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THE EUCHARIST: ITS CONTINUITY WITH THE BREAD SACRIFICE OF LEVITICUS

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For Christians a loaf of bread and a cup of wine would substitute for the flesh and blood of animals. Jesus' death was to be the offering that would replace the offerings required in the old law. The institution of the Eucharist was understood to be a new covenant, the foundation of a new relation to God, the basis for the Christian theology of redemption. Jesus is recorded as having said it clearly enough on that occasion (Matthew 25:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:20). It was a radical break, but at the same time no one could argue that the Christian Eucharist was a brand new institution. It clearly has continuity with the Bible. The Last Supper was the paschal meal. The bread sacrifice of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4) is honoured in Christian teaching (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1). But neither of these points allow a parallel to be drawn between the Eucharist and the regular sacrificial system of the temple. Melchizedek, king of Salem, was not a descendant of Abraham; he is mentioned in Genesis and not in the law book, Leviticus. Here I wish to argue that the doctrine of the Eucharist was actually continuous with Bible teaching on sacrifice and that there was a solid basis for bread sacrifice laid down in Leviticus itself.

Apart from the switch from animal to bread sacrifice, some have claimed that another innovation of the Eucharist was to open the communion feast to non-Jews.[1] This might seem to make it a new covenant in the sense that it was to include people not descended from the heirs of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Jesus celebrated this family festival, the Passover, without his family, only his disciples sharing communion with him and each other. This would

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constitute a major break with the past if it be assumed that the message of the Bible was destined for an exclusive, hereditary group. But according to the texts, to open the Eucharist communion feast to all believers would not be very radical. The priestly teaching in Numbers (9:14) expects the stranger or sojourner to celebrate the passover.

To make the case convincing I have to combat the tendency to dismiss the priestly books. There is a mistaken but widespread idea that the sacrifice of the old law was materialist, and that the religion as taught by the priestly editors was exclusionary and focused on old-maidish rules of physical purity. On the contrary, the evidence of the text of the priestly books shows that they did not teach a narrowly sectarian doctrine, and even that it would have been compatible with their teaching to open up the promises of God to all mankind.

I admit that when I first read Leviticus for enlightenment on African dietary laws[2] I accepted the anti-priestly bias that I now reject, but that was thirty-plus years ago. Since then I have been reading Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, more carefully. The case for the continuity of the Eucharistic doctrine with the sacrifice of the Old Testament develops through three supporting arguments. The first concerns the place of animals in the divine plan.[3] The priestly editors, unlike the other Bible sources, put animal life on the same plane as human life, and demanded accountability to God for shedding animal blood as well as for shedding human blood (Lev. 17:4, 14).

Second, there always was a cereal offering in the biblical system of sacrifices, and so far from being subsidiary to the animal sacrifice, it was recognized as a separate, autonomous and very holy offering, with covenantal implications as strong as those implied in animal sacrifice.

Lastly, a fair reading of Leviticus emphasises the spiritual dimension of the act of sacrifice. The word for "body" has multiple references as microcosm for the temple and for God's universe. We have also to take into account the interchangeability in the Bible of words for spiritual and material food, bread and flesh, wine, blood, life and soul. Even the reference to the covenant is the same, as when Jesus said,

> "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me ... This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:17, 20, and see Matthew 26:26 and Mark 14:22).

Compare the wording for the altar of show bread:

> Every sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the Lord continually on behalf of the people of Israel as a covenant for ever (Lev. 24:8).

The mention of the covenant by Jesus would have keyed in the relevant associations for the strong reading given by the apostle who was not present (Paul, 1 Cor. 11:23–29).

