

## TABOOS OF FOOD AND DRINK

BY JACOB SINGER

IT is obvious that the chief concern of life, namely, food would be surrounded with many taboos calculated to preserve the force or fertility of the life-sustaining animals and plants. To the sophisticated editor of the early codes the reasons of food avoidance may be ascribed to psychological reasons (disgust) or may have the hygienic aim of safeguarding the health of the community. Such reasons come into being after the ancient superstitions were rationalized. That the food taboos "upon priests and kings are *a fortiori* more numerous and stringent than those upon ordinary persons" indicates that the primitive conception of holy (unapproachable) persons is responsible for these regulations. The motives lie beyond the notion of utility or sensual repugnance. In savage society we find these prohibitions in their unsophisticated guise, and whatever reason the untutored native can give is in accord with his idea of his relation to the supernatural forces that control his life. "The natives of Queensland", for instance, "burned all food left over from meals, to prevent sorcerers from getting hold of it and injuring them thereby. The Narrinyeri call such persons 'disease makers'. In Polynesia natives carry remains of food to streams which alone can annul the evil influence of the disease-maker. Greeks took a purgative to prevent 'the sacred food' (new corn) from being polluted by common food. In such primitive beliefs Crawley sees "the tendency to avoid mixing the different sorts of food, which plays a considerable part in Jewish sacred dietetics."<sup>1</sup>

The rationalized taboos survived among cultured peoples either in the ritual or the "mores" purporting to serve hygienic or social ends. Priestly restrictions were widened in scope by Ezra who used them as part of a code applicable to the entire Jewish community. Under the influence of the Pharisees, who had lost faith in the

<sup>1</sup>Hasting's, "Food", in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

corrupt priesthood of their day, the tendency to invest the layman with all the restraints of the priesthood accentuated this view.

#### FOODS:

These Biblical sources of the dietary laws, according to König, emanate from the 6th century B. C. The passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy agree so fully that Marti and Oettli hold that both are based on a common source. Analogies are found among many peoples of the ancient world. Among the Egyptians some animals were forbidden which were considered clean by the Hebrews. The pig was forbidden except in the day of the full moon.<sup>2</sup> Theodor Wachter<sup>3</sup> mentions the Scythians, Cappadocians, Syrians, Cretans, Cyprians and Libyians. The Egyptians abstained from the ass, the mouse and the gazelle.

According to Porphyrius,<sup>4</sup> the Egyptians made the distinction between cloven and uncloven hoof.

Assyrian and Babylonian food taboos appear for certain days, e. g. "fish for the 9th of Iyar, pork for the 30th of Ab, beef for the 27th of Tishri."<sup>5</sup>

Among the Hindus, the distinction between clean and unclean foods appears as early as 1000 or 800 B. C.; but unlike the Jewish prohibitions, all flesh is banned. Domestic animals for the Hindus are unclean. Schrader<sup>6</sup> shows the ethical and religious consequences of such taboos. By association with the doctrine of Karma, sentiments of sympathy for animals were fostered. Doubtless these higher speculations appear as concomitants of rationalization.

For the Greeks and Romans, (according to Wachter) animals are unclean which are not acceptable as sacrifice. The forbidden animals among the Pythagoreans have a strong resemblance to the Hebrew taboos. Wiegand holds that some of these interdictions

<sup>2</sup>Frazer, *Golden Bough*, "Taboo," pp. 291 ff; Lev. xi. 3; Clean and unclean animals have their origin in the heathen cults. (A. Weiner, *die Juedische Speisegesetze* (1895). Certain animals served as totems. *Analog ist das Verbot des Pferdenfleische—nusses fur die Christ. Germanen des Genusses von Esselfleisch fur die Christl. Araber.* (motive in Lev. xi. 44). For P. the origin is somewhat obscure. From such early taboos comes the feeling of repulsion and later the rationalized hygienic reasons. (Baentsch Com. Lev. to verse). Deut. xvi. 3. "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing." J E has no law on this subject; in P. the parallel is Lev. xi. 2-23, characteristic of D.

<sup>3</sup>Reinheitsvorschriften in Griech. Kultus"—in his *Religionsgeschichte Versuche im Vorarbeiten* IX 1, 1010 p. 82 ff. de abstentia IV 7.

<sup>4</sup>Com. to Lev., p. 482, quoted by Knobel and Dillman.

<sup>5</sup>König, *Geschichte der Alttestamentische Religion*.

<sup>6</sup>*Indiens Literatur und Kulte*. Leipsic, 1887, p. 406.

have purely utilitarian reasons, e. g. the bull was a forbidden animal for sacrifice because he was needed for agriculture. The same authority explains the Hindu prohibitions on similar practical grounds. There is no question that the difference between taboo and an ordinary prohibition is marked. One grows out of the irrational fears of primitive man while the other is a quasi-police regulation. Society has found certain acts injurious and has designedly banned them. In the struggle for survival, those taboos best suited to the needs of society have been rationalized and retained. Even where the utilitarian consequences are obvious it is by no means certain that the origin of these "practical" regulations did not have deep roots in the soil of "taboo" superstitions. Beside the aspects of fear and utility go the emotional reactions and sentimental whims of peoples. The Egyptians, for instance, regarded the sheep as a repulsive animal, while with us it became a symbol of purity and innocence. The Athenians loathed goats, because of their destructive tendencies to plant life, especially the much prized olive trees.<sup>7</sup> In Sparta the goat was offered to Hera and the dog was considered to be clean in some localities and unclean in others.

Regarding the origin of the food taboos among the Hebrews, a number of conjectures have been offered by scholars. W. Robertson Smith holds that the taboos are survivals of a time when animals were regarded as the abodes of spirits which were later shunned for religious reasons and were not to be killed on that account. M. J. Lagrange and Ed. König hold that the "survival" theory is unproven. Others, basing their views upon ethnological parallels connect the animal taboos with totemism as the underlying motive.<sup>8</sup> Attempts to identify the clean with the holy are unconvincing, however. Ed. Meyer is of the opinion that animals are regarded "unclean" not because they are holy or sacred but just the reverse, because they are unholy. As further proof he adduces the example of the bull which was regarded as sacred in the Orient and still its flesh was not taboo for the Hebrews. Hence the "sacred animal" theory seems to be untenable.

In tracing the origin of taboo to totemism, Stade regards the differences between various tribes in the kind of animals tabooed. The Mosaic legislation is a composite of such diverse lists. Against this totemistic origin König<sup>9</sup> contends that nowhere do we find the

<sup>7</sup>Wiegand, p. 425.

<sup>8</sup>Reuterskiöld, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, XV, pp. 1-23.

<sup>9</sup>*Heilige Schriften*, I, p. 160.

prohibition to kill a certain animal in the Old Testament.

Another theory has it that certain animals regarded as sacred by the heathen were tabooed by Jews. This explanation is partly supported by Leviticus xxii. 23: "And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I am casting out before you: for they did all these things and therefore I abhorred them." Against this theory we must consider certain animals as the bull and fish which were regarded as sacred by Egyptians and other neighboring peoples, but which were not unclean for the Jews. The prohibition in Leviticus is inspired by the separatistic motive which colors all of the priestly legislation.

Cumont ascribes hygienic reasons for food animal taboos.<sup>10</sup> "Swine is not eaten for hygienic reasons. Mice and rats spread plague and are therefore unclean animals." Wiegand holds that the primal feeling of repulsion which certain animals excite either by their appearance or disgusting habits accounts for the origin of such taboos.

Certain animals are forbidden as food "because they are regarded as a portion of the gods themselves; they must not be eaten except by those who discerned in them the body of the gods, and who were entitled to share them intercommunion with the gods."<sup>11</sup> A number of food taboos is given by Sumner, "A Phoenician or an Egyptian would sooner eat man's flesh, than cow's flesh, a Jew would not eat swine's flesh"<sup>12</sup> Some Melanesians will not eat eels because they think there are ghosts in them. South African Bantus abominate fish. Some Australians will not eat pork. In explanation of these taboos, Crawley holds that "many are arbitrary while some have dietetic reasons often based on false analogies. The dangerous power transmittal by contact affects the food." To avoid the poison produced by the evil eye, food is covered. Especially guarded are those who partake of food in the presence of the opposite sex.<sup>13</sup>

Nearer to our own investigation is the interpretation given to the food taboos by W. R. Smith.<sup>14</sup> The source of taboo is "reverential

<sup>10</sup>*Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, p. 142.

<sup>11</sup>Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, III, 404-6, quoted by Trumbull, *Blood Covenant*, p. 172. In ancient Peru, Reville says: "It should be noted that they only sacrifice edible animals, which is a clear proof that the intention was to feed the gods."

<sup>12</sup>Sumner, *Folkways*, pp. 338-9.

<sup>13</sup>Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, p. 168.

<sup>14</sup>W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*.

dread." The notion that "unclean" is related to physical foulness is erroneous. The Hebrew word טָמֵא (tame) means "taboo." Among the heathen Semites the unclean animals, which it was pollution to eat, were simply holy animals. Biblical support for this contention is found in Isaiah lxx. 4-5.

"That sit among the graves,  
And lodge in the vaults ;  
That eat swine's flesh,

And broth of abominable things in their vessels :"

"He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man ; He that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he broke a dog's neck".<sup>15</sup> All these are connected with the sacrosanct mysteries of totem religions. The reference to the dog's neck points to the mode of killing without shedding blood.

"They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves

To go unto the gardens, Behind one in the midst,  
Eating swine's flesh, and the detestable thing, and the mouse,  
Shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."<sup>16</sup>

Now under the conditions of Eastern life, beef and mutton are not everyday food. In Canaan, as among the Arabs to this day, milk is the usual diet. "And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household : And maintenance for thy maidens."<sup>17</sup> The slaughter of a victim for food marks a festal occasion and the old principle was modified to mean sacred occasions of natural joy.

"Except at a feast, or to entertain a guest, or in sacrifice before a local shrine, the Bedouin tastes no meat but the flesh of the gazelle or other game. This throws light on Deuteronomy xii. 16, 22, "the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the gazelle, and as of the hart" which shows that in old Israel game was the only meat not eaten sacrificially." "That all legitimate slaughter is sacrifice appears in Arabia down to the time of Mohammed."<sup>18</sup>

"The king of Unyoro in Central Africa might not drink milk and eat beef at the same meal."<sup>19</sup>

#### SWINE :

The heathen Harranians sacrificed swine once a year. In

<sup>15</sup>Isaiah, lxxi. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Isaiah, lxxi. 71.

<sup>17</sup>Prov. xxvii. 27.

<sup>18</sup>W. K. Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 249 ff., also Wellhausen *Arabische Heidentum*, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup>Frazer, *Golden Bough*, "Taboo," vol. vi, part II, p. 292.

Cyprus were swine connected with the worship of the Semitic Aphrodite and Adonis. A reference to this pagan rite appears in Isaiah lxv. 4. The Egyptians considered the swine as unclean because the demon Set once appeared in the form of a pig. Mohammedans also refrain from eating swine.<sup>20</sup> "The pig was forbidden among the Egyptians. Pork was a forbidden food."<sup>21</sup> Cheyne connects the prohibition with totemism.<sup>22</sup> Among proper names in the Old Testament we have חֶזִיר (Hezir).<sup>23</sup> Other examples of names that bear traces of totemistic origin are: the "dog" כַּלְבִּי (Caleb) the son of Jephunneh."<sup>24</sup> "He נָבֶל (Nabel) was of the house of Caleb."<sup>25</sup> "And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of אַכְבָּר (Akbar) "mouse" reigned in his stead.<sup>26</sup> And Akbar, the son of Micaiah."<sup>27</sup> Elnathan the son of Akbor."<sup>28</sup> In Homer, the pig is called "divine", but in Crete it was not eaten. Among the Jews and Syrians swine was taboo. The pig was a consecrated offering in the temple of Hierapolis.

