

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CEREMONY
OF SACRIFICE, ACCORDING TO HUBERT
AND MAUSS.

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II. THE PROGRAM OF SACRIFICE

(Continued)

The Sacrificateur.

There are sacrifices in which no other actors than the sacrificer and the victim play a part. But generally one does not dare approach sacred things directly and alone; they are too serious and too lofty. An intermediary or a guide is necessary. It is the priest. He is more familiar with the world of gods; he can come nearer to it and with less fear than one of the laity. At the same time he prevents sinister errors. Sometimes even the profane man is excluded from the temple and the sacrifice. The priest is sometimes marked with a divine seal. He bears the name, title or costume of his god; he is his minister, his incarnation, or at least the depository of his power. He is the visible agent of the consecration in the sacrifice; in summary, he is on the threshold of the sacred and the profane worlds and he represents them at one and the same time.

By virtue of his religious character, one might believe that he could enter into the sacrifice without preliminary initiation. In fact, that is what took place in India. The Brahman priest had no need of a new consecration, save in extraordinary cases, for there were rites which required from the sacrificateur as well as the sacrificer a special preparation, more simple, however, than in the case of a profane person.

Among the Hebrews, the priest had to take supplementary precautions. He had to wash himself before entering the temple; he had to abstain from wine and fermented drinks. He dressed in

linen clothes which he took off after the sacrifice and put in a consecrated place, because they were sacred and it would be dangerous for a profane person to touch them. The priest himself in his dealings with the divine was constantly threatened with the unnatural death which had befallen the sons of Aaron.

But he did not sanctify himself for his own sake only: he did it also for the sake of another person or of the society in the name of which he acted. That was particularly true of the feast of the Grand Pardon. On this day the chief-priest represents the people of Israel. He asks pardon for himself and for Israel. Such grave functions necessitates special preparations in harmony with the half divine role of the preacher. Seven days before the feast, the chief priest isolates himself from his family. Like the Hindu sacrificer, he is the object of all sorts of care. The day before, he is surrounded by old men who read to him the section of the Bible where the ritual of Kippur is revealed. He is given a little to eat whereupon he is led to a special room where he is left after he has sworn not to change the rites. Then, all crying together, they separate. All night he must watch, for sleep is a time when involuntary impurities may be contracted (referring to seminal excretions, and to the belief that during sleep the spirit is out of the body and cannot re-enter). Thus the pontifical ritual tends towards the same end. It confers upon the chief priest an unusual sanctification making him able to support the burden of sins which has gathered on his shoulders.

The Place; the Instruments.

It is not sufficient that the sacrificer and the priest are sanctified in order that the sacrifice may begin. The latter cannot take place anywhere at any time, for all moments of the day or of the year are not equally propitious to sacrifices; there are some which are definitely excluded. In Assyria, for instance, the 7th, 14th, and 21st of the month were forbidden days. According to the nature and object of the ceremony, the hour of celebration differed. Now it had to be during the day, now in the evening or at night. The scene of the sacrifice itself must be sacred; taking place outside a sacred spot, the sacrifice is only a murder. When the sacrifice is made in a temple or in a spot already made sacred by a previous sacrifice, the preliminary consecrations are useless or at least very much reduced. That is the case with Hebrew sacrifice as it is regulated by the ritual of the Pentateuch. It is celebrated in a unique

temple, consecrated in advance, chosen by the divinity and made divine by his presence.

The Hindus had no temple. Every one could choose a place where he wanted to sacrifice; but this place had to be consecrated in advance by means of a certain number of rites, the most important of which consisted in the building of fires. One of these was lighted by friction so that it would be entirely new. Under these conditions, it had a magic virtue which dispersed evil spirits and demons. But it was more than a killer of demons, it was the god himself. According to certain old Biblical legends, the fire of the sacrifice was none other than the divinity himself who devoured the victim, or to speak more exactly, it was the sign of the consecration. Whatever divinity the sacrificial fire has is communicated to the place of sacrifice and consecrates it. This place is rectangular and fairly extensive and is called *Vihara*.

Within this space is another called *vedi*, whose sacred character is still more marked; it corresponds to the altar. The *vedi* thus holds a position more central than the fires which surround it. The outlines of the *vedi* are carefully drawn on the ground; for this purpose, they take a sword of magic wood and scratch the earth lightly, saying: "The wicked one is killed." All impurity is thus destroyed; the magic circle is drawn, the place is consecrated. Within the limits of the circle, the earth is dug up; the hole constitutes the altar. After a lustration, at once expiatory and purificatory, the bottom of the hole is covered with different kinds of turf. On this turf, the gods to whom the sacrifice is made, sit down; from there, invisible but present, they take part in the ceremony.

One of the most important instruments used is the *yupa*, the stake to which the animal is going to be tied. It is not of mundane material, but the tree out of which it has been made had already of itself a divine nature which unctions and libations have further re-enforced. It holds an eminent position because to it will be tied the most important of the members who will take part in the ceremony, namely, the victim. The Brahmans also prescribe it as one of the points where all the religious forces which take part in the sacrifice converge and concentrate. Its slender stem refers to the way in which the gods mounted to Heaven; its upper part gives power over celestial things; its middle section, power over things of the air; its lower part, power over things of the earth. But at the same time it represents the sacrificer; it is the shape of the sacrificer which determines its dimensions. When one anoints it, one

anoints the sacrificer, and when one strengthens it, it is the sacrificer who is strengthened. In it operates in a stronger manner than in the priest this fusion of the gods and of the sacrificer which will become more complete in the victim.

Everything is now in order. The actors are ready. The entrance of the victim is going to begin the play. One essential character of the sacrifice must be noted: its perfect continuity. From the beginning to the end it must continue without interruption and in the ritual order. All the operations must succeed each other without a gap and in their proper places. The forces which are in action escape from the sacrificer and the priest and react terribly against them, if they are not exactly directed in the prescribed way. This exterior continuity of rites is not enough. There must be a firm constancy in the state of mind in which the sacrificer, the priest and the victim find themselves concerning the gods, the victim, and the vow whose execution is demanded. In other words, the internal attitude must correspond to the external attitude.

The Victim.

A series of circles are drawn inside the sacred space. On the exterior circle stands the sacrificer; then come successively the priest, the altar and the stake. Outside the circle, among the laity in whose interest the sacrifice takes place, religiosity is at a minimum. Thus the whole life of the sacrificial performance is centered around the altar and the victim, which is now ready to be brought on the scene.

Sometimes the victim, if an animal, was congenitally sacred: that is, the species to which it belonged was united to the divinity by special ties. These cases comprise those where the victims are totemic beings or former totems. But it is not logically necessary for sacred animals to have had this totemic character. The truth is, that in some way or other there is a definite relation between the god and his victim and the latter often arrives at the altar already sacred: hence no preliminary consecrating ceremony is necessary. But generally, appropriate rites were necessary to put it into the religious state which the part it was to play required. In certain cases where it had been designated a long time in advance, these ceremonies took place before it was led to the sacrifice. Often, also it had nothing sacred about it at the moment. It was only expected to fulfil certain conditions which would make it fit to receive consecration. It had to be without fault, sickness, infirmity and have

a certain color, age, sex, according to the effects desired to be produced. To raise it to the required degree of religiosity, it had to be submitted to a collection of ceremonies.

In certain countries, they dressed it up, painted it, bleached it, ornamented the horns, put a crown on the head, decorated it with ribbons, thus giving it a religious character. Sometimes even the costume was like that of the god who presided. This demi-consecration could be obtained in other ways. In Mexico and Rhodes, the victim was intoxicated. Intoxication was a sign that the divine spirit was taking possession of the victim.

The Hindu ritual enables us to follow the whole operation of consecration. After the victim is bathed, it is brought forward while different libations are poured upon it. Then the victim is addressed, laudatory adjectives being used while it is implored to be quiet. At the same time, the god of beasts is implored to give his consent to the taking of one of his flock as a victim. These precautions, propitiations, have a double purpose. First, they make the victim sacred by calling it excellent names and declaring it to be the property of the gods. They serve especially to induce the victim to allow itself to be sacrificed peaceably, not to avenge itself once dead on man. These usages do not mean, as has been said, that the sacrificed animal is always a former totemic animal. The explanation is nearer. There is in the victim a spirit which it is the object of the sacrifice to liberate. This spirit must be conciliated; otherwise, once freed, it would become dangerous.

The victim is now tied to the stake. At this moment, the *sacred* character which it is in process of acquiring is already such that the sacrificer can no longer touch it; even the attending priest hesitates to approach it. He has to be invited and encouraged by a special formula which a priest addresses to him. Nevertheless, to increase to the last limit this religious character which is already high, three series of rites are necessary. The animal is made to drink water, for water is divine; it is brushed underneath, on the back, everywhere. Then it is anointed with butter on the head, throat, two shoulders, croup and between both horns. These anointments correspond to those which were made with oil in the Hebrew sacrifice, to the ceremony of *molasalsa* in Rome, to the grains which were thrown on the animal in Greece. Finally, after these lustrations and anointments there comes, in the Vedic ritual a last ceremony which has for its purpose the enclosing of the victim itself in a last magic circle, smaller and more divine than the others. A

priest takes a brand from the fire of the gods and carrying it in his hand circles the animal three times. In India they would thus walk around all victims, with or without fire; it was the god Agni who was surrounding the animal on all sides, making it sacred, isolating it.

But the victim must still maintain relations with man. The means employed to insure this communication is furnished in the religion which we are studying, through the principles of magic and religious sympathy. Sometimes there is direct representation; a father is represented by his son whom he is sacrificing. In general the sacrificer having undertaken to defray the expense of sacrifice, is, ipse facto, a representation. In other cases, this association of victim and sacrificer is realized by a material contact between the sacrificer (sometimes the priest) and the victim. This contact is obtained, in the Semitic ritual, by the imposition of hands or equivalent rites. As a result, the victim already representing the gods, is also found to represent the sacrificer. More than that, their personalities fuse. Even the identity is such, at least in the Hindu sacrifice, that from now on, its approaching death has a kind of reacting effect upon the sacrificer. Hence an ambiguous situation arises for the latter. He has to touch the animal in order to stay united with it; nevertheless, he is afraid to touch it, for he thereby exposes himself to death. The ritual solves the difficulty by a middle road. The sacrificer touches the victim only through the intermediary of the priest who himself in turn touches the victim only through the intermediary of an instrument.

The culminating point of the ceremony has now been reached. There remains only the supreme act. The victim is already sacred in the highest degree. But the spirit which is inside it, the divine principle it contains, is still attached to the body and remains as the last tie binding it to things profane. Death is going to disengage it. It is the solemn moment.

It is a crime that is about to begin, a kind of sacrilege. So while the victim is being led to the place of murder, certain libations and expiations are presented in the rituals. They ask forgiveness for the act, they weep for it as if it were a relative. They ask its pardon before striking it. They address the species to which it belongs, as if it were a vast familiar clan whom they supplicate not to take revenge for the injury about to be committed on one of its members. Under the influence of the same ideas, it happened that the author of the murder was punished; they struck him or exiled him.

In Athens, the priest at the sacrifice of the *Bouphonia* fled as he threw away his hatchet; all those who had taken part accused each other; finally they condemned the knife and threw it into the sea.

Also absolute quiet prevails immediately before death. In India the priests turn around; the sacrificer and the officiating priest turn around murmuring propitiatory verses. Nothing can be heard but the orders given in a clear voice by the priest to the sacrificateur. The latter then severs the cord which surrounds the throat of the animal; the victim is dead; the spirit has departed.

The rites of the murder were extremely varied. But each cult required that they be scrupulously observed. To change them was generally a black heresy punishable by excommunication and death. The fact is that by the murder, an ambiguous or blind force was leased, formidable because of the very fact that it was a force. It therefore had to be limited, directed and deified. Hence the rites. Generally the neck of the victim was cut. Slashing was an ancient rite which in Judea appeared only in cases of penal execution, and in Greece in certain feasts. Elsewhere the victim was smothered or hanged. Generally a prompt death was desired. If the cries of the animal were accounted bad omens, they tried to stifle them or conjure them away. Often they tried to regulate the flowing of the consecrated blood. They saw to it that it fell in a propitious spot or else that not a drop of it was scattered. Sometimes these precautions were indifferently taken. In Arcadia, Greece, the rite commanded that the victim be cut into pieces; interest might be taken in prolonging the agony. The slow as well as rapid death could diminish the responsibility of the sacrificateur. The rites were more simple when grain or cakes were sacrificed.

By this distinction, the essential act of the sacrifice was accomplished. The victim was separated definitely from the profane world; it was consecrated, sacrificed, and various languages applied the term sanctification to the act which put it in this state. But the phenomenon had also another aspect. If on the one hand the spirit had flown away, had gone completely behind the veil into the world of gods; on the other hand, the body of the animal remained visible and tangible; and it was also, by the act of consecration, filled with a sacred force which isolated it from the profane world. Its remains were surrounded with a religious aspect, and were now subject to a double series of operations. What was left of the animal was either allotted entirely to the sacred world, or to the profane world, or shared between the two.

Its relegation to the sacred world was realized by different methods. One of them was to put certain parts of the animal's body into contact with the altar of the god or some objects especially sacred to him. During the Hebraic hattat of the day of Kippur as it is described in the first verses of the fourth chapter of Leviticus, the sacrificateur dips his finger in the blood which is presented him. He makes aspersion seven times before Jahweh, that is to say, on the veil, and puts a little blood on the horns of the altar of the perfumes, inside the temple. Elsewhere they smear the sacred stone or the figure of the god. In Greece, in sacrifices to water gods, they caused the blood to flow into the water.

Varying dispositions were made of the corpse. The idol was dressed in the animal's skin. In one form of Hebrew sacrifice, the assistants cut the body into pieces, brought them and the head to the priest who placed them on the altar.

Burning was another method. In all Hebrew sacrifices, the fat and the viscera were burned in the fire on the altar. The parts consecrated to the god personified in the consecrated were supposed to give a pleasant odor and the god ate really and substantially of the sacrificed flesh. The Homeric poems speak of the gods seated at sacrificial banquets. In the Bible the divine fire is said to flare up and cause the flesh on the altar to disappear. Certain preparations were made of the flesh remaining. The priest took his share, which was still divine. The editors of the Pentateuch have been busy determining whether the victim in the hattat should be burned or eaten by the priests. Moses and the sons of Aaron were in disagreement on this point, according to Leviticus x., 16.

In the expiatory sacrifices of the Romans, the priests ate the flesh. Again, among the Hebrews, in the sacrifice called *zebahshelamin*, the priests kept the parts specially presented to Jehovah; the shoulders and the heart. The parts reserved for the priests could be eaten only by them and their families, and in a sacred place. The Greek texts contain a number of directions as to the disposal of the flesh.

The burning by the priest had for its object the elimination from the temporal medium the parts of animals which had been destroyed. There are cases where the whole body and not certain parts was treated (burned, etc.).

Among cases of complete destruction, there are a certain number which present a special aspect. The sacrifice of the victim and the destruction of its body took place at one and the same time.

Such were sacrifices by precipitation. Whether an animal was thrown into a chasm, from a tower in a city, or from the top of a temple, the brutal separation which was a sign of consecration was ipso facto realized. These sorts of sacrifices addressed the victim to infernal deities or evil spirits. They imagined that the spirit of the victim with all evil powers within it, had gone away to join the world of evil powers. The essential thing was to eliminate it, and this was done without first putting the victim to death.

The remains, when not disposed of, served the purpose of communicating to the sacrificers or the objects of sacrifices, certain religious qualities aroused by the consecration. This was usually done by a simple benediction. Generally, recourse was had to more material rites: aspersion of blood, application of skin, anointments by grease, contact with the ashes of the cremated body. The means of realizing the most perfect communication was to leave part of the victim to the sacrificer, who ate it. By eating a part he assimilated the qualities of the whole.

These claims to the victim on the part of the sacrificer were always limited by the ritual. Often he had to eat it at a given time. Leviticus allows the remains to be eaten the day after the ceremony. If there was any left on the third day, it had to be burned; whoever ate it, sinned gravely. Generally the victim was to be eaten on the same day as the sacrifice; when it took place in the evening nothing was to remain in the morning. Analogous restrictions are found in Greece. These precautions were intended to prevent the remains of the victim, being sacred, from losing virtuosity by contact with profane objects. Religion defended the sanctity of sacred objects at the same time that it protected the vulgar against their malignity. The sacrificer could touch and eat the victim after death because consecration had put him in no danger. Those parts not used had to be watched over, nevertheless. The remains of the cremation were put in special places protected by religious interdictions. The study of the Hindu animal sacrifice presents an ensemble of all these practices just described. Immediately after the stuffing of the victim, the sacrificial purity is assured by a special rite. A priest leads the wife of the sacrificer to the body and during different washings, she pours pure water into all the orifices of the animal. After the first cut, the blood is allowed to escape for it is intended for the evil spirits.

Now comes the ceremony of dedicating to the god the essential part of the victim. It is raised quickly with all sorts of care and

propitiatory words. They take it in a procession, with the priest carrying it and the sacrificer holding on to the priest, to the sacred fire where it is cooked so that the fat drips drop by drop into the fire.

Once cooked, it is thrown into the fire in the midst of benedictions and invocations. This is at the end of the second dedication to the gods. That done, they return to the animal, scorch it, and cut from its body eighteen pieces which are boiled together. The fat, the bouillon, the froth which forms in the pot is the sacrifice to the god or the pair of gods concerned. What is thus destroyed represents formally once again the whole victim; it is a new complete expulsion of the animal. Finally, among the eighteen pieces, a certain number are taken out and assigned to different divinities or mythical personalities.

But seven of these parts serve for an entirely different purpose; through them the sacred power of the victim is to be transmitted to the sacrificer. The name given to these pieces is *ida*. This name is also that of the deity which personifies the animals. The fact is that the deity is incarnated in the course of the ceremony. The seven pieces are put into the hands of a priest. The other priests and the sacrificer surround him and touch him. While in this position, the deity is invoked. The deity is not only invited to be present at and participate in the ceremony, but to descend in the offering. It is a real transubstantiation which is at work. In answer to the appeal, the deity comes bringing with her all sorts of mythical powers, those of the sun, wind, air, sky, earth, animals, etc. Then the priest holding the pieces in his hands eats his share, and then the sacrificer does the same. And everybody remains seated in silence until the sacrificer has rinsed his mouth. Then the priests, each representing a god, are given their shares.

Having distinguished, in the various rituals which have just been compared, between the rites of dedication to gods, and those of utilitarian value to men, it is important to note their analogy. All are made with the same methods. In both instances we have sprinkling with blood: the putting on of the skin either on the altar or on the idol, or on the sacrificer or on the objects of the sacrifice: the communion, fictitious or mythical when concerning the gods, real when concerning men. At bottom, these different operations are all substantially identical. It is a question of putting the victim into contact either with the sacred world or the people or things which are to profit by the sacrifice. Sprinkling, touching, the putting on of the skin, are only different ways of establishing a contact

which the communal eating carries to its highest degree; for it produces not only a simple contact, but a mingling of two substances which are absorbed in each other to a point when they become indiscernible. And if these two rites are similar at this point, it is because the aim in each case is analogous. In both cases it is a question of communicating the religious force which the successive consecrations have accumulated in the sacrificed object, to the sphere of the religious on the one hand, and to the profane world on the other. The two systems of rites contribute each in its way to the establishment of this continuity which appears, after this analysis, to be one of the most remarkable features of the sacrifice. The victim is the intermediary by means of which the current is established. Thanks to it, all the spirits which meet at the sacrifice are united in it. All the forces which meet there, fuse.

But there is not only a resemblance but a solidarity between these two kinds of practices. The first is a condition of the second. In order that the victim may be used by men, the gods must have their share. The victim, in fact, is charged with so much sanctity, that a mortal, in spite of the preliminary consecrations which have in a measure raised him above his ordinary and normal nature, cannot touch it with impunity. Therefore this religiosity must be lowered a few degrees. Death had already achieved this result in part. In fact, it is in the spirit that this religious force is most highly concentrated, and once the spirit has departed, the victim becomes more approachable. It can be handled with less care. There were even sacrifices where all danger had disappeared after death; there were those in which the whole animal was utilized by the sacrificer without anything being reserved for the gods.

Thus the numerous rites which are practiced on the victim can, in their essential features, be summarized in a very simple scheme. They begin with the act of consecration; then the forces which this consecration has aroused and concentrated in the victim, through its killing are allowed to escape, some to the beings of the sacred world, others to the spirits of the mundane world. The series of states through which it passes might be sketched by a curve; it rises to a maximum degree of religiosity, at which point it stays but for a moment and from which it descends progressively. We shall see that the sacrificer passes through similar phases.

The Departure.

The useful effects of the sacrifice have been produced ; however, all is not finished. The group of people and things gathered about the victim have no longer any reason for being there ; still they must go away slowly without getting hurt, and as there are rites which created the sacrifice, there are also rites which alone can set free the elements of which it is composed. The ties which united the priests and the sacrificer to the victim have not been broken by the sacrifice ; all those who took part have acquired a sacred character which isolates them from the profane world. They must be reinstated. They must step out of the magic circles in which they are still enclosed. Besides, in the course of the ceremony, faults may have been committed which must be effaced before the ordinary life is resumed. The rites by which this exit from the sacrificial spot is made are connected with those which are observed prior to the entrance of the interested parties.

In the Hindu animal sacrifice, as elsewhere, in all sacrifices based on the same ritual, this last phase of the sacrifice is very accurately marked. What remains of the butter and the fat is sacrificed on the grass ; then a certain number of instruments is destroyed in the sacrificial fire : the sod ; the stick or baton of the one who recites ; the boards which surrounded the altar. The water is poured out and a libation is made over the stake. Sometimes the stake is carried home, or else it is buried like the sod. All else that remains of the offering is destroyed in the fire ; the utensils are cleaned and carried away.

As for the people, the priests, the sacrificer and his wife come together and sprinkle each other and wash their hands. The rite has a double purpose : in the first place it cleanses the people of the faults which may have been committed in the sacrifice ; and, secondly, of those faults which it was the aim of the sacrifice to wipe out.

An exaggerated form of the same rite will make the meaning clearer ; that is, the bath which ends the sacrifice of the soma or plant sacrifice. After the instruments have been put away, the sacrificer takes a bath in a placid pool formed by a stream of water. All the remains of the sacrificed plant are thrown into the water. The sacrificer then submerges the sacrificial belt which he has worn at the animal sacrifice ; he does the same with the clasp which holds together certain parts of the woman's costume, the turban, the

skin of the antelope. Then he and his wife, in the water up to their necks, take their baths while praying and washing each other. That done, they emerge and put on fresh clothes. Thus all danger accruing from the sacrifice is washed away.

The biblical texts are less complete and clear, but we do find some allusions to the same practices of the chief priest washing himself and putting on fresh clothes. In Greece, after the expiatory sacrifices, the participants who had refrained as much as possible from touching the victim, washed their clothes in a stream or river before returning home to the city. The utensils were carefully washed when not destroyed. These practices limited the action of the consecration. They are important enough to have existed in the Christian mass. The priest, after communion, washes the chalice and his hands; after that, the mass is at an end, the cycle is closed and the officiating clergyman utters the final and liberating formula: *Ite, missa est*.

The religious state of the sacrificer thus describes a curve, symmetrical with that of the victim. He begins by rising steadily into the religious sphere; he reaches a culminating point from whence he descends toward the profane. Likewise, there are curves for all the beings and objects which play a part in the sacrifice. But if these curves have the same general configuration, they have not all the same height; that of the victim is always the highest.

Besides, it is clear that the respective importance of these phases of ascension and descension may vary infinitely according to circumstances. That will be shown in the following section.

III. HOW THE SCHEME VARIES ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL FUNCTION OF SACRIFICE

The sacrificial scheme previously outlined was not inflexible. Different elements in it would at various times receive more attention than at others: shifting around, etc., but would retain common elements, however.

Since the object of the sacrifice is to influence the religious state of the sacrificer or the object of the sacrifice, the general picture will vary according to what condition exists before the sacrifice. If it is a neutral one, the purpose of the sacrifice is to create a sacred

state. This is true of initiation and ordination. In this case ceremonies of introduction are very elaborate; conversely, ceremonies of exit are very simple, the reason being that the sacred state once realized, it was not desire to lose it by any prolonged and complex series of rites while the sacrificer was returning to the profane world. The changes produced in these types of sacrifices were of varying duration. Sometimes a real metamorphosis was implied; for instance, when a man touched the flesh of the human victim sacrificed to Zeus (the wolf), he was changed into a wolf. Since the end of the whole rite is to enhance the religiosity of the sacrificer, it is imperative that the latter be associated as closely as possible with the victim. The sacred passes from the victim, where it has been amassed, to the sacrificer or object, like a current. Therefore, this contact is realized after death, although it could happen that an imposition of the hands would bring about contact even before the death of the victim—in all cases, however, the imposition of the hands was secondary. The most essential contact was that after death. Then it was that communion was practised.

But it is not unusual for the man who is to sacrifice to be already marked with a sacred character. This may be either good or bad. The sinner, like the criminal, is a sacred being. If he sacrifices, the object of the sacrifice is to rid him of this consecrated nature. Both the so-called curative sacrifices (when the sacrificer is diseased) and the expiatory sacrifices (when the sacrificer is a sinner or criminal) have as their object the transmission of the impurity from the sacrificer to the victim. For instance, on the day of atonement, the chief priest put his two hands on the head of a ram, charged it with the sins of Israel, then sent it out into the desert carrying away with it these sins. In purifying a leper, the priest took two sparrows and cut the throat of one above a vase of water. The other he dipped in this bloody water, which was then sprinkled on the head of the leper. The sparrow was then freed, carrying away the leprosy with it. The sick man was purified and cured. Hindu medicine sacrifices have similar cases. To cure jaundice, yellow birds were tied on the top of a bed—then sprinkled in such a way that the water fell on the birds which thereupon began to chirp. At this moment the jaundice was in the yellow birds.

In all these cases the sacred character passes from the sacrificer to the victim. This takes place before the death of the victim. In these cases the rites supplementary to death are elaborate whereas the introductory rites are few or non-existent. Thus a leper after

the first rite of purification has to take a bath to complete the work. Sacrifices in which the transmission of the sacred character from the victim to the object takes place after the death of the victim, as in communal sacrifices, may be called "sacrifices of sacralization." Sacrifices in which the sacred character is transmitted from the sacrificer, who is already sacred, to the victim, may be called sacrifices of desacralization.

In the sacrifices just mentioned, we have supposed that the sacred character which inhered in the sacrificer before the ceremony was a defect in him, a cause of religious impurity, sin, etc. But there are cases where the mechanism is exactly the same and where, however, the initial state is one of superiority for the sacrificer. For instance, in Jerusalem, a Hebrew priest would have taken a vow as a result of which he abstained from wine and would not cut his hair. When the expiration of his vow had come, he could rid himself of his sacred character only by a sacrifice. He would take a bath; then offer up a lamb, a goat and a ram—cut off his hair and throw it on the fire where the flesh of the ram was cooking. Then the priest put into his hands a cake and the sacred parts of the animal. After this the nazir could drink wine. The sacred character had left him partly in the hair cut off and partly in the victim. The process is the same as in an expiatory sacrifice.

The process of desacralization applied to objects as well as to people. In Judea, for instance, first fruits were always considered sacred. On an appointed day, the inhabitants around Jerusalem would march into the city with baskets filled with the first fruits. At the head of the procession walked a flute player. An announcer went ahead to inform the inhabitants of the city that a procession was coming; in the city, everybody stood while the cortege passed by the streets, thereby conferring respect upon the sacred objects. Behind the flute player came the cow with decorated horns and a crown of olive leaves. The cow, perhaps, would draw the cart on which the fruit baskets were placed. Later this cow was sacrificed. Having arrived at the sacred mountain, each person took his basket and ascended the steps. The doves which were placed on top served as holocausts, and the baskets were handed to the priest. Thus, in this case, two methods were employed to rid the fruit of its sacred character: consecration in the temple; the sacrifice of the cow and the sacrifice of the doves.

This relationship between the case of the nazir and of individual expiation, and between the first fruits and other things which had

to be purged of a religious character which was really bad, leads to an important observation; that is, that the sacrifice could perform two distinct services: acquire sanctity and suppress a state of sinfulness. In each case, however, since there were the same elements involved, it follows that there was not the sharp contrast that one would at first suppose. Two states, one pure and the other impure, were subject to the same sacrificial procedure, in which the elements were not only identical but worked in the same order and bore the same meaning one to the other. It must be remembered, however, that in expiatory sacrifices, the victim was not a passive factor but was more sacred than the sacrificer himself—not much different from the victim in a sacrifice of sacralization. Again, after the death of the victim, there was no difference in the power of the body, whether that of an expiatory victim or that of a sacralizing sacrifice, to transmit its character. The body of an expiatory victim would contain the impurity eliminated from the sacrificer and would transmit it to anyone who touched it; similarly, the body of the victim in a sacrifice of sacralization, such as communion, would transmit its purity to the persons who touched or ate it. The only difference between expiatory sacrifices and sacrifices of sacralization, then, was theological.

The fact is then as Robertson Smith has pointed out, that the pure and impure are not two contrary forces which exclude each other; they are two aspects of religious reality. Religious forces are characterized by their intensity, their importance, their dignity, but the sense in which they are exercised is not necessarily predetermined by their nature. They can be exercised for good or evil, depending upon circumstances, rites, etc. This explains why the same sacrificial mechanism may satisfy religious needs whose differences are extreme. Thus the victim may represent life or death, sickness or health, sinfulness or righteousness, falsity or truth. It serves as a means of concentrating the religious force, which is stored up in it and becomes part of it.