Animals under God's Protection

The first argument starts with the treatment of animals in the food rules of Leviticus and then moves on to the rules about animals fit for sacrifice. We tend to read the Bible as if there were no other peoples around or as if what these other peoples were saying or doing in the sixth and fifth centuries has no bearing on our reading of the book. But Judah was not an island. The theme of animal rights was being widely canvassed in the eastern Mediterranean and hinterland, and further east, in the centuries before the final editing, seventh, sixth, fifth. There were conspicuous philosophical and literary debates about whether humans should not eat animals because of their common descent and kinship. There were passionate controversies about whether animals are inferior to humans because they cannot reason, whether they can really feel pain, and whether it is right to take animal life at all. The priestly editors could not have failed to know about these debates, as they had been in Babylon while and before the work of editing. Some practical issues were at stake, concerning the rules for eating animal flesh, as these times were replete with vegetarian movements, (Parmenides, the Pythagorean school, Zoroastrianism, Orphism, and in India, Buddhism and Jainism). We do not know when these movements started. It is quite implausible that they all burst into life at the point at which they were reported, in the sixth or fifth century. They had surely started with the first ascetic traditions. It goes without saying that people who adopted vegetarian food rules did not practice animal sacrifice, since sacrifice usually involved doctrines about eating together with the god. Sacrifice was a communion rite.

The priestly editors, after having been in exile in Babylonia, must have known of the ferment of new religions from the east. Their own claims to spirituality would be under challenge. They had accepted a charge to edit the ancient texts recording their people's relation to God, the creator. In these texts the series of covenants with God were always ratified by animal sacrifice. The vegetable offering of Cain had been rejected. The texts took the form of a pastoral history, a people who lived as shepherds and herders, and who were beloved by a God who was kind and merciful as well as just. All around them, in these foreign dissident religions, God's kindness and mercy were being interpreted as applying to animals as well as to humans. In the Bible the prophets and psalms give plenty of reason for taking God's mercy to extend to all his creation. At the same time, the priestly editors would have had no wish to impose a vegetarian regime on the congregation. It would have been unthinkable to turn their back on Moses and the forefathers whom he led across the desert with their flocks and herds. But the editors did impose a very strict care in the matter of animal life.

In effect, the detailed rules about impure animals brought the meat diet of the Israelites into correspondence with the sacrificial regime. What was

impure for the altar was impure for the body of the Israelite, the meat that defiled the one defiled the other. We can call this correspondence a microcosm effect. A parallel was drawn between body and altar by the law of food impurity. The only animals which were allowed for sacrifice were the flocks and herds which the people of Israel reared for their livelihood, and these were the only land animals which the people were allowed to eat. Every other kind of land animal was excluded from the diet. As to the birds of the air and the fish in the water, they could eat any of them except the teeming things (which are often translated as crawling or creeping). The teeming things are recognized and blessed by God in Genesis for their abounding fertility, and whether they teem on the land, the water or the air, Leviticus forbids the people of Israel to eat them or to touch their carcases. In effect, this was like a game law or a rule for protecting endangered species. It protected every living thing from the knife of the Israelite. I keep repeating this word, Israelite, because the laws were not expected to apply to the rest of humankind. They were part of what the people of Israel accepted when they accepted the covenant with God. Not only were the covenanted people not allowed to eat furry animals with claws, or crawling animals, or swarming birds and shrimps, or slithering animals like snakes and eels, they were not allowed to touch their carcases. This would be really disabling if you wanted to set up as a furrier, or a taxidermist, or to make snakeskin bags or ornament of bone or tusks. It meant no mink coats, no beads or dice of ivory, no containers made of animal stomachs, no musical instruments stringed with gut. And so on.

The religion required that an account be made to God of the life of every animal (Lev. 17:2–4). By implication, of those that they were allowed to eat, or dismember and use, that is, the livestock they reared, each one that was killed had first to be consecrated at the altar and killed for sacrifice (Lev. 17: 8–9). Their livestock were treated in parallel with themselves, as covenanted creatures. If they were work animals they had to observe the sabbath (Exod. 20:10) and the first born of cattle were consecrated as were the first born of the people of Israel (Exod. 13:2; Lev. 27:26). The domestic flocks and herds came under the same covenant as the people of God and their servants. If you want to protest that these animal rights only led to slaughter, you can try to defend the ignominious and hidden deaths of our cattle in modern slaughterhouses in contrast with the dignity of the consecrated deaths of the livestock of Israel. For if you are going to eat animal meat at all, this is what it comes to, only the vegetarian has the right to protest.