"The pig appears, from a find of bones of this animal at Gezer, to have been a sacrificial animal among the cave-dwellers. Its uncleanness among the Hebrews points to an ancient sanctity which obtained among the Canaanites. Perhaps it was connected with Hezir—a guild of priests."<sup>29</sup> The pig was forbidden to the Hebrews. "The swine as a domesticated animal was not known to the undispersed Semites or to the Sumerian population of Babylon."<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, its flesh was forbidden food to all the Semites.<sup>31</sup> The inference therefore is that (1) it was after their dispersion that the Semites became acquainted with the pig as a domestic animal, (2) it was forbidden food from the time of its introduction and spread amongst them. The pig can only be housed

<sup>20</sup>Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*. "Taboos," 11, pp. 38-9.

<sup>21</sup>Rawlinson, *History of Egypt*, 1-88.

<sup>22</sup>Cheyne, *Commentary on Isaiah*, chapter 66.

<sup>23</sup>I Chr. xxiv. 15; Neh. x. 21.

<sup>24</sup>Num. xiii. 6. Perhaps here a clue of early Semitic totemism. W. R. Smith, "Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia" (1885), *Religion of Semites*, p. 137 ff.

<sup>25</sup>I Sam. xxv. 3.

<sup>26</sup>Gen. xxxvi. 38.

<sup>27</sup>II Kings, xxii. 12-14; Jer. xxvi. 22; xxxvi. 12; Ezek. viii. 10; Is. lxvi. 17.

<sup>28</sup>II Kings, xxiv. 8.

<sup>29</sup>Wood, "Religions of Canaan" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XXXV, (1916) p. 243 ff.

<sup>30</sup>Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, 261.

<sup>31</sup>W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 218.

and reared amongst a settled, i. e., an agricultural population. The pig is associated especially with the worship of agricultural deities, e. g. Demeter, Adonis and Aphrodite. The inference again is that, as agriculture and religious rites associated with it spread together, it was in connection with some form of agricultural worship that the domestication of the pig found its way amongst the various branches of the Semitic race. Finally the pig was esteemed sacrosanct by some Semites and in Isaiah<sup>32</sup> it is regarded as a heathen abomination. The inference then is that the worship with which the pig was associated did not find equal acceptance amongst all the Semites. Where it did find acceptance, the flesh was forbidden because it was sacred; where it did not, it was prohibited because of its association with the worship of false gods.<sup>33</sup>

#### MILK AND MEAT:

"Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk."<sup>34</sup> This is regarded by some Biblical scholars as part of the primitive Ten Commandments. Cheyne proposes the curious reading: "Thou shalt not clothe thyself with the garment of a 'Yerahme' elite woman."<sup>35</sup> That there is a humanitarian motive in this prohibition is not likely, if taken in connection with the entire tone of this legislation. Such prohibitions are not unique. Frazer assures us that many savage tribes forbid the eating of meat and milk.<sup>36</sup> Among the Nandi, for instance, "if milk is drunk, no meat may be eaten for twenty-four hours."<sup>37</sup> . . . "And in view of the evidence collected . . . the rules of this commandment . . . are parts of a common inheritance transmitted to the Jews from a time when their forefathers were nomadic herdsmen subsisting mainly, on milk of their cattle, and as afraid of diminishing the supply of it, as are the pastoral tribes of Africa at the present day."<sup>38</sup> If Frazer's contention is correct, then we should meet with a more inclusive prohibition in the Old Testament. It is true that Jewish practice bans all forms of meat and milk, and the rabbinical codes demand that two sets of dishes be

<sup>32</sup>Isa. lxxv. 4; lxxvi. 3-16.

<sup>33</sup>Jevons, *Introduction to History of Religion*, p. 118, note 3.

<sup>34</sup>Ex. xxiii. 19; (E) Ex. xxxiv. 26 and Deut. xiv. 21. "A kid is not to be seethed in its mother's milk." This law is repeated verbatim from Ex. xxiii. 19b-xxiv. 26. The prohibition may have been aimed against the practice of using milk thus prepared as a charm for rendering fields and orchards more productive." Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*.

<sup>35</sup>*Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel*, p. 565.

<sup>36</sup>*Folklore in Old Testament*, III, p. 151 ff.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 154.

kept to separate milk and meat and all their products. Still the question remains, why the Pentateuchal law limits this prohibition to the kid and its mother's milk. There may be some specific reason. The aversion of pastoral tribes in Africa to boil milk for fear of injuring their cattle is based on the principle of sympathetic magic. The command against the mother's milk is doubly dangerous because milk and the kid are both of the same mother.<sup>39</sup>

## SACRIFICE:

Sacrifice was regarded as a tribute to the gods, but W. R. Smith rejects this hypothesis. It is primarily (1) a repast and (2) a repast in which the god and the devotee partake. This theory is rooted in a belief common among primitive peoples, that food consumed makes for kinship. Hence the essence of sacrifice is not "Renouncement," but "it is an act of alimentary communion."<sup>40</sup>

"Sacrifice was not founded to create a bond of artificial kinship between man and his gods, but to maintain and renew the natural kinship which primitively united them."<sup>41</sup> "Food taboos are often food-vows".<sup>42</sup>

## SALT:

"It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord"<sup>43</sup>

"And the priests shall cast salt upon them."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Similar superstition in Frazer *Folklore in the Old Testament*, III, 117 ff: "We can therefore understand why in the eyes of a primitive pastoral people the boiling of milk should seem a blacker crime than robbery and murder. For whereas robbery and murder harm only individuals, the boiling of milk, like the poisoning of wells, seems to threaten the existence of the whole tribe by cutting off its principle source of nourishment." *Folklore in the Old Testament*, III, pp. 124-5.

<sup>40</sup>Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 290.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340; I Sam. xvi. 5; Ex. viii. 22; "And Moses said: It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination on הַיְצִיבָהּ הַיְצִיבָהּ (*Toabat Mizraim*) of the Egyptians to the Lord our God."

"Agypten is tein Jahwe fremdes Land, jeder Versuch ihn da zu ernehren ware ein Greuel was dieses Land hervorbringt ist nicht kosher (Cf. I Sam. xxvi. 19.) Holzinger, Exodus, *Kurz. Hd. Com.*, loc. cit.

Ezek. xlv. 15: "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, (both forbidden as foods) said the Lord God."

Deut. xii. 17: "Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herd or of thy flock, nor any of the vows which thou vowest, nor the freewill-offerings, nor the offering of thy hand."

"But while flesh, not intended for sacrifice, may be eaten in any part of the land, tithes, firstlings, and other sacred dues may be partaken of only at the central sanctuary." Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*.

<sup>42</sup>Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, p. 151. ff.

<sup>43</sup>Num. xviii. 19.

<sup>44</sup>Ezek. xliii. 24.

## LEAVINGS OF SACRIFICIAL OR TABOOED FOOD.

Food leavings are regarded as dangerous, hence the minute regulations concerning the safe disposal of such victuals. It is a common belief among savages that magic mischief may be wrought upon a man through the remains of the food he has partaken of, or the dishes out of which he has eaten. To avoid the risk of having the sorcerer secure the remains of food, it must be burnt. These ideas prevail particularly in Melanesia and in New Guinea. A similar superstition prevailed among the ancient Romans.<sup>45</sup> Indirectly this superstition served the ends of sanitation and cleanliness. The same food is by sympathetic magic united, though it may rest in different stomachs. Harm to the one will injure another who partook of the same food.<sup>46</sup> Burning is the safest method of removing the element of danger inherent in the sacred or tabooed food.

"And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offerings; he shall not leave any of it until morning. . . . But that which remaineth of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire.<sup>47</sup> Among Semites it was necessary to eat all of the victim while it was still warm.<sup>48</sup>

The same taboo is found in the regulation concerning manna, מַנְהוּ (Manhu).

"And Moses said unto them: Let no man leave of it till the morning."<sup>49</sup>

"And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt with fire."<sup>50</sup>

## PASCHAL LAMB:

"And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning."<sup>51</sup> Only those were permitted to partake of it who were "sanctified."<sup>52</sup>

"And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance; and the holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and

<sup>45</sup>Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVIII, 19.

<sup>46</sup>Frazer, *Golden Bough*, "Taboo," p. 130.

<sup>47</sup>W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 386 ff.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Ex. xvi. 19.

<sup>50</sup>Lev. vi. 23.

<sup>51</sup>Ex. xii. 10. (P) "Die Bestimmung, nichts bis zum Morgen übrig zu lassen, wird alte kultische Überlieferung sein (s. Wellh. Arab. Heidnt. 43 Anm. 1, auch 118 f. 119 Anm. 1) Holzinger Ex. p. 37. The regulation to permit nothing to remain until morning is a survival of the old cult.

<sup>52</sup>I Chr. xxx. 17, 18; xxxv. 6.

in pans, and carried them quickly to all the children of the people."<sup>53</sup>

#### FAT OF ANIMALS:

"Let the fat be made to smoke first of all, and then take as much as thy soul desireth. . . . And the sin of the young man was very great before the Lord: for the men dealt contemptuously with the offering of the Lord."<sup>54</sup>

For there he offered the burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offering.<sup>55</sup>

The Hebrew חֶלֶב (*heleb*) (Syrian *helba*) is not only the omentum or midriff, but includes the fat and suet connected therewith. As the seat of emotion, it is especially holy: hence it was burned on the altar.<sup>56</sup>

#### THE DOG:

The Carthaginians were forbidden to eat it. The dog was sacred for the Harranians and was connected with the *mystae*.<sup>57</sup> The dog appears in Semitic mythology.

#### FISH:

Certain fish were forbidden to all Syrians since they were sacred to Atargatis.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE MOUSE:

The mouse is regarded as "abominable."<sup>59</sup> שֶׁרֶץ (*Sherez*). The Arabic "hamash" possesses supernatural or demonical qualities.<sup>60</sup>

#### THE HORSE:

The horse was sacred to the sun-god at Rhodes: four horses were cast into the seas as a sacrifice to the sun. Pegasus, the winged horse, was a sacred symbol of the Carthaginians.

#### THE DOVE:

The dove was held as sacred by the Semites, who would avoid eating or touching it. The dove was sacrificed by the Romans to

<sup>53</sup>II Chr. xxxv. 13; Lev. viii. 32: "And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire." Mal. i. 7: "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar." Prov. xx. 25. "It is a snare to a man rashly to say: 'Holy'. And after vows to make inquiry." Daniel. i. 8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the officers that he might not defile himself." Deut. xiv. 3: "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing." Ex. xxix. 34. "It shall not be eaten, because it is holy."

<sup>54</sup>I Sam. ii. 16, 17.

<sup>55</sup>II Chron. vii. 7; Gen. iv. 4; Lev. vii. 24, 31.

<sup>56</sup>W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 379, note 4.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

<sup>59</sup>Is. lxvi.; Lev. xi. 41.

<sup>60</sup>Ezek. viii. 10.

Venus.

These examples preserve the religious beliefs of antiquity. Taboos and sanctity are related; and comparative studies in savage life clarify the original notions. Domestic animals are regarded on the one hand, as the "friends and kinsmen of men", on the other hand as "sacred beings"; and are slain on rare occasions, at public and not at private sacrifices. The beliefs are distinctly prevalent among pastoral peoples. The Harranians sacrifice only male animals. The Golden Age was one when animals were not eaten. Unclean animals appear as sacrifices in the Old Testament only when Israelites began to believe that "The Lord hath forsaken His land."<sup>61</sup>

#### FISH :

"These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters whatsoever hath fins and scales may ye eat; and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat, it is unclean unto you."<sup>62</sup>

Fish were eaten by the Israelites but not sacrificed: among their heathen neighbors, fish—or certain kinds of fish—were forbidden food, and were sacrificed in exceptional cases.<sup>63</sup>

The fish taboo is known all over Syria.<sup>64</sup>

#### FIRSTLINGS :

The first-fruits are consecrated to the gods or to the priests among many primitive peoples. "In the West African kingdom of Congo there was a supreme pontiff called 'Chitome or Chirombe', whom the negroes regarded as a god on earth and all powerful in heaven. Hence before they would taste the new crops they offered him the first-fruits, fearing that manifold misfortunes would befall them if they broke this rule."<sup>65</sup>

"Among the aboriginal races of Central America . . . an image of their god, made with certain seeds from the first fruits of their temple gardens, with a certain gum . . . was partaken of by them reverently . . . under the name 'food of our soul'.<sup>66</sup>

Curtiss repeats the tale of an Arab who sees Moses in a dream, and "cuts off the tips of the ear of the fattest sheep" and hangs it up to the ceiling to protect his property—and puts a little blood on the lintel of the house." The Beni Hamed say "that the first-born of the sheep belongs to Nebi Musa whose shrine is on the west side

<sup>61</sup>Ezek. viii. 10-12.

<sup>62</sup>Deut. xiv. 9 f; Lv. xi. 9-12.

<sup>63</sup>W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 219.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 175, note 22ff.

<sup>65</sup>Frazer, *Golden Bough*, "Taboo", p. 5.

<sup>66</sup>Trumbull, *Blood-Covenant*, p. 176.

of the Dead Sea."<sup>68</sup>

"The first-fruits of the harvest manifest the energy which they contain: here the totemic god acclaims himself in all the glory of his youth."<sup>69</sup>

"This is why the first-fruits have always been regarded as a very sacred fruit, reserved for very holy things. So it is natural that the Australian uses it to regenerate himself spiritually."<sup>70</sup>

"And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God, bread of the first-fruits."<sup>71</sup> That no harm came to the people from eating his "tabooed" food, is another miracle credited to Elisha: "and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord."<sup>72</sup>

"Ye shall count the fruit thereof as forbidden: three years shall it be as forbidden unto you: it shall not be eaten."<sup>73</sup>

"There is an element of 'danger' in the first of any fruits or meats, as in the ceremony of first-fruits amongst the Kaffirs and many other peoples."<sup>74</sup>

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof."<sup>75</sup>

"Cain", however, brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." The reason for God's preference of Abel's over Cain's offering is connected with the greater sanctity, hence desirability of the first-fruits. Cain shows no preference for the firstlings.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>68</sup>S. I. Curtiss, "Firstlings and Other Sacrifices," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 22:45 ff.

<sup>69</sup>Cf., Biblical parallel. Gen. xlix. 3.

<sup>70</sup>Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. See also Frazer, *Golden Bough*, II, pp. 348 ff.

<sup>71</sup>II Kings iv. 42.

<sup>72</sup>II Kings, iv. 44.

<sup>73</sup>Lev. xix. 23. "Unbeschnitten d. h. unberührt, Tabu." (Baentsch, *Commentary on Leviticus*).

<sup>74</sup>Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup>Gen. iv. 4. Trich and Knobel connected it with *בְּבוֹרִים* (*bikkurim*) "firstlings." Dillmann points to differences in attitude or sincerity between worshippers; rejecting the firstlings hypothesis saying: "There can be no thought of mere errors of ritual in this pre-legalistic period," forgetting that firstling taboos belong precisely to the pre-legalistic age. See *Commentary on Genesis*, Dillmann, English translation, Edinburgh, 1897, p. 187.

<sup>76</sup>Ex. xxii. 28. (E) According to Frazer (*Golden Bough*, II, p. 68 f.) and 373 f. Here the idea of a gift to God rather than communion (or sharing of the sacrificial meal) removes the offering from the earlier heathen rite. (Holzinger, *Commentary on Exodus*). "The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep" . . . "the eater of the first-fruits partakes sacramentally of the corn spirit." Ex. xxiii. 19.

"But the firstling of an ox, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy."<sup>77</sup>

"Of the first of your dough ye shall set apart a cake for a gift."<sup>78</sup>

"All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thine ox, nor shear the firstling of thy flock."<sup>79</sup>

"Also the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstlings of our herds and our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, and that we should bring the first of our dough . . . and the fruit of all manner of trees, the wine and the oil, unto the priests."<sup>80</sup>

Lev. ii. 12; Num. xviii. 12 f.; Lev. ii. 14; xxvii. 26. "The firstlings of cereals belong to the priest. Leaven is to be kept away from the altar, hence this meal offering is given to the priest. The "first-fruits corn in the ear parched with fire" being without leaven, may be offered on the altar. Num. iii. 13.

<sup>77</sup>Num. xviii. 17. "The flesh of the firstborn is treated differently from that of the peace-offering; for whereas the greater part of the peace-offering could be eaten by any one ceremoniously clean (Lev. vii. 19-21), the whole of the flesh of the firstborn, like the right thigh and the breast of a peace-offering, is to be given over to the priests for consumption." Gray, *International Critical Commentary on Numbers*, ad. loc.

<sup>78</sup>Num. xv. 20.

<sup>79</sup>Deut. xv. 19. "The firstling males of oxen and of sheep are to be dedicated to Yahweh, and to be eaten annually by the owner and his household, at a sacrificial feast at the central sanctuary." The Codes in Ex. xiii. 11-16 and in J. E. Ex. xiii. 2, Num. xviii. 15-18 show some differences in details due to change in practice of different ages. See Driver Com. to Deut., p. 185 ff. Deut. xviii. 4; Deut. xx. 6. "And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not used the fruit thereof?" חִלְלוֹ (*hillelo*)—to pollute; defile, profane: hence to remove the taboo of the firstling. "Hillelu"—"Not profaned it (the vineyard), treated it as common—the first produce of the vines being reserved as sacred, and not used by the owner." Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*. Deut. xxvi. 2. "Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the ground . . . which thou bring in from thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." Ps. lxxxix. 28; Ezek. xxix. 26-40.

<sup>80</sup>Neh. x. 37, 38; xiii. 31; Jer. ii. 3, "Israel is the Lord's hallowed portion, His first-fruits of the increase; All that devour him shall be held guilty; evil shall come upon them," Saith the Lord. Ezek. xl. 14, "Nor alienate the first portion of the land; for it is holy unto the Lord." Prov. iii. 9; I Chr. v. 1, "For he was the first-born: but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's couch, his birth-right was given unto the sons of Joseph." Jos. vi. 26. "And Joshua charged the people with an oath at that time, saying: 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city, even Jericho: with the loss of his first-born shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.'" Gen. xxxii. 32. Thigh-vein: "Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the thigh-vein which is upon the hollow of the thigh unto this day; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh." The "inan" or angel touched it; and it became taboo by contact.