining" in which the sacrificer gives so that he may receive benefits in return. The emphasis of the do ut des
formula is on giving, but anticipation and expectation for rewards are implied: "I give that you may give."

The ideal sacrifice (the true way of "making holy") is unselfish giving. This type of sacrifice does not conform to the do ut des formula. The donor and recipient commune reciprocally, and it is impossible to determine which is which. The centre of this sacrificial activity is the gift (or giving) itself, and this has prompted van der Leeuw to suggest that "instead of the rationalistic do-ut-des, we must say: do ut possis dare--'I give in order that thou mayest be able to give'. I give thee power that thou mayest have power, and that life may not stagnate because of any lack of potency."

Sacrifice is essential to all religions; it expresses man's creatureliness, his self-surrender before the Deity. Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Christ recommend true sacrifice involving unselfish giving. Sacrifice, then, need not be reduced to a particular act. Our three reformers call for a sanctification of all actions. In other words, all actions can become sacrificial when offered to God in the spirit of unselfish giving. And even if this theistic aspect is absent (as perhaps is the case with Buddhism), sacrifice is still there, as a system of unselfish giving to others.

Part I of the study deals with the existing sacrificial cult (vajña) of the Vedic religion, followed by its criticism (Upaniṣads), and finally its reform by Kṛṣṇa. Part II discusses Buddha's attitudes towards the Vedic vajña and his
method of reform. Part III is structured exactly as is Part I: the Israelite sacrificial cult, followed by the prophetic criticisms, and finally the reform of Christ. I have consulted the Sanskrit, Pāli, and Greek sources and have modified, to some extent, the various English translations of the materials.

The system of textural references for the Vedic material gives the part (or book), the section, and then the verse.

Examples: Ch. U. I, 10:9 (Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Part one, section ten, verse nine); RV X, 90:6 (Ṛg Veda, Book ten, section ninety, verse six). References to the Bhagavad Gītā simply denote the chapter and verse (śloka) numbers, respectively: B.G. 9:27 (Bhagavad Gītā, chapter nine, śloka twenty-seven).

The references to the Pāli canon give the volume and page numbers of the Pāli Text Society (Pāli) editions: DN 1, 141 (Dīgha Nikāya, volume one, page 141). Biblical references conform to the system adapted in the Jerusalem Bible. Abbreviations used for Biblical references are those given in the "List of Abbreviations" in the Jerusalem Bible (they are not given here in "Abbreviations").
NOTES


3. On page 5 of his study, Yerkes gives a schematic contrast of the meanings of sacrifice, ancient and modern.


8. van der Leeuw, p. 354.


10. Cf. "It is more blessed to give than to receive", (Ac 20:35).
PART I

From Yajña to Bhakti
The Vedic Yajña

The Sanskrit word "yajña" is usually translated as "sacrifice", but its depth and complexity are not fully conveyed in the translation. The rich and diverse meaning(s) of yajña is well expressed by D.K. Bedekar:

...the routine life of the people, their festivals, their ethics, the social and political creativeness of the elite were all governed by that nucleus of ideas and practices which may be collectively called the yajña. ¹

Yajña also meant different things at different times during India's religious history. For example, Radhakrishnan remarks that "the yajña of the Gītā is not the same as the ceremonial sacrifice of the Veda." ² This type of yajña (viz. the "yajña of the Veda") with all of its elaborate ritual mechanics, is the "yajña" in the title of this section, and (as we shall see) is the "yajña" discussed by the thinkers in the Upaniṣads, by Kṛṣṇa, and by Buddha as well.

The original yajña was probably a rather simple ritual act which accompanied the early hymns of the Ṛg Veda. ³ But subsequently, the rituals became complicated and specialized, requiring a particular group of sacrificial specialists, the brāhmaṇas ("priests").

The specialized yajña was an extremely complex system of particular actions involving detailed preparations, immolations, incantations, etc. The most striking aspect of the yajña is its emphasis on detail and perfection. The Samhītās (of the Yajur Veda and the Śāma Veda), the Brāhmaṇas,
the Śrāuta Sutras, these treatises concern the precise performance of the yajña, stressing minute particulars such as the correct number of altar bricks, the proper placing of the sacrificial grass (dharba, or kuśa), the precise pronunciation of the mantras, and so on. To illustrate this concern for precision, let us consider the following excerpt from A. B. Keith's work on Vedic sacrifice:

The ritual texts lay down various periods as appropriate for the setting up of the sacred fires, ... they also suggest that the proper time is the new moon, especially in conjunction with certain asterisms, but the full moon is also permissible. The essential part of the rite which takes two days is the setting up of the fires: on the first day are set up two sheds, the one for the Gārhapatya, the other for the Āhavanīya fire: the actual altar of the first is round, that of the second square: the Daksīna fire is south of the Gārhapatya and is shaped like a half moon. The fire is obtained for the Gārhapatya either by friction, or by being borrowed from the house of a wealthy man or distinguished sacrificer. The night of the first day is spent by the sacrificer and his wife in wakefulness to the noise of lutes and flutes. 4

In general, the Vedic yajña may be considered as exemplifying the do ut des theory of sacrifice. For instance, in the Taittirīya Samhitā we read:

Give thou to me, I shall give to thee;
Bestow upon me, I shall bestow upon thee;
Accept my offering, I shall accept thy offering. 5

Keith suggests that the most important element of the sacrifice is the notion of exchange:

The whole formula is excellently expressed in the Sūktavāka formula uttered near the end of the sacrifice, where it is said, 'the god hath accepted the offering; he hath become strengthened; he hath won greater might,' to which the sacrificer for whom the rite is performed replies,
'may I prosper in accordance with the prospering of the god.' ...this theory of the sacrifice and its result as an exchange of gifts, of strength for strength, is the fundamental fact of the whole Vedic religion.6

When considering these elements of the Vedic yajña, namely, the concern for precision and perfection, the "obsession" with detail, and the exchange (or "bargaining") with the gods, one tends to look upon the sacrifice as a magical performance. If the sacrificer desires "gifts" from the gods, all he need do is to perform the sacrifice (accurately, of course): he buys the gods with his sacrifice.7

Although at times it is difficult to distinguish between magic and religion, the Vedic yajña seems to embody many of the criteria used when referring to a system of actions as "magic". S. Dasgupta regards the vedic sacrifices as magic, explaining his use of the term:

I have attached the term magic to the Vedic rituals in the sense that the Vedic people in general believed in the operations of nature, the condition of human bodies, the efficiency of enemies; as a matter of fact, everything that concerns us in our daily life could be changed, modified or influenced by the performance of sacrifices, provided there were duly qualified priests, the Vedic mantras were duly and properly uttered or chanted in their proper accents and the elaborate sacrificial details were performed in strictest accuracy.8

Dasgupta also remarks (rather disparagingly) that the Vedic sacrificial system discouraged "free speculative thinking," and that "the only thing which could engage wise and religious minds was sacrifice and its elaborate rituals."9 If this cultic sacrifice was the "only thing" of importance and concern for the Vedic religious mind, then should we not ask why?
In order to understand the importance of *ṣaṅga* (for the Vedic sacrificers) we need to see its connexion with creation. The renowned *Puruṣa Sukta* (RV 10:90) is a cosmogonic expression relating the origin of the world with the Primordial sacrifice.¹⁰ Puruṣa is a macrocosmic being ("thousand-headed...pervading the earth on all sides..."), and the elements of the sacrifice of Puruṣa are macrocosmic as well:

> When the gods performed the sacrifice with Puruṣa as the oblation, then the Spring was its clarified butter (*ṣadvah*), the Summer—the sacrificial fuel (*idmāh*), and the Autumn the oblation (*havīh*).¹¹

From this sacrifice, all things came into being. The Vedas, the (sacrificial) animals, the moon, the sun, the gods (viz. Indra and Agni), heaven and earth, these are all effects, so to speak, of the primordial purusa-ṣaṅga.

Since the body of Puruṣa is sacrificed, the hymn naturally asks:

> 'When they divided Puruṣa, in how many different portions did they arrange him? What became of his mouth, of his arms? What were his thighs and feet called?'¹²

The next verse gives the answer:

> His mouth became the Brāhmaṇa ("priestly class"), his arms were made into the Rājanya ("warrior"), his thighs the Vaiśya ("merchant"), from his feet the Śūdra ("servant") was born.¹³

The functions of each of the four castes, metaphorically, correspond to a particular part of Puruṣa's body. The mouth, as the
organ for speech, utters wisdom; hence it became the Brāhmaṇa. And the arms, as wielders of weapons, became the Rajāya, and so forth.

The hymn correlates the cosmic, natural, and social phenomena, and it exalts the sacrifice, providing it with both a creative function and a sacrosanct character. Since all things came into being as a result of the original yajña, the priests' regular performance of yajñas continually sustains and renews the cosmos. The priestly ritual, then, is legitimized; yajña is the source and sustenance of the world. "If we do not perform the yajña", the brāhmaṇs might have contended, "then this world will return to its undifferentiated state of chaos; our yajña upholds the universe."

It is generally agreed that the Purusa Sūkta is of a relatively late date due to its language and systematization of ideas. The hymn even refers to the sacrificial formulae (verse 9) as having originated from the primordial puruṣa-yajña. Not only the sacrifice itself, but also its elaborate furnishings (e.g. mantras) are given a sacrosanct legitimation in this priestly document. As V.K. Rajvede puts it "...this is simply elevating human incantations to a divine rank."

Despite its relation to the cosmic and social orders, the Vedic yajña was so specialized, complicated, and "magical", that the act itself was the centre of attention. This does appear to be a rather crude way to obtain religious rewards. Heavenly rewards depend not on the grace of the gods, but on
the precise performance of the *vajña*. Yet even in spite of
the magico-mechanic character of the *vajña*, it contains the
seeds of certain important ideas which developed and flourished
in subsequent realms of Indian thought. Dasgupta credits the
Vedic *vajña* for containing the "first rudiments of the law of
karma." He also indicates that the two important terms
*dharma* and *karma* - function in the Vedic sense as meaning the
benefits accrued from the sacrifices, and the performance of
the sacrifices, respectively. So the early Vedic *dharma*
(sacrificial benefits) came to mean, in later times, "religion",
"righteousness", "law", etc., and the Vedic *karma*
(sacrificial performance) evolved into the later notion of
*karma* as "any kind of work performed". What had been asso-
ciated particularly with the magical operations of *vajña* was
later to be extended into the ethical realm.

Although the Vedic *vajña* contained the germs of the
ethical (and religious) notions of *dharma* and *karma*, it must
be remembered that in the Vedic sense, these ideas strictly
referred to the outward mechanics (and benefits received) of
the ritual. The mechanical Vedic *vajña* was hardly an "ethical"
or "religious" system. Yet in time, Indian thought began to
focus its attention on internal realities. There emerged an
insight which was sensitive to the spiritual impotency of
external ritualism; an insight which initiated movement away
from the Vedic *vajña* and sought to concentrate on "mental
activity" (*jñāna*). The *vajña* of the Veda makes way for the
*jñāna* of the Upanisads, to which we now turn.
Some Upaniṣadic Observations

The attitude of the Upaniṣadic thinkers towards the Vedic ṛāja was critical. In some cases, ṛāja is scornfully attacked and denounced. Yet there are also some instances of constructive criticism whereby the Vedic sacrifice is reinterpreted in either mystical or ethical terms. Whatever direction the particular criticism may have taken, we should note that the Upaniṣads generally replaced the Vedic ṛāja with jñāna. Dasgupta remarks that "...the minds of the Upaniṣadic sages were gradually emerging from the cloudy atmosphere of ritualistic worship, in which one was being continually suffocated with the demands of desire and their satisfaction though ritual means. The search after the highest...was now definitely being directed towards the inner spirituality of man."18

The jñāna of the Upaniṣads has an esoteric quality. One has to be "fit" to hear the Upaniṣads. The notion of adhikāra-bheda ("difference of fitness") expresses a kind of "quality control": "Those who perform the sacrifices are not fit to hear the Upaniṣads and those who are fit to hear the Upaniṣads have no longer any necessity to perform the sacrificial duties."19 The esoteric character of the Upaniṣads elevates jñāna to a superior position. In contrast with the inferior, external Vedic ritual "knowledge", the Upaniṣadic jñāna holds a superior rank. This contrast may be illustrated by the concept of the "two knowledges":

14
...two kinds of knowledge are to be known, 
...the higher as well as the lower.
Of these, the lower (aparā) is the Rg Veda,
the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, the Atharva Veda.
...and the higher (parā) knowledge is that by which the imperishable is apprehended.²⁰

This anti-Vedic sentiment frequently occurs with regard to the Vedic vaṣṭa. In the Mundaka Upaniṣad we find this criticism of Vedic ritualism:

Unsteady are the boats of the eighteen sacrificial forms, which are said to be inferior karma. The deluded who delight in this as leading to good, fall again into old age and death.

Abiding in the midst of ignorance,... thinking themselves to be learned, fools, afflicted with troubles, go about like the blind led by the blind.²¹

And in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, there is an amusing satire describing a mock ritual; it contains the proper elements that constitute a Vedic vaṣṭa, except that the officiants are dogs instead of brāhmans:

Just as the priests, when they are about to chant with the hymn of praise (bahispaṇa-māna), move along, joined to one another, so did the dogs move along. Then they sat down together and made the noise 'him'.

'AUM, let us eat, AUM, let us drink, AUM, may Varuṇa, Prajāpati and Sāvitr bring food here. Oh Lord of food, bring food here,...AUM'.²²
Besides this derogation of the \textit{yajña}, there are instances in the \textit{Upaniṣads} of constructive criticism; that is, a new interpretation is given to the particulars of the sacrifice whereby emphasis is now placed on inner activity as opposed to the actual, external performance of the ritual. For example, the \textit{Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad} opens with a cosmic re-evaluation of the Vedic \textit{āśvamedha} (horse sacrifice) declaring that the "dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse, the sun the eye, the wind the breath," and so on. Dasgupta indicates that this symbolic representation is a substitute:

...instead of a horse sacrifice the visible universe is to be conceived as a horse and meditated upon as such.... What is the horse that grazes in the field and to what good can its sacrifice lead? This moving universe is the horse which is most significant to the mind, and the meditation of it as such is the most suitable substitute of the sacrifice of the horse, the mere animal.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Jñāna} is elevated to such an extent that the mere performance of a sacrifice without \textit{knowing} (in the \textit{Upaniṣadic} sense) is not only ineffective, but may also be dangerous:

'Oh priest, if you sing the introductory praise without knowing the divinity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.'\textsuperscript{24}

The text then mentions the other parts of the ritual (viz. the chants and the response) with the same anathema, "without knowing the divinity that belongs to it, your head will fall off." And what is that divinity which must be known? Is it Indra? Agni? The answers given in the text are "breath", "the sun", and "food"; these (instead of the sacrificial deities) are to be meditated upon.
The Upaniṣadic criticism of yajña also provides an ethical reinterpretation of sacrificial components. The Chāndogya offers such an ethical, symbolic interpretation of the elements of a yajña (in particular, a soma sacrifice):

When one hungers and thirsts and abstains from pleasures, these constitute the initiatory rites.

And when one eats and drinks and enjoys pleasures, then he joins in the upāsā (upasāna) ceremonies.

And when one laughs and eats and indulges in sexual intercourse, then he joins in the chant and recitation.

And austerity, almsgiving, upright, non-violence, truthfulness, these are the daksīṇā (fees for the priests).

Therefore they say "He will procreate." He has procreated—that is his new birth. Death is the final bath (after the ceremony). 25

The motif of utilizing particular terminology and giving it a new interpretation is a viable method for imparting a teaching; after all, the terms are known (the sacrifices were performed). Thus a sure way of communicating new religious concepts is to work through the traditional religious ideas and institutions.

An important aspect of Upaniṣadic ethics is illustrated by the three "da's". 26 Dāma (self-restraint or control), dāna (giving), and dayā (compassion) are the three principal virtues which "the heavenly voice of thunder repeats: 'da! da! da!... 'control yourself', 'give', 'be compassionate'!" 27 Dāna is extremely important for this study for it is virtually
synonymous with "sacrifice". Giving is the essence of sacrifice. The do ut des formula, needless to say, is centred on giving. But there are ways to give; some are selfless and meritorious, and others selfish and (spiritually) detrimental. Unfortunately, the Upaniṣadic thinkers have not fully formulated the proper way to give, but this will be dealt with later.28

Since the sages of the Upaniṣads were concerned with the acquisition of Jñāna, it seems as if sacrificial action was considered an obstacle: As was said earlier, Jñāna replaced yazāna; the Upaniṣadic knowledge was to be pursued, the Vedic sacrifices were to be abandoned. This emphasis on Jñāna tended to render all ritual action useless and unnecessary. The way to achieve Jñāna is to renounce all outward action.

This Upaniṣadic Jñāna is the knowledge of the Ultimate truth and reality, namely, that the true Self within man is the Ultimate Reality. This immediately eliminates "relation" between man and a "deity" (as a recipient of sacrificial worship). As Dasgupta says, "There is no relation here of the worshipper and the worshipped and no prayers are offered to it, but the whole quest is of the highest truth, and the true self of man is discovered as the greatest reality."29 The dichotomy of knowledge and action is polarized, and in order to obtain Jñāna one must abandon external action. And it is here that the notion of tapas serves as the means by which Jñāna is obtained.
Tapas is often translated as "austerities" or "asceticism". It literally means "heat", "creative heat by which the brood hen produces life from the egg." Though originally a ritual concept that involved various practices (such as fasting, meditation, celibacy) which "heated up" the priests in preparation for their ritual, tapas came to mean ascetic practices in general. The ascetic's retreat in the forest was not a preparation for the sacrifice; it replaced the sacrifice itself.

Tapas is "negative activity", that is to say, one must abandon and abstain from pleasures, sexuality, sacrificial actions, and so on. As a substitute for yajña, tapas also eventually took on a magical quality. In comparing the magical character of both yajña and tapas, Dasgupta asserts: "Thus it was believed that just as a man could attain whatever he wanted by the performance of sacrifices, so he could also achieve his end, however extravagant it might be, by the performance of tapas involving meditation and self-imposed sufferings and mortifications.... Thus from the early Vedic times two kinds of magic, viz. that of rituals, and that of tapas, were regarded as being omnipotent, and even the powers of gods were regarded as belonging to a much lower rank."32

The most valuable contribution of the Upaniṣads was the insight which had noted the ineffectiveness of the external, magico-mechanics of the Vedic yajña. A shift in emphasis is noticeable; concentration on external (ritual) activity - yajña - is now centred on internal activity - jñāna. Both the means to ultimate knowledge (jñāna) and the knowledge itself
required considerable effort. Tapas, in its extreme application, is "self-torture"; a very strenuous "religious" activity indeed. And the Upaniṣadic jñāna is difficult to obtain, for one must be "fit" to hear (and to understand) the Upaniṣads. Although the Vedic vajña was an operation confined to the Brāhmanical elite, it was available to non-Brāhmans (but only with the daksīna as payment of the ritual performance). Both the Vedic vajña and the Upaniṣadic jñāna were esoteric; if someone wished to perform a vajña he had to pay for it, and if one wanted to pursue jñāna he had to be "fit" for it.

The Upaniṣadic substitute for the Vedic vajña had become an antithesis to the Vedic sacrificial system. The dichotomy of action and knowledge was polarized. Furthermore, the accessibility of spirituality was restricted to those who were able to obtain jñāna. The esoteric Vedic vajña was replaced by the esoteric Upaniṣadic jñāna; neither of these two extremities was accessible to the masses. What if the "common man" could not afford to perform the vajña? And if he could, he might have realized (having come into contact with an Upaniṣadic sage) that the external ritual was spiritually useless. His alternative, then, would have been an attempt to obtain the Upaniṣadic jñāna, which required considerable effort. And if he finds such discipline (tapas) difficult, and if he fails to achieve that special jñāna, then what is his alternative?

If the dichotomy of knowledge and external action is so severe that each esoteric pole limits the religious possibilities of the masses, then surely a synthesis would be beneficial
and welcomed by the people. The reconciliation of the Vedic *vajña*
with the Upanisadic *jñana* would provide a religious system whereby
both sacrifice and wisdom are held together as a unity-in-tension;
a religious system incorporating the wisdom of philosophy and the
sacredness of sacrifice, thus achieving fulfilment in an integrated
system of worship.
Sacrifice in the Bhagavad-Gītā

In the Bhagavad-Gītā, Kṛṣṇa (or more precisely, the author of the Gītā) discusses the Vedic yajña somewhat along the lines of the Upaniṣads, taking into account their anti-ritual sentiment. We may analyze Kṛṣṇa's attitude towards sacrifice by means of the following three categories:

(1) Kṛṣṇa condemns those sacrifices which are merely external, pompous formalities:

Self-conceited, obstinate, filled with the pride and arrogance of wealth, they perform sacrifices which are so only in name (nāma-yajña). 33

(2) Kṛṣṇa undermines those sacrifices which (when properly performed) yield heavenly rewards, for eventually the performer is impelled to return to the world of mortals:

Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven, they return to the world of mortals, their merit exhausted...desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable. 34

(3) Kṛṣṇa accepts those sacrifices which are performed without any selfish desires for rewards:

That sacrifice which is offered...by those who expect no reward...is "pure" (sāttvika). 35

The first type of sacrifice (performed with greed) leads the sacrificer to hell36, the second type leads one to heaven only temporarily (because of his desire for heaven), and the third type ("pure", unselfish sacrifice) leads the sacrificer to salvation:
Those who sacrifice to Me come to Me. 37

As Radhakrishnan rightly indicates, "the vaţa of the
Gītā is not the same as the ceremonial sacrifice of the Veda.
It is sacrificial action in general by which man dedicates
his wealth and deeds to the service of the One Life in all.
People with such a sacrificial spirit will accept even death
gladly, though unjustly meted out to them, so that the world
may grow through their sacrifice." 38 The key to understanding
what Kṛṣṇa means by "sacrifice" is furnished by the notion of
nīskāma-karma ("desire-less action"). Sacrifice meets with
Kṛṣṇa's approval if—and only if—performed without any
desire for the rewards of the action. The principle of
nīskāma-karma allows for the performance of vaţa while at the
same time emphasizing intention (or, the internal aspects of
action); it synthesizes the polarity of knowledge and action.

Nīskāma-karma is the renunciation of the fruits of
action (karmaphalatyāga), not the mere renunciation of action
itself (karmatyāga). Kṛṣṇa not only saw the difficulty that
a complete renunciation of action entailed, but he also saw
its impossibility:

For no one can remain even for a moment
without doing work; every one is made to
act helplessly by the impulses (guṇas) born
of nature. 39

The point is reiterated in another śloka, emphasizing here the
importance of renouncing the fruit of action:

It is indeed impossible for any embodied
being to abstain from work altogether. But
he who gives up the fruit of action, he is said to be the (true) renouncer.⁴⁰

When Kṛṣṇa recommends the performance of sacrifice (in 18:5), the principle of nīskāma-karma serves as an important qualification:

But even these works [vājīna, dāna, and tapas] ought to be performed, giving up attachment and desire for fruits. This, Oh Arjuna, is my decided and final view.⁴¹

The actual external particulars of a sacrifice are not of primary importance here, for Kṛṣṇa is mostly concerned with one's attitude while he sacrifices. If one has renounced the desire for rewards, then he may or may not perform a vājīna. His physical performance at the sacrificial altar is not a primary concern; what is important, however, is his intention, his inner purity. This is what constitutes the "sacredness" of his sacrifice.

Since nīskāma-karma indicates self-less behaviour, actions performed in this manner are sacrificial. True sacrifice is the giving of self, without any desire for rewards. Nīskāma-karma dictates the proper spirit in which all religious activities are to be performed; giving, practicing austerities, sacrificing, etc., are pure (sāttvika) if performed selflessly. The giving of self, the renouncing of egocentricty, the relinquishing of the fruit of actions; these are all synonymous with sacrifice as pure desireless action (nīskāma-karma). In this sense, then, all self-less actions can be seen as truly sacrificial, especially when performed as worship dedicated to the Lord.
Bhakti (devotion) can be considered as an alternative mode of worship to Vedic ritualism. Devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the true-sacrifice; self-surrender to the Lord patterned on the principle of nīḍkāma-karma. The particulars of this sacrifice are unimportant:

Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that offering of love, of the pure heart, I accept.\textsuperscript{42}

The synthetic principle - nīḍkāma-karma - dispels the problem of the knowledge-action dichotomy; it recommends (sacrificial) action but also requires knowledge. One must realize that his desire-less activity neither binds him nor centres the activity on "I-ness". With this knowledge, all actions (any activity) if dedicated to the Lord, are sacrifices:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer, whatever you give, whatever austerities you practise - do that, as an offering to Me.\textsuperscript{43}

As a religious method, Bhakti provides for the sanctification of all activity. "Work on the religious level", writes Srinivasachari, "becomes the worship of God and every thought as well as every word and deed is dedicated to God who is Himself the way and end of life and is thus consecrated."\textsuperscript{44}

Bhakti replaces the Vedic vaiṣṇva which was esoteric. Theistic devotion, on the other hand, emphasizes religious universality:

For those who take refuge in Me,...

though they are lowly born, women, Vaiṣyas as well as Śūdras, they also attain the highest goal.\textsuperscript{45}
Hence with Bhakti, Kṛṣṇa has expanded both the meaning of sacrifice as well as the restricted group of sacrificers.

Kṛṣṇa considers himself the "enjoyer and lord of all sacrifices" (aḥam hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca)\(^{46}\) since bhakti (as devotion to the Lord) enables all actions to be sacrificial. But why does Kṛṣṇa see himself (rather than some other deity) as the recipient of all sacrifices? Why does he make this declaration?:

Even those who are devotees of other gods, and worship them with faith; they also sacrifice to Me alone...\(^{47}\)

It seems to me that all assertions in the Gītā in which Kṛṣṇa speaks of himself using the first person are to be understood as referring to the Divine which is manifested in and through Kṛṣṇa, and not to the particular "Kṛṣṇa", charioteer and friend of Arjuna. For instance, in 9:34 we find this apparent "ego-centricity":

Fix your mind on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; revere Me...to Me you will come.

Commenting on this particular śloka, Radhakrishnan rightly remarks, "it is not the personal Kṛṣṇa to whom we have to give ourselves up utterly but the Unborn, Beginningless, Eternal who speaks through Kṛṣṇa."\(^{48}\) Likewise, it is in this sense that we are to understand the theory of avatāras given in 4:7-8:

Whenever there is a decline of dharma and a rise of adharma,...that is when I manifest myself.
... for the establishment of dharma I come into being in age after age.

Krṣṇa, as an avatāra, is a manifestation of the Divine. Śri Aurobindo indicates that the function of the avatāra is twofold: the descent of God into humanity, and the ascent of man into the Godhead. 49 The descent of God is for the sake of establishing "righteousness" (dharma), but it must be remembered that this requires man's effort as well. Man must strive for the ideal pattern of religious behaviour which is exemplified in the teachings and in the actions of the avatāra himself. Krṣṇa both embodies and teaches self-sacrifice, the religious ideal necessary for man's consecration.

The essential teaching of the Gītā is self-sacrifice. The devotee (bhakta) dedicates all of his actions, whatever they may be, as sacrifices to the Lord. As Krṣṇa declares:

He who does work for Me,
he who looks upon Me as the highest goal,
he who worships Me, free from attachment,
he who is free from enmity to all creatures,
he goes to Me.... 50

This sloka is regarded as the substance of the whole teaching of the Gītā (gītāśāstrasya sārabhūto'rthaḥ). If one lives according to the teachings of the Gītā his life becomes a pure sacrifice. And what have those of us who only study the Gītā to gain? As Krṣṇa says:

And he who studies this sacred dialogue of ours, I am worshipped by him through the sacrifice of knowledge.... 51
Summary: Kṛṣṇa as Reformer

We have primarily dealt with the teachings (concerning sacrificial) of Kṛṣṇa as given in the Bhagavad-Gītā. We should note that sources apart from the Gītā also refer to Kṛṣṇa in connexion with his reform of sacrifice. Let us recall that section in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (see above, p. 17) in which an ethical reinterpretation of vajña-components is given. Immediately following the verses which had gone through the elements of the vajña and substituted the ethico-religious activities, Kṛṣṇa devakīputra (Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki) is mentioned as having received this knowledge of the true interpretation of the vajña from the sage Ghora Āṅgirasa. It is interesting that this reinterpretation of sacrifice imparted to the Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad is in complete accord with the teachings concerning sacrifice imparted by the Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā.

This reference in the Chāndogya is probably the earliest mentioning of the name "Kṛṣṇa". The question arises, then, as to whether or not the Chāndogya's Kṛṣṇa is indeed the Kṛṣṇa of that later work, the Bhagavad-Gītā. Although the Chāndogya reference is brief and relatively cryptic, the fact that Kṛṣṇa's name is mentioned with regard to his learning of a new meaning of sacrifice and that this new meaning is taught by Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā, seems to afford the connexion between the Kṛṣṇa of the Upaniṣad and the Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā. It is well known that the author of the Gītā is familiar with and draws
upon the Upaniṣads.52 Could the author of the Gītā have been heavily influenced by that section in the Chāndogya where Kṛṣṇa learnt the true meaning of vaṣā?

Much of the material concerning the life of Kṛṣṇa is available from the Purāṇas, works which post-date the Gītā. Amidst the many amorous tales of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in the Purāṇas, we do find instances of Kṛṣṇa's reform of sacrifice. For example, in the Bhāgavata there is a story relating how Kṛṣṇa put an end to sacrifices to Indra and substituted instead worship "of the cows, the Brāhmans, and the mountain", a new ritual consisting of rice, porridge, cakes, etc., and the distribution of food to all.53 There is also a description of true sacrifice:

wise men worship through sacrifices mostly consisting of chanting the names of the Lord and singing his praises.54

Since the reinterpretation and reform of sacrifice is common to the three "Kṛṣṇa's", namely, the Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhagavad-Gītā, and the Kṛṣṇa of the Purāṇas, then the diverse and complex character of "Kṛṣṇa" is more easily ascertained by considering the phenomenon of sacrificial reform.

Kṛṣṇa's reform of sacrifice has contributed to his popularity. Bhakti, as the new vaṣā, incorporates the value of the traditional religious activities, but at the same time, it provides the masses with the opportunity of performing acts which had hitherto been reserved for the elite (as dictated in the Brāhmaṇaś). What the priests had reserved for themselves
(viz. the Vedic vaṣṭa) has been expanded by Kṛṣṇa and made available to all.

Besides contributing to his popularity among the masses, Kṛṣṇa's reform of sacrifice may also be related to his having received the title "avatāra". Mahadev Desai speaks of the "tests" which determine an individual's avatārhood:

Complete 'noughting' of self, supreme detachment and perfection are the tests that the avatāra in the Gita lays down for whomsoever we would associate with the name of avatāra, and by that test only can the activities we attribute to an incarnation be judged."

Since Kṛṣṇa prescribes self-sacrifice as the means by which salvation can be obtained, and since this path (unlike the esoteric Vedic vaṣṭa) is made available to all men and women, regardless of caste or position in life, then Kṛṣṇa does indeed satisfy the criteria by which we give the title "avatāra". And the raison d'être of the descent of the avatāra is to establish the dharma, the true religious way for man to relate with himself, and hence to commune with the Divine. God gives himself to man; man gives himself to God. But the giving here is not a mere "bargaining". God gives to man by becoming human, thus exemplifying a path through which man can obtain the highest. And man gives to God by striving for the exemplified ideal, the "god-man", and by making his life "sacred" through self-less sacrifice to Him. Mahadev Desai expresses this beautifully:

Each one of us has to sacrifice ourselves--our petty and narrow and circumscribing selves--in order to be one with the Self. We have to burn ourselves out with a heart and a will and a cheer each in his or her own sphere: our wicks may be
ever so flimsy, our oil ever so poor, our flame ever so feeble, just enough to light our narrow path, but ultimately our dim lights will blend right enough with the Universal Flame. All sacrifice, no matter how small or great, provided it is pure, reaches Him, ranks the same with Him, there is no last nor first.
NOTES


4. Ibid., Vol. XXXII, p. 316.

5. TS I, 8:4.


7. In the article "Opfer I" (*RGG*, Vol. IV, pp. 1637-41), the bargaining character of the Vedic ritual is aptly expressed: "Hier ist die Butter - wo sind deine Gaben?" (p. 1639).


12. RV X, 90:11.


15. Ibid., p. 224.
28. See below, pp. 24, 51f.
33. BG 16:17.
35. BG 17:11.
36. See BG 16:16.
37. BG 9:25.
39. BG 3:5.
40. BG 18:11.
41. BG 18:6.
42. BG 9:26.
43. BG 9:27.
45. BG 9:32.
46. BG 9:24.
47. BG 9:23.
50. BG 11:55.
51. BG 18:70.
52. For an excellent treatment of the textual affinities between the Gītā and the Upaniṣads see K.N. Upadhyaya, Early Buddhism and the Bhagavad Gītā (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), pp. 110ff.
54. Ibid., XI, 5:32.
56. Ibid., p. 121.
PART II

The Wrong Sacrifice
and the Right
Buddha's Attitude towards the Vedic Yajña

Buddha shared the anti-ritual sentiment of the sages of the Upaniṣads. His criticism of Brahmanism was rather extreme; he opposed not only the yajña, but the authority of the Vedas (śruti) and the caste system (vāraṇa) as well.¹ This opposition to "orthodoxy" (i.e. the Vedic religion) provided the criteria by which Buddhism was later to be regarded as "heterodox". Likewise, Jainism (another heterodox system) was firmly anti-Vedic.² It seems that the Upaniṣads have even come close to the fine line distinguishing orthodox from heterodox teachings, yet they are held to be śruti literature. Now with regard to our main individuals, Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, the terms "orthodox" and "heterodox" can be used respectively. That is to say, Kṛṣṇa has reformed sacrifice from within the Vedic stream itself, reconciling the two divergent positions concerning the yajña, viz. the Brahmanical with the Upaniṣadic. Buddha, however, cannot be considered a sacrificial reformer from within the system; he was not concerned with providing a reconciliatory system of worship entailing (true) sacrifice to God (as Kṛṣṇa had done). Yet he did concern himself with sacrifice, and he did provide a system of sacrificial behaviour patterned on what Buddha considered to be the right way to sacrifice.

Since both Kṛṣṇa and Buddha are roughly contemporaneous, it is difficult to determine which one may have been first in his reform of the Vedic yajña. Since both contain
teachings similar to the Upaniṣads on sacrifice, the chronological question can be suspended; rather than concentrate on one as before or after the other, it seems we can deal with them in terms of "within" and "without" (or, orthodox and heterodox). Since Buddha has worked against the main line of the Vedic tradition he has been credited with having hindered the progress of Brahmanism. "No single individual", writes Upadhyaya, "has caused as much set back to Brahmanical religion as has been done by Buddha alone." 3

There are various instances in the early Buddhist canon in which Buddha displays his depreciation of the Vedic vajña. In a conversation with Ujjaya the brāhmaṇa, Buddha is asked: "...does the worthy Gôtama praise sacrifice?" He replies:

'No, brāhmaṇa, I do not praise every sacrifice.... In whatever sacrifice cows are slaughtered, goats and sheep are slaughtered, ...and various living creatures come to destruction; such sacrifice, Oh brāhmaṇa, which involves butchery I do not praise.'4

The text goes on to mention certain types of vajña such as the puṟuṣa-maṇḍha, the aśvamedha ("human sacrifice", "horse sacrifice"); these are the constituents of the lavish ceremonial sacrifices, the śrauta-vajña, which were performed by brāhmaṇs requiring substantial support from the wealthy royalty.

Buddha also expresses his contempt for vajña in the doctrine of the four classes of persons.5 The first is a self-tormentor who practices extreme asceticism (tapas), the second is a tormentor of others, the third a tormentor of both
himself and others, and the fourth a tormentor of neither. The worst individual, then, torments himself and others by his extreme self-torturing austerities and his performance of sacrifices; this person (a king, noble, or brahman) is known to say: "Let so many bulls be slain for the sacrifice,... Let them cut down so many trees for the sacrificial posts; let them mow so much darbha grass for the sacrifice." We should note that here, as in the above passages, Buddha displays an accurate knowledge of the Vedic yajña with all of its particulars. As we saw above, the yajña involved strict performance and attention to petty minutiae (such as "mowing so much darbha grass"). Buddha is aware of the obsession with detail that characterizes the Vedic yajña, and this is one of the areas on which he focuses in his criticism.

At times Buddha’s protest of the Vedic sacrificial institution takes on a satirical mode. There is an amusing story (Kūṭadanta Sutta) in which a certain brāhmaṇa, Kūta-
danta, is about to offer a huge sacrifice. The priest’s name itself is rather humorous; it literally means "pointed-tooth", and perhaps we can use a modern colloquialism like "buck-tooth" to aid in bringing out the humour. So, the Very Reverend Buck-tooth plans to offer a lavish ceremonial sacrifice, and he asks Gautama for advice in order to ensure the correct performance of the ritual. Now for a brāhmaṇa, as a sacrificial specialist, to ask a wandering ascetic like Gautama Buddha for advice concerning the correct performance of a sacrifice, is completely absurd. It would be as
ridiculous as a sales clerk asking his customer how (and for what price) to sell his product! Or, to use a religious analogy, a brāhman asking a sāmaṇa for sacrificial advice would be like a Pharisee asking Jesus to instruct him on the details of the Law concerning the sabbath regulations! Well, having been asked, Buddha proceeds to tell his buck-toothed inquirer a story of a certain "King Wide-realm" (Mahā-Vijita) and the great sacrifice he had performed:

...at the sacrifice, neither were any oxen slain, nor goats, nor fowls, nor pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as sacrificial posts, and no darbha grasses mown.... And the slaves, messengers, and workmen were not driven by rods or fear, nor carried on their work with weeping faces.... With ghee, oil, butter, milk, honey, and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished. 9

"It is all ironical", writes Rhys Davids, "...just the very contrary, in every respect, of a typical Vedic sacrifice." 10

The emphasis on ritual detail, the yajña jargon, the officiants and attendants, all these elements are present in this delightful sacrifice; the difference, however, between King Wide-realm's sacrifice and an actual Vedic one is obvious. The sacrifice in Buddha's story is peaceful, harmless, and moral; it serves as a didactic parody of the Vedic yajña, and the author(s) of this sutta displays Buddhā's subtle and clever rendering of what he thinks a true sacrifice ought to be.
The moral of the story begins to appear when our Reverend Buck-tooth realises that Gautama himself had had that sacrifice performed, and he then asks: "Is there, Oh Gotama, any other sacrifice less troublesome and less difficult, with more advantage and more fruit than this one?"\textsuperscript{11} Buddha's response is affirmative, and a long list of ethical sacrifices, each better than the other, is given until finally, the highest sacrifice of all is declared: the path towards arhatship!

The humorous aspect of Buddha's protest of sacrifice "does nothing to militate against its fundamental earnestness."\textsuperscript{12} In spite of the humour, Buddha's attitude towards the Vedic yajña is, as Mrs. Rhys Davids says, "one of uncompromising dissent."\textsuperscript{13}

Buddha's contempt is for the institutional, mechanical form that the yajña had taken and which, as Bahadur Mal says, "in the Brahmana...became all in all."\textsuperscript{14} Buddha did not speak out against the "original yajña" (which was simple and harmless), but only against the complex, destructive, sacrificial ritualism of Brahmanism. In fact, Buddha praises the "brāhmans of old" who

...sought and gathered rice and ghee
And oil and bed and cloth, then sacrificed;
But...they killed no cows.
'Like our mother, father, brother, and kin,
Cows are our greatest friends...'
They saw the truth of this and killed no cows.\textsuperscript{15}

Buddha continues the story:
Then came a change; here and there they looked
on the splendour of kings...
And the gross wealth of men they coveted....
Then Okkāka...offered the horse-sacrifice,
The human-sacrifice;... 16

This "golden age" of dharma-following brāhmans, followed
by its "fall" into the complex state of brahmanic affairs is
an interesting expression of the "rise and fall" of vañña.
Whether Buddha's portrait of those ancient brāhmans (who had
been originally "pure" but became corrupt) is historically
accurate - I tend to see it as an idealized portrayal - his
point is well made. His hearers must have been captivated
by that wonderful story of the brāhmans and their dharma of
illo tempore. The story would have left his audience eager
to imitate the ways of the ancients who knew the true, pure
vañña. Indeed it did, for those wealthy brahmans who lis-
tened to Buddha's story declared:

'It's amazing, Master Gotama! It's wonderful,
Master Gotama!...We go to Master Gotama for
refuge, to Dhamma, to the Saṅgha; accept us as
lay disciples, from this day forth to life's
end, gone to the refuge!' 17

In her analysis of Buddha's denunciation of vañña, Mrs.
Rhys Davids gives three reasons for the "uncompromising
dissent" towards the external ritual: (1) it is a futile exp-
ression of misdirected effort, (2) it involves cruelty (to
animals, slaves, etc.), and (3) it is not sufficiently spiri-
tual due to the desire for the benefits of the ritual act. 18

Regarding the first point, Buddha speaks of the Vedic
Vajña as being "fruitless" (na te honti mahapphalā). A similar sentiment is expressed by the god Brahmā (to whom sacrifices are offered) who addresses the mother of Brahmadeva when she is about to offer sacrifice: "Brahmā does not feed on such (offerings)." And Buddha clearly tells Sundarika the brāhman:

'Do not think, Oh brāhman, that purity comes with burning firewood, for that is merely external.'

Mrs. Rhys Davids' second point concerns vajña as involving injury and cruelty. It is not only because vajña is fruitless that Buddha says, "This type of injurious sacrifice [of animals], Oh brāhman, I do not praise." The vajña was harmful as far as the sacrificial animals were concerned; it was also harmful, Buddha informs us, to humans as well:

And those who are his [i.e. the sacrificer's] slaves or messengers or workers, terrified of the fearful rod, with weeping faces made the ritual preparations.

This "bullying of slaves" is also mentioned in the Kūṭa-danta Sutta, but as we have seen, the exact opposite occurs in King Wide-realm's sacrifice; his slaves and workmen are well treated. It is clear that Buddha abhors any sacrifice which involves either animal or human injury. The doctrine of ahimsā ("non-injury") will not allow for harmful sacrifices.

Regarding Rhys Davids' third point, the Vedic vajña lacked the proper intentions and aspirations. It is a
"do ut des" operation of the worst sort, whereby the action is a means for the satisfaction of selfish expectations and greed. The belief in the efficacy of sacrifice is fallacious; it is considered to be a "fetter", the third of the ten samyojanas, and it should be abandoned. Buddha's disapproval of the wrong intentions associated with vajña is illustrated in his conversation with Kassapa of Uruvelā; Buddha asks him why he has abandoned his fire-sacrifice. Kassapa replies:

'Of sights and sounds and tastes, Of pleasures and women do the sacrifices tell: Perceiving that stain in attachments, Therefore I took no pleasure in sacrifice and offering.'

Buddha also detests the greed of those brāhmans who...
...set their hearts on hoarding wealth...
...with hymns they came to Okkāka:
'...Make sacrifice for you have great wealth.'

Buddha's protest of the Vedic vajña does not intend to totally annihilate "sacrifice". The external mechanics of vajña are criticized: this is, according to Buddha, the wrong way to sacrifice. Vajña "in itself" is not destroyed; instead, it is reformed. The good intentions and all the effort of ritual action are kept, and even the ritual jargon (and the vajña components) is reinterpreted in Buddha's system. There is an inversion of the brahmanical vajña whereby it becomes true, fruitful, and meritorious. Even the word "vajña" takes on a new meaning; for according to Buddha there is a wrong and a right way to offer sacrifice.
Reinterpretation of Sacrificial Terminology

The motif of utilizing particular terms and providing them with new meanings is a common occurrence in India's religious literature. Regarding sacrifice, we may recall the ethical interpretation given in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad\textsuperscript{28} where particular constituents of \textit{yajña} are reinterpreted ethically:

\begin{quote}
\text{atha yat tāpo dānam ārjavam ahiṃsā satya-vacanam iti tā asya dakṣiṇāḥ}\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

The \textit{dakṣiṇā}—fees for the priests who perform the sacrifice—do not consist of gold or cattle here! Tapas ("austerities"), \textit{dānam} ("giving"), \textit{ārjavam} ("uprightness"), ahiṃsā ("non-violence"), \textit{satya-vacanam} ("truthful speech"); these are what the author of the Upaniṣad would have us render as our gifts instead of material objects!

Buddha is also fond of employing the motif of altering and reinterpreting sacrificial terminology. As Warder indicates, "...terms such as 'sacrifice' might continue to be used, but they should have reformed meanings consonant with Buddhist principles."\textsuperscript{30} In working with the known, Buddha has the opportunity of using sacrificial jargon as a vehicle for his teaching. His technique often entails a play on words to support his homiletic rendering of \textit{yajña} and related terms.

For example, the "three fires"\textsuperscript{31} (of brahanical sacrifice) viz. \textit{āhavanīya}, \textit{gāhapatya} and \textit{dakṣiṇa} appear in Pāli
as āhuṇeyya, gahapati and dakkhiṇeyya. The Vedic meaning of these terms, "eastern fireplace", "householder's fireplace", and "southern fireplace", has an altered meaning in the Buddhist context. āhuṇeyya means "worthy of offerings, venerable", and instead of constructing an eastern fireplace, Buddha recommends that one honour the venerable, such as one's parents. And gahapati is understood by Buddha to indicate that the householder should honour his children and servants (instead of building the householder's sacrificial fire). And the daksina (meaning both the southern fire and the priest's fees in the Vedic context) means, for Buddha, the giving of gifts to saṃnās rather than to sacrificing priests.

The great sacrifices of the ancient Vedic system are interpreted by Buddha in a completely ethical manner.

Ṛṣvamedha (horse-sacrifice) undergoes a clever word-play and becomes sāsamēdana, "crop sacrifice" or "knowledge of crops".

Puruṣamedha (human-sacrifice) becomes purisamedha, and with altering the meaning of the compound it reads: "giving to people".

Samēḍprāsa ("peg-throwing rite") is rendered samāpañāsa meaning literally "right binding" and understood as a "bond to bind men's hearts".

Vājapeyī ("drink of victory") is deliberately altered, becoming vācapiya meaning literally "kind speech".

Nirargāla ("unobstructed" sacrifice, i.e. "all-out
killing") literally means "no bolts" (hindrances). Buddha interprets it as "unbolted doors", i.e. security and peace prevailing.

Through linguistic and symbolic word-play, Buddha has given what he holds to be the true meaning of these five great sacrifices which were performed in ancient Vedic times.35

Another example of Buddha's reinterpretation of sacrificial jargon is the "six directions" to which a Vedic sacrificer offers his sacrifice. These are interpreted ethically by Buddha;36 instead of sacrificing to the eastern direction, one should honour his parents, for as the day begins in the east, one's life begins with his parents. And rather than sacrifice to the southern direction (dakṣina) one should give to his teachers ("dakṣina" is here understood as "donations to teachers" instead of donations to priests). Likewise, sacrifice to the western direction is to be replaced by provisions for one's wife and children; for as the day "matures" in the western sky, so the youth matures and as a man is responsible for his family. Sacrifice to the north should be honouring one's friends and companions, for since the north is "beyond", the help of friends brings one "beyond" troubles. The nadir sacrifices are to be replaced by compassion towards slaves and workers, for they are the "lowest". And instead of sacrificing to the zenith, one should give to the wise, the samanās, for they are the "highest".

Buddha also gives a new meaning to another important brahmanical concept, namely trividya ("three-fold knowledge").
In the Vedic system it refers to the knowledge of the three Vedas (Ṛg, Yajur, and Śāma); Buddha's meaning of the threefold knowledge (tīvṛtā) is knowing the three great truths, viz. anicca ("impermanence"), dukkha ("suffering"), and anattā ("no-soul"). Another ritual term, pārīṣkāra ("furnishings, i.e. sacrificial paraphernalia) is understood by Buddha to mean requisites or qualities of a true brāhmaṇa.37

The essential message conveyed through all of the reinterpreted sacrificial jargon is that there is a right way to sacrifice. Instead of outward ritual sacrifice, Buddha places emphasis on practical, moral activity as the true sacrifice. He suggests an inversion, a transformation of external ritual to internal activity38 as in his assertion:

'Do not think, Oh brāhmaṇa, that purity comes with burning firewood, for that is merely external.... I lay no wood, brāhmaṇa, for fires on altars, only within burns the fire I kindle.39

The external ritual sacrifices fail to be relevant for spiritual improvement. The only external activity that Buddha would recommend must be practical, compassionate and meritorious; sacrifice does exist in Buddhism, but in quite a different way than in the Vedic religion.

Under the entry of the word yañña in the PTS Pāli-English Dictionary we read:

almsgiving, charity, a gift to the Sangha or a bhikkhu. The brahmanical ritual of Vedic times has been given a changed and deeper meaning. Buddhism has discarded the outward and cruel form and has widened its sphere by changing its participant, its object, as well as the means
and ways of "offering", so that the yajña now consists entirely in a worthy application of a worthy gift to a worthy applicant. 48

In short, the entire brahmanical system is reinterpreted by Buddha. The traditional characteristics of a brāhman are called into question. It is one's conduct, not his birth, that serves as the criterion for purity and goodness. Yajña, the heart of Brähmanism, is also called into question, and Buddha reinterprets it and includes it in his Path. The way to sacrifice properly is stressed; it must involve compassion, non-injury to all beings, and the proper (self-less) intentions. Sacrifice is essential to Buddhism; the right sacrifice conforming to Buddha's teachings.
The Right Sacrifice

In his conversation with Ujjaya, Gautama remarks that he does not condemn every sacrifice:

'... But in whatever sacrifice, brähman, cows are not slaughtered... and living creatures are not destroyed, such sacrifice without slaughter, I do praise; such as, for instance, a long-established charity, an offering for the welfare of the family. ... such [sacrifice] the thoughtful should celebrate, such sacrifice bears great fruit; to the celebrants, they bring good, not misfortune. Great is the sacrifice, and the gods are pleased.'

This is, for Buddha, the right sacrifice. As we have seen with King Wide-realm's sacrifice, it too can be considered as properly performed:

... with ghee, and oil, and butter, and milk, and honey, and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished.

And there are sacrifices which are even more fruitful than this, such as gifts to saṃnāsas, "taking the refuge", becoming a monk, and so on. In other words, a "sacrifice" should be an act of compassionate giving, without the destruction, greed, and self-expectation common to the Vedic yajña. Or, besides being a particular act, sacrifice can be one's entire life. According to Buddha, all actions can be sacrificial provided they be performed without violence, without desire for benefits, and with compassion.

Since Buddha's reinterpretation of the Vedic yajña
favored the redirection of the ritual intention towards pragmatic, moral living, it could be said that the right sacrifice cannot be a particular rite; it cannot be particular at all. Buddha does not confine sacrifice to a specialized, esoteric performance; he expands its meaning and availability.

Although the Buddha's form of sacrifice is not "ritualistic", it does have certain essential elements. These are not "particulars", however, but are universal, all-embracing, exoteric characteristics of sacrificial activity. We will consider the following to be the most important elements of the Buddhist *vaţa*: *ahimsa*, the *appamaññas* and *dana*.

A requisite for Buddhist sacrifice is non-injury to animal (and human) life. This does, in fact, seem to contradict the essential constituent of "sacrifice", or rather the kind of cultic, altar sacrifice which involved the immolation of a victim. But as we have seen, Buddha condemns any sacrifice that involves slaughter. *Ahimsa*, in itself, does not allow for any kind of blood-sacrifice. This is precisely the point that Buddha is making: if a "sacrifice" involves injury, then it is not a true sacrifice.

The *appamaññas* (Brahma-viharas, "meditations") comprise four qualities: *metta*, *karuna*, *muditā* and *upekkhā* (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity). Collectively, we may consider them as a constituent of Buddhist sacrifice. *Metta*, for example, is the counterpart of *ahimsa*; "non-injury" is not merely a negative concept, for it implies the positive notion of loving kindness. These
qualities stress the positive aspects of sacrifice, while, reinforcing the destructive, demeritorious character of the Vedic vaiśa (which, needless to say, lacked these virtues). "The religious aspirant", writes Bahadur Mal, "is required, by these meditations [i.e. the four appamaññās], to send thoughts of love, compassion and sympathy to all quarters of the globe. The thought of love, without any bounds or measure, ought to flow towards all creatures.... He thus spreads his loving heart over the whole world.... This daily practice is recommended to all Buddhists." This is, indeed, a right kind of sacrifice!

Dāna is the first and most important Pāramitā ("perfection"). Giving is essential to sacrifice and worship, and as J. Wach says, "is so central to the followers of the Buddha that the whole message of the Enlightened One has been called dāna-kathā (giving sermon). It is dāna that makes sacrifice right and proper, for it is the outward and practical expression of ahiṃsā and the appamaññās. In other words, we could say that sacrifice and giving are identical in Buddhism.

Giving is the pure intent and content of every sacrifice, and Buddhism has attempted to put this notion into actual practice. All Buddhist doctrines seem to meet at this point; ahiṃsā and mettā are, as we have seen, complementary. The pāramitās, the precepts, the blessings, and even the doctrine of anattā are all related with regard to giving.

The doctrine of "no-soul" has been given much attention
in Buddhist studies, and it remains a problematic (one might even say controversial) topic. We will only deal with anattā in its moral aspect. "No-soul" (or "self"), on the level of morality, stresses self-less behaviour. If there is no emphasis on "me" or "mine" (if "I-ness" is renounced) then acts of giving will be altruistic, and hence not self-centred. Thus anattā, in its practical, ethical application, allows for true sacrifice; self-less, ego-less, "anattā" giving.

On this practical, moral level, then, with the doctrine of anattā Buddha has set an example of "self-sacrifice".50

There are, of course, right and wrong ways to give. Those gifts which are offered with greed and selfish desire for rewards are not sacrificial. As Buddha says:

'Monks, there are these two gifts, the material and the spiritual. Of these two gifts the spiritual is superior.'51

The text continues with the same procedure occurring with sharing, kindness and with sacrifice. We then find this beautiful gāthā:

He who has made the spiritual sacrifice
Without greed,
A sentient being, truly compassionate;
Such a being, the best of gods and men,
Is honoured by all as having attained saint-
hood.52
Summary:  Buddha as Reformer

Kṛṣṇa's reform of sacrifice had allowed for the masses to participate in worship. The same is true of Buddha. Both have removed the esoteric limitations of sacrifice, and this may be seen as a contributing factor to their popularity. The main difference between each is that Kṛṣṇa worked within the Vedic stream and incorporated his understanding of sacrifice into a theistic system; Buddha, on the other hand, did not attempt to reform sacrifice from within the Vedic tradition itself, nor did he proclaim a theistic type of sacrifice.

The fact that Buddha's critique of the Vedic vaṣṭha was so severe has perhaps contributed to his label of "heterodox". Also, since he was completely intolerant of the Vedic vaṣṭha (especially with regard to the slaughter of animals) Buddha has been credited with putting an end to the sacrifice of animals.

If we consider Aśoka's Rock Edicts as propounding the principles of Buddhism (or, at least principles in accord with Buddha's teachings) we may then regard the following inscriptions as evident of Buddha's sacrificial reform:

'No animal may be slaughtered for sacrifice.'

'Not to injure living beings is good.'

Buddha's recommendations, then, were decreed by the emperor.

The Hindu theory of avatāras places Buddha as the ninth, and in the Gītā Govinda we find this interesting sloka:

'Animated by compassion for creatures, Thou dost, as the Buddha, condemn the Vedic injunctions that prescribe the sacrifice of animals.'
Similarly, the Devī Bhāgavata has:

The Supreme took the form of Buddha in order
to put a stop to wrong sacrifices and to prevent
injury to animals.55

Both historical evidence (Aśokan inscriptions) and the
Vaiṣṇava avatāra theory refer to Buddha's reform of sacrifice. Now
there are many factors which give rise to the acquisition of the title
"avatāra". It is possible that Buddha's reform of sacrifice is one
contributing factor. As we have seen with Kṛṣṇa, his avatārhood is
also related to his sacrificial reform. Both Kṛṣṇa and Buddha (as
avatāras) have expanded the meaning of the Vedic yajña and allowed for
all to offer sacrifice, which had hitherto been a monopoly of the elite.
Perhaps this is why they had become so popular and, eventually,
deified.

In the way that they reformed sacrifice, Kṛṣṇa and Buddha
differ. By concentrating on desire-less activity, Kṛṣṇa is able to
remain tolerant of sacrifice despite its ritualism; he is not concerned
with the particular external aspects of activity at all. Buddha,
however, does not tolerate external sacrificial actions which do in
fact cause injury to animals. The key to understanding Kṛṣṇa's reform
of sacrifice is niṣkāma-karma; for Buddha's it is ahīmsa.

Buddha's reform centred on pragmatic activity. External
rituals are spiritually useless for attaining enlightenment. This is
why he has reinterpreted yajña and its various components in accord-
ance with his ethical system. Sacrifice is important for Buddhism;
we could even venture to say that it is essential. And although
Buddha's concept of true sacrifice does not consist in self-surrender
to "God" (at least not explicitly so) is it essentially different from
Krṣṇa's notion of true sacrifice? The gāthā which speaks of the one
who offers the "spiritual sacrifice" could very well have appeared
as a Gītā śloka! Buddha and Krṣṇa meet in their call for true sac-
rifice; whereas one was more interested in the "Sacred" of sacrifice
(as worship of the Lord), the other was more concerned with the "making"
of sacrifice (as right action). As Buddha says, if one performs sac-
rifice in the right way, without violence, and with compassionate
interests,

'... great is the sacrifice,
and the gods are pleased.'
NOTES

4. AN ii, 42.
5. AN ii, 205.
6. AN ii, 207.
7. See Part I, "The Vedic Yajña".
8. DN i, 127ff.
9. DN i, 141.
11. DN i, 143.
15. Sn, 52ff.
16. Ibid., 52-53.
17. Ibid., 54-55.
19. AN ii, 43. Cf. SN i, 76.
20. SN i, 144.
21. SN i, 169.
22. AN ii, 42.
23. AN ii, 207-208. Cf. SN i, 76.


27. Sn, 53.


31. See above, p. 9.

32. See N. Dutt, p. 10.

33. AN ii, 45.

34. AN ii, 42.

35. See A.B. Keith, *Religion of the Veda*, Vol. XXXII, Ch. 20 where he discusses three of these sacrifices. (The *nirargala* and the *samyegräja* may not have been the names of actual sacrifices for they are not explicitly documented in the Brahmanical texts.)

36. DN iii, 180.

37. DN i, 137.
38. See B. Mal, p. 128.
39. SN i, 169.
41. See, for example, DN i, 119; and DH 396ff.
42. AN ii, 42-43.
43. DN i, 141.
44. H. Saddhatissa, pp. 89-90.
45. B. Mal, p. 224.
46. Ibid.
47. L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Worship (Buddhist)", in ERE, XII, p. 758.
50. Monier-Williams, p. 130.
51. Itivuttaka, 102.
52. Ibid.
55. Quoted from S. Radhakrishnan, Upaniṣads, p. 50.
56. Itivuttaka, 102. See above, p. 52.
57. AN ii, 42-43.
PART III

The Old Sacrifice
and the New
Israelite Sacrifice

The concern with precision and detail in the performance of sacrifices is as noticeable in Israel as it is in India. And as the Brāhmaṇas (and other sacrificial treatises) prescribe the performance of the yajña in the Vedic religion, so also in the Old Testament, Leviticus and other priestly sources enunciate the sacrificial performance in the Israelite cult:

Yahweh called Moses, and from the Tent of Meeting addressed him, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel; say to them, 'When any of you brings an offering to Yahweh, he can offer an animal from either herd or flock. If his offering is a holocaust of an animal out of the herd, he is to offer a male without blemish; it is to be offered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, so that it may be accepted before Yahweh. He is to lay his hand on the victim's head, and it shall be accepted as effectual for his atonement. Then he must immolate the bull before Yahweh, and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall offer the blood. They will pour it out on the borders of the altar.... Then he must skin the victim and quarter it. The sons of Aaron, the priests, must put fire on the altar.... He is to wash the entrails and legs in water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. This holocaust will be a burnt offering and the fragrance of it will appease Yahweh.

It is difficult to speak of "sacrifice" as a unit.
Israelite sacrificial ritual entails various aspects which are operative in particular sacrifices. Basically, the notions of gift, communion and expiation can be applied to the three main types of sacrifice, namely the holocaust (‘ālāḥ), the communion sacrifice (zebâḥ ḫēlāmîm) and the expiatory sacrifice (ḥaṭṭâ‘î, "sin-offering", 'āmām, "sacrifice of expiation").

The symbolism of holocaust as gift centres on its aspect of totality; the victim is completely burned. Also, the ‘ālāḥ implies the transformation of the victim and its departure into the divine realm (‘olâh is derived from the root ālāḥ meaning "to ascend"). By burning the victim one is assured that the sweet fragrant smoke of the holocaust will ascend and reach its heavenly destination.

In the communion sacrifice the victim is shared by Yahweh and the sacrificers who partake of the "leftovers". This is a rather joyous occasion (perhaps because the worshippers are allowed to eat!). Communion is established between the human and the Divine, both partaking of the same substance. The zebâḥ or ḫēlāmîm is comparable with the Greek ritual, the thūsia, and it is this term that almost always occurs in the LXX for zebâḥ.

The expiatory sacrifice "appeases the anger of God against the sinner and averts punishment." These sacrifices (ḥaṭṭâ‘î and 'āmām) stress the importance of blood which contains (or is) life:
The life of the flesh is in the blood. This blood I [Yahweh] myself have given you to perform the rite of atonement for your lives at the altar. 

The sacrificial institution requires the function of priests and the adherence to the multitude of laws which dictate the correct performance of the sacrifices. This would seem to indicate that Israelite sacrifice is comparable with the Vedic rituals; both require specialization in performers and performance. We should note, however, this important difference: Israelite sacrifice was never elevated to such a powerful position that it ranked even higher than the gods (as did the Vedic yajñā). Furthermore, Israelite sacrifice is not offered to gods, but establishes communion with The God, Yahweh. And although the entire sacrificial performance seems to appear "quasi-magical", the essential focus in the sacrifice is Yahweh. H. Kraus holds that the "personal majesty of Yahweh gives a new direction to the magical powers set in motion by the offerings, and even when the 'sacred realm' is the real goal of the rites and sacral undertakings the personal God stands at the centre of this 'realm'."

The various intentions of the sacrifice are all related to the Israelite conception of God as one who intervenes in history. In contrast to Vedic (and other) sacrifice, Israelite ritual maintains its prominent status not because of the power it would have in itself, but because of its memorial character. Because Yahweh has acted with his people,
sacrifice is offered in homage, thanksgiving, reparation, in order to maintain the Divine-human relationship. Ritual serves as commemorating an event. And even though Israel may have utilized ritual forms which her neighbours employed, the ritual takes on a commemorative meaning; it is historicized. Since Yahweh delivered his people from Egypt a commemoration ritual (e.g. unleavened bread) re-enacts the event. As Moses tells the people:

"Keep this day in remembrance, the day you came out of Egypt, from the house of slavery, for it was by sheer power that Yahweh brought you out of it.... And on that day you will say to your son, 'This is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt.' The rite will serve as a sign on your hand would serve, or a momento on your forehead, and in that way the law of Yahweh will be ever on your lips, for Yahweh brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand."9

Whereas Vedic sacrifice was legitimized because of its relation with the creation of the cosmos, and because the regular performance of the sacrifice re-enacts and maintains the creation, Israelite sacrifice is legitimized because of its connexion with the salvific action of Yahweh, and the performance of the sacrifice commemorates Yahweh's intervention with his people. Thanksgiving sacrifices, then, remember Yahweh's acts with homage; communion sacrifices attempt to maintain Israel's relationship with Yahweh; and expiatory sacrifices attempt to re-establish the relationship, to repair transgressions which may damage the personal
relationship. In all these sacrifices the central element (or perhaps the central intention) concerns the personal relationship between man and his God.

Israelite sacrifice is thus an expression which was mostly concerned with the personal Deity and his alliance with the people of Israel. Yet in spite of this noble character of the sacrifice the problem of symbolic action arises. The rich symbolism of sacrificial action tends to mask the true intention of the act. If one must adhere to particular details in the sacrifice he may find himself lost, as it were, in the complicated ritual mechanics. Also, the symbolic ritual had in time become so elaborate that the sacrificer may have lost sight of the meaning or intention of the act; he would know only its external performance.

In sacrifice where symbolic action plays a substantial role, we find that the externalities of the act become all-important, and what may have been a deeply reverent act of holy sacrifice undergoes degradation, becoming a mere habitual ritual. And it is at this moment that creative thinkers speak out against the ritual sacrifice. In India, the Upaniṣadic sages voiced their criticisms of the Vedic sacrifices; in Israel the voices of the prophets are to be heard speaking out against the spiritual impotency of ritualism.
Some Prophetic Reactions

Although the number of passages in the Old Testament in which sacrifice is criticised is relatively small, their impact is quite noticeable. The anti-cultic statements stand out boldly, for they contradict the main stream of the Bible's teaching regarding worship.

Perhaps the strongest of such sacrificial criticisms is Amos 5:21-24:

'I hate, I reject your feasts, and I take no delight in your festive assemblies. Even if you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the "peace offering" of your fatted beasts I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs, ... in order that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

And Isaiah demands that the people listen to Yahweh's command:

'What are your endless sacrifices to me?... I am sick of holocausts of rams and the fat of calves. The blood of bulls and of goats revolts me,... Bring me your worthless offerings no more, the smoke of them fills me with disgust. New Moons, sabbaths, assemblies--I cannot endure festival and solemnity. Your New Moons and your pilgrimages I hate with all my soul.
They lie heavy on me,
I am tired of bearing them.
When you stretch out your hands
I turn my eyes away.
You may multiply your prayers,
I shall not listen.
Your hands are covered with blood,
wash, make yourselves clean.'12

The prophets demanded moral activity instead of the practice of cultic sacrifices. Immediately following the above passage in Isaiah we read:

'Take your wrongdoing out of my sight.
Cease to do evil, learn to do good,
search for justice,
help the oppressed,
be just to the orphan,
plead for the widow.'13

Virtuous behaviour is often contrast with sacrifices, for Yahweh demands:

\[
\text{love, not sacrifice} \\
\text{the knowledge of God, not holocausts}.14
\]

And in 1 Samuel 15:22 the prophet asks:

'Is the pleasure of Yahweh in holocausts and sacrifices or in obedience to the voice of Yahweh?
Yes, obedience is better than sacrifice, submissiveness better than the fat of rams.'

Since the worship of God is essential to (theistic) religion, the question often arises as to the type of worship one should offer. In Micah 6:6-8, the prophet represents an individual Israelite speaking in the name of Israel,
inquiring what he should do to properly worship the Lord:

'With what gift shall I come into Yahweh's presence and bow down before God on high?
Shall I come with holocausts, with calves one year old?
Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, with libations of oil in torrents?
Must I give my first-born for what I have done wrong, the fruit of my body for my own sin?'

Yahweh's response is given through the prophet:

'What is good has been explained to you, man;
this is what Yahweh asks of you:
only this, to act justly,
to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with your God.'

The prophetic criticism of sacrifice has been interpreted in two ways, namely (1) the criticisms employ the principle of relative negation and (2) the criticisms are "absolutely" negative.

The arguments used to support the contention that the prophetic derogations of the cult are only "relative" are:
(a) the prophets could not have been anti-cultic, for religion cannot exist without some form of cult. (b) When observing the various criticisms of the cult, one discovers that prayer is also under attack (Is 1:15). The prophet could not have seriously denounced prayer. (c) The apparent negative denouncements are not really meant negatively. For example, Ho 6:6 is to be understood along the lines of "relative negation": "I want love more than I want sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than holocausts."
Those who hold that the prophets really were antici-
cultic contend: (a) the prophetic statements must be taken
literally. For example, the words of Amos /"I hate, I despise
your feasts... (5:21) are to be taken as "absolute negation"
(i.e., relative negation cannot possibly apply here). Like-
wise, Ho 6:6 is to be understood as absolute: "I want love,
I do not want sacrifice (at all), (I want) the knowledge of
God, I do not want holocausts (at all)." (b) The particular
argument concerning prayer used by those who hold the "relative" opinion must recognize the context of Isaiah's denun-
ciation of prayer. The prophet's statement: "your hands are
covered with blood" (Is 1:15) suggests that prayers offered
by those whose hands are full of sacrificial blood cannot be
genuine or acceptable. (c) The prophets ought to be seen as
"radical"; they rejected the cult because it hindered true,
spiritual worship.

Biblical scholars have been at loggerheads over this
issue (viz. the prophetic criticism of sacrifice) and the
reader may consult the various scholars and their arguments
for the debate. 17 Although the textual evidence itself is not
conclusive (comparative statements are absent in Hebrew;
they are expressed by using negative contrasts), perhaps
"absolute negation" of Israelite sacrifice is what the pro-
phets had in mind. This is exactly what we observed with the
Upaniṣadic thinkers. The criticism of the existing form of
sacrifice provides for the possibility of reinterpretation.
The external sacrificial forms are not spiritually relevant.
This is where the sages of the Upaniṣads and the prophets of the Old Testament meet18; both have reacted to the external formalities of sacrifice and suggested moral and virtuous behaviour instead.

The motif of substituting ethico-religious practices for the performance of sacrifices occurs in the Old Testament. The above passages of the prophets speak of "love", (or compassion), "righteousness", "humility", "knowledge of God", "obedience to God" as religious recommendations to be practiced in stead of sacrifices. As we have seen with the Indian thinkers, even the particular components of sacrifice undergo reinterpretation with the substitution motif; let us compare Psalm 141:2:

'Let my prayers be counted as incense before Thee, the lifting up of my hands as the evening oblation.'

The motif is also very well displayed in Ecclesiasticus:

A man multiplies his offerings by keeping the Law; he offers communion sacrifices by following the commandments.
By showing gratitude he makes an offering of fine flour,
By giving alms he offers a sacrifice of praise.
Withdraw from wickedness and the Lord will be pleased,
withdraw from injustice and you make atonement.19

As the Indian reinterpretation of sacrifice often centred on man's self-less behaviour as authentic sacrifice or worship, we may compare Psalm 51:15-17:
'Oh Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will speak out your praise. Sacrifice gives you no pleasure; were I to offer holocaust, you would not have it. My sacrifice is this broken spirit, you will not scorn this crushed and broken heart.'

The notion of suffering is important. It accompanies acts of self-denial, and the one who suffers is performing a sacrifice. This sacrifice can be effective in that the sins of others are atoned for, and the suffering one, the sacrificer, can be exalted:

...through his wounds we are healed.
...If he offers his life in atonement, he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life and through him what Yahweh wishes will be done.20

It seems the prophets have redefined worship, and as N. Porteous writes, "...the prophets were more interested in what men did in their dealings with their fellows as they went about their daily business than with what took place at the sanctuaries."21 And in their criticism of sacrifice they looked towards an ethical, spiritual worship; a sacrifice in which the "blood of goats" and the "fat of rams" are not necessary. They also looked towards the future. The above passage of the "suffering servant" (ēbed Yahweh) of Deutero-Isaiah is prophecy:

'My servant will prosper, he shall be lifted up, exalted...'.22
The prophets had seen that external sacrificial rituals are fruitless, and they spoke of the one to come whose suffering sacrifice will atone for the sins of many. As the external cultic sacrifices were attempts to maintain the personal relationship of man and God, the sacrifice of the suffering one would be successful; he would be the ultimate embodiment of the human-Divine relationship.
The Sacrifice of Christ

Both Kṛṣṇa and Buddha had taken the prevailing anti-ritual thought into account when expressing their attitudes towards sacrifice. Likewise, Christ utilizes the prophetic criticisms of sacrifice, emphasizing the moral intent of the prophetic polemic.

Among the gospel accounts of Jesus' eating with sinners (Mt 9:10-13; Mk 2:15-17; Lk 5:29-32) Matthew's version should be noted:

While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When he heard this he replied, "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: 'What I want is love, not sacrifice.' And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners."

Note that Jesus quotes Hosea's criticism of sacrifice. The Pharisaic "obsession" with adhering to the Law is attacked; attending to the needs of sinners and outcasts is far more important than observing cultic laws.

The story of the picking of corn on the sabbath (Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5) also displays Jesus' attitude towards the petty observance of the law:
At that time Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him: "Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the sabbath." But he said to them, "have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple priests break the sabbath [by eating the food offerings] without being blamed for it?

...if you had understood the meaning of the words: 'What I want is love, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the blameless..."^23

In the well known passage relating the two great commandments (love of God and love of neighbour), Mark's version (12:28-34) gives this reply of the scribe:

'Well spoken, Master;...to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.' Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'

Jesus' depreciation of sacrifice is also displayed by his negative attitude towards the Temple.\^24 R.E. Clements thinks that Jesus' attitude towards the Temple "was perhaps the greatest offence he offered to his fellow Jews."\^25

Since the Temple is the locus ritus (the most important cultic activity being sacrifice), criticism of the Temple, of the sacrifices, and of the (cultic) Law are all related.\^26

Besides sharing the anti-sacrificial sentiment of the prophets, Jesus (more precisely, the author[s] of the texts) speaks of *himself* in sacrificial terms. We must keep in mind
that this apparent paradox is resolved by the type of sacrifice Jesus has in mind. He speaks of "giving his life as a ransom for many." This alludes to the suffering servant whose expiatory sufferings are effective in atoning "for many." And in John 17:19 we read:

'For their sake I consecrate myself, so that they too may be consecrated...'

"I consecrate myself" is virtually synonymous with "I sacrifice myself." Jesus is conscious of his sacrificial death, and indeed the sacrificial interpretation of his death is imparted post factum in the Pauline literature and in the Letter to the Hebrews.

Paul uses sacrificial terminology when referring to Christ's death. He speaks of the justification of all who are "redeemed in Christ Jesus who was appointed by God to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation through faith." Paul also calls Christ "our Paschal Lamb," who "gave himself up as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." These Old Testament sacrificial themes are given a new interpretation when applied to Christ's death as a sacrifice. L. Cerfau says that Paul certainly does not put Christ's death on the same footing as the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament. The expiatory value of Christ's death comes not merely from the fact that it is accompanied with bloodshed, but also because it is an act of love and obedience.

The notion of a bloody sacrifice is thus spiritualized, and lifted on to a higher plane, on which the immolation is none the less real for having the voluntary character of the offering emphasized. Christ's death is a true sacrifice, but in a transcendent order that makes it different from all others.
Christ's sacrificial death is seen as the perfect act of self-sacrifice embodying the notions of gift, communion and expiation. The Old Testament sacrifices were merely attempts; Christ's sacrifice, however, is perfectly efficacious. The author of Hebrews criticises the "old sacrifices" performed by priests who stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away.34

And in contrast to the ineffective priestly performance, Christ has offered one single sacrifice for sins,... By virtue of that single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying...
When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.35

The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice lies not only in its analogous relation with the expiatory character of the death of a victim; it is a voluntary, self-offering performed by Christ as priest. Moreover, Christ's life was sacrificial:

'love one another  
as I have loved you.  
A man can have no greater love  
than to lay down his life for his friends.'36

Christ's sacrifice is effective because of his love. Thus, Paul demands that his hearers "follow Christ by loving as he loved...giving himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God."37
Christ has fulfilled Malachi's prophecy of "pure sacrifice"\textsuperscript{38}, which is what Paul himself practices by "preaching the Good News"\textsuperscript{39}, and is the type of sacrifice he recommends:

\begin{quote}
worship Him spiritually by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

Spiritual worship (\textit{logikē latreia}) consists "not in outward rites, but in the movement of man's inward being."\textsuperscript{41} The spiritual sacrifices ("\textit{pneumatikas thūsias"}) which man should offer have been made acceptable to God by Christ.\textsuperscript{42}

With Kṛṣṇa's declaration that simple activities (such as eating, drinking) are \textit{sacrificial}\textsuperscript{43}, we may compare this similar statement of Paul's expressing the universality of sacrificial behaviour:

\begin{quote}
'Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God.'\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

The New Testament passages describing the instituting of the Eucharist (Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Co 11:23-25) obviously disclose the sacrificial character of the body and blood of Christ. The renowned phrase (occurring in the versions of Paul and Luke) "do this in memory of me" established the performance of a commemorating (re-enacting) ritual: the Mass. Is it possible, though, that "this" (\textit{touto}) may refer to something other than Jesus' breaking of the bread?

The eucharist itself has been interpreted as a
sacrifice; more particularly the true sacrifice prophesied by Malachi. This is evident in the Didachē and in much of the early patristic literature. J. de Watterville insists that "il est indéniable,... que les écrits des premiers siècles nous présentent l'eucharistie comme un rite sacrificiel." Watterville suggests further that the eucharist (as presented by the Fathers) was considered as

un mémorial de la passion qui rend présents le corps et le sang du Christ offert pour nous; comme l'accomplissement des sacrifices de l'Ancien Testament et à ce titre comme le sacrifice de la Nouvelle Alliance; comme un repas sacrificiel, une communion qui sanctifie et actualise les fruits de la croix, l'eucharistie nous apparaît avoir été conçue par les premières générations chrétiennes comme un sacrifice, et même le sacrifice pur et parfait, prophétisé par Malachie.

I wonder, then, whether the phrase "do this in memory of me" might recommend not only the performance of another memorial ritual (viz. the Mass), but also the practice of imitating Christ's life as the pure sacrifice. If we limit our understanding and interpretation of Christ's sacrifice to his death alone we might tend to limit true sacrificial behaviour to a particular ritual act. In other words, the sacrifice of Christ entailed his entire life of pure, compassionate activity and man's response, man's sacrifice, must consist in his imitation of Christ's life. The "this" of "do this in memory of me" might mean more than that man has to imitate Christ's lifting up of the cup and breaking of the bread. The imitatio Christi consists in sharing in Christ's suffering, in "dying with Christ" so that one may live with
Him. Man's self-sacrifice, his suffering, his "taking up of Christ's cross", his love; these may be seen as man's sacrificial actions which participate in the sacrifice of Christ and are truly pleasing to God.
Summary: Christ as Reformer

At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, an extraordinary phenomenon is related in the Gospel accounts: the veil of the Temple (behind which the Holy of Holies was situated) was torn in two. On this, C.F.D. Moule remarks:

...whether or not the Evangelists believed that it happened literally, at all events what they describe was a symbol of something dramatically new and revolutionary in the relations between God and man: a quite new way of approach—an open access to God. Sacerdotally speaking, approach to God had hitherto been by specially prescribed means—the manipulation by the accredited priests of the blood of animal victims. Now (for this seems to be what the symbol of the rent veil is saying), the way into the inner sanctum stands open; and that, because a Jew named Jesus from the Galilean town of Nazareth had died on a cross outside Jerusalem on a spring day in about A.D. 30.

Christ has made worship accessible to all. Whereas the Levitical sacrificial institution was esoteric, the new sacrifice of Christ allows for the participation of all. And the sanctuary which had been kept hidden from the worshippers and which was accessible only to the high priests is now exposed. By his sacrifice, Christ has removed the barrier which had hitherto restricted man's complete apprehension of the Sacred: the Temple veil has been torn in two.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews has often been concerned with the power and finality of Christ's sacrifice. He uses the symbol of the torn veil and relates it to Christ's sacrificial body:

...through the blood of Jesus we have the right to enter the sanctuary, by a new way
which he has opened up for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, his body.\textsuperscript{52}

The equation of the Temple veil with the body of Christ serves to indicate the intense effect of Christ's death: once his body is pierced and torn the veil is simultaneously rent. Man may now enter the sanctuary through the torn curtain; he may enter into the presence of God through the "torn body" of Christ.

Christ, the new sanctuary, has replaced the Temple. The old cultic institution comprised of animal sacrifices performed by cult specialists in a building "made by human hands",\textsuperscript{53} has been superseded by Christ's new form of worship. Christ's sacrifice has not only been credited to have abolished the barrier which had restricted entry into the sanctuary; it is also believed that it has removed the barrier which had separated the court of the Jews from the court of the pagans in the Temple. In Ephesians we read:

\begin{quote}
'But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law.... Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.'\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

Like Krsna and Buddha, Christ has reformed sacrifice by expanding its meaning. Also, he has eradicated the particular
and esoteric limitations pertaining to the performance of sacrifice, allowing all to offer true sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice has removed the distinction between esoteric cultic specialists ("priests") and the masses. Christ's sacrifice is universally effective; the opportunity to worship, to perform the true sacrifice (which he lived, taught and embodied) is available to all mankind.

Shortly before his arrest and crucifixion Jesus utters a prayer to the Father. Concerned for his disciples (and for the masses) he prays:

'Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth. I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us. as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.'
NOTES


3. de Vaux, p. 27.

4. See Yerkes, p. 94.

5. de Vaux, p. 91.


7. Lv. 17:11.


12. Is 1:11-16.


16. See Hyatt's article for a good discussion of the scholars and their arguments for both interpretations.

17. For a good taste of this lively debate see *Expository Times*, Vol. 58, 1946-47, for C.J. Cadoux "The Religious Value of Sacrifice" (pp. 43-46) and H.H. Rowley's response (pp. 69-71); N.H. Snaith "The Prophets and Sacrifice and Salvation" (pp. 152-153) and Rowley's response (pp. 305-307).

18. Is it not interesting that the prophets and the Upanishadic reacted to the sacrificial cult at the same time, i.e. circa 8th-5th century B.C.?


23. Mt 12:18.


26. It is interesting to note that the prophetic criticisms of sacrifice are accompanied by prophecies of the destruction of the Temple. See for example, Am 5:21ff; 9:1; Ho 8:13-14; 10:1ff; Mi 3:9-12.

27. Mk 10:45. Whether this an authentic document saying or not, Jesus' messianic role is undoubtedly related to the Suffering Servant. (See the Jerome Biblical Commentary on the text in question.)


29. "hagios" is more or less equivalent with "sacer". Raymond E. Brown discusses the sacrificial significance of this verse; see his commentary in *The Gospel According*

30. Rm 3:24-25. This may also be translated "whom God has brought forward to be a propitiation (hilasterion). This intends "expiation" as Cerfau has shown in Christ in the Theology of St. Paul (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), p. 144f.

31. 1 Co 5:7.
34. Heb 10:11.
38. Mt 1:11; 3:3.
40. Rm 12:1.
42. 1 P 2:5.
43. BG 9:27.
44. 1 Co 10:31.
47. Ibid., p. 201-202.


50. Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45.


53. For the contrast of cheiropoiētos and acheiropoiētos see Mk 14:58; Ac 7:48; 17:24; 2 Co 5:1; Heb 9:11.


CONCLUSION

The textual material that we have examined affords the following observations:

1. Both in India and Israel, the priests governed the cultic laws and traditions of the flourishing sacrificial cult.

2. Reaction to the sacrificial cult appeared and was articulated by the sages of the Upaniśads and by the pre-exilic prophets. (This phenomenon occurred in India and in Israel at approximately the same time, i.e. circa 800 to 500 B.C.). These thinkers rejected the performance of ritual sacrifice which they considered to be spiritually useless.

3. This reaction paved the way for the reformers; Kṛṣṇa and Buddha have reformed sacrifice in India (the former working from within the Vedic line, the latter working against it), and Christ has reformed sacrifice in Israel.

4. All three individuals have incorporated the anti-ritual thoughts that preceded them, but at the same time, all three recommend the performance of sacrifice. This is possible because of the "new meaning" they have given to sacrifice. All three have articulated what each believes to be the true sacrifice. Their ideas of this true sacrifice are basically the same: unselfish giving is emphasized in each case.

The phenomenon of sacrificial reform has had tremendous effects throughout the history of religions. It may be seen
as partly responsible for the establishment of (Vaishnava) Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, for our three reformers are the founders of these great religious traditions. Also, we should note that sacrificial reform occurred in other traditions and with other founders than the ones we have studied here. Besides Krsna, Buddha and Christ, there are Mahavira, Nank, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mani, Muhammad; all of whom can be regarded as reformers of sacrifice as well as founders of world religions. It would be fruitful indeed to undertake a study dealing with all of these individuals and the phenomenon of sacrificial reform.

As we have seen, sacrifice has undergone various stages of development; it has a history. Before its institutionalization as an altar-cult phenomenon, sacrifice existed without the specialized elements of priests, altars, formulae, treatises, and so on. The primitive form of sacrifice, though varying in each culture, may be depicted, in general, as activity which sought to relate, in one way or another, with the Sacred. Marett speaks of the sacramental character of primitive man's simple activities such as eating, washing, mating, dancing, and so on. 1 "The ideal of the religious man", writes Eliade, "is, of course, that everything he does should be done ritually, should, in other words, be a sacrifice. In every primitive society...the work to which every man is called constitutes a sacrifice of this kind." 2

This is precisely what our three reformers have proclaimed. They have reformed sacrifice by insisting on a
return, as it were, to the simple, primeval life of sacrificial activity. They rejected the ritualistic institution of sacrifice in which worship had become stale and empty. They also rejected the esoteric restrictions of worship imposed by the sacrificial specialists. Civilization has produced a multiplicity of specialized occupations, one of which was the ruling of the institution of sacrifice by the priests.

By rejecting the cultic performance of sacrifice and the priestly institution as well, our three reformers enabled the masses to freely participate in worship. Since the priestly sacrificial cult was essential to the traditions out of which our reformers have emerged, and since altar sacrifice was considered to be the way to be religious, objection to this priestly monopoly was well received by the public. The common people could now (literally) afford to offer sacrifice without the need of altars, animal victims, or priestly supervision.

The true sacrifice as depicted by Krishna, Buddha and Christ concerns, in all cases, selfless behaviour. These three reformers lived compassionate lives of self-sacrifice, and they recommend that this be followed in human religious life.

An objection might be raised with regard to acts of self-sacrifice, namely, that they tend towards masochism. Indeed, certain types of asceticism appear to be nothing but self-torture. Self-denial can take extreme forms, no doubt,
but the kind of self-denial insisted upon by Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Christ, and others is the epitome of blessed activity.

J. Wach considers self-denial as a universal religious phenomenon, but he regrets:

It is the exception rather than the rule that in our modern Western civilization worship of one's God and care for one's brothers could become separated and one played against the other. If we can be proud at having left behind the cruder practices of an extreme asceticism, there is less reason for rejoicing that so many of us moderns have at the same time, because we see no motivation for it, abandoned all and every act of self-denial.

It is strange that the two related concepts—sacrifice and self-denial—are affirmed on the one hand as positive, universal, religious acts, while on the other (in the secular context) are seen negatively. We often use the expression "So and so sacrificed this for that" to mean that someone lost something and received even less in return; in this sense, sacrifice is something to be avoided, it results in complaint. In the religious context, however, sacrifice is the epitome of human expression; it has abundant value, for it provides for the encounter of God and man.

Since Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Christ have reformed sacrifice so as to make spirituality more available to all people, regardless of birth or position in life, and since the true sacrifice they propounded (and embodied) is the epitome of religious activity (i.e. unselfish giving), then is it possible that their reform of sacrifice contributed to their popularity among the masses? The phenomenon of sacrificial reform has allowed for a viable comparison of these three
individuals; their reform of sacrifice displays similar elements in all three cases, such as the synthetic or reconciliatory character of the reform, similarities in message concerning the giving of self as the (most) spiritual sacrifice, appeal to the people and the satisfaction of their religious needs, and so on. It is not unlikely that Krishna, Buddha and Christ's reform of sacrifice was at least one factor which contributed to their popularity among the masses.

Could their reform of sacrifice have been a contributing factor to their having received divine titles? This is a speculative matter, for the textual evidence itself cannot provide the answer. Yet if we conjecture that the reform of sacrifice is one of the functions of the incarnation, then we could arrive at this formula: the Divine activity of incarnation enriches the human religious activity of sacrifice, allowing for true communion to take place.
NOTES


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