In sum, this reading of Leviticus reduces the gulf between the priestly teaching and the prophets and psalms about God's compassion for all that he has made and his love for all living things. It also rescues the priestly reputation from the quest for purity for its own sake. It puts the religion more than halfway between a practical religion that everyone can observe without undue suffering, and an ascetic religion that calls for heroic

asceticism. In this reading Leviticus is seen to place strong emphasis on the covenant, it also places strong emphasis on animal sacrifice for redemption, but there is also a cereal offering. So we come to the second part of our argument.

The Cereal Offering

Now read Leviticus again with an open mind to understand what it says about the cereal offering. The first chapter is on how to make a burnt offering, the second is on how to make a cereal offering, they are strictly "how-to-do-it" chapters. Then follow chapters 3–6:14, about which animals to give as peace or sin offerings. Notice that if a person cannot afford the full rate, he can bring two birds, and if he cannot afford birds he can bring flour to be burnt on the altar as a sin offering. But this default use of flour in absence of an animal is strictly discriminated from the "cereal offering" in which oil has to be incorporated and on which incense is laid (Lev. 5:11).

The word (*minhah*) used for the cereal offering in Leviticus has a secular connotation in the rest of the Bible. It means tribute, offerings in kind brought by subjects to their king, a gesture of submission by the vanquished to the conqueror. It means homage, recognition from one monarch to another. It may include food, but not necessarily, and the richest gifts can be very varied and sumptuous. The queen of Sheba's (*minhah*) homage to Solomon took the form of gold, spices and precious stones (1 Kings 10:2, 10). When the king of Syria was sick he sent a present (*minhah*) to Elisha, forty camel loads of all kinds of goods from Damascus (2 Kings 8:9). When the idea is extended to the religious context, the tribute takes the form of a meal: as for example, cooked meat, with its gravy and bread presented by Gideon to the angel of God (Judg. 6:11–24).

Throughout the Bible there are scattered and fragmentary references to the cereal offering. When we come to examine the priestly teaching we find that it has been developed very systematically. Alfred Marx's review of the cereal offering[4] argues that the priests have made it not minor, nor even equal in importance to animal offerings, but the prime sacrificial form. It is a solemn requirement; it must accompany all the daily sacrifices and sabbaths; it is prescribed for the new moon sacrifices and all public feasts. It is required for consecration of persons, from consecration of a priest to the reintegration of a healed leper. It is required for private sacrifices and it can also be offered as a solemn sacrifice in its own right. The cereal offering is destined to be shared between God and the priests, only by them; it is called "sacrosanct", and it is declared to be "the most holy portion out of the offerings by fire to the Lord" (Lev. 24:9). God's part is burnt on the altar to give the sweet savour, in the same words used of Noah's sacrifice. It is never assimilated into the performance of animal sacrifice, but remains always

distinctively subject to its own rules. This reverses the common idea that it is a mere accompaniment.

Alfred Marx gathers evidence from Leviticus and Numbers, the two priestly books, to show that the priestly editors have taken immense pains to create a separate system for the cereal sacrifice, separate from but alongside the system of animal sacrifice. This is specially apparent in the repeated requirement for the cereal sacrifice for the feasts around the seventh month, the great feast of Atonement, and around the feast of Tabernacles, which is the culmination of all the sacrifices of the calendar. Everyone who has read in the Book of Numbers the laws pertaining to the number of animals which must be sacrificed in the third week after the Day of Atonement is struck by the strong patterning of the rules for the number of bulls to be sacrificed. From thirteen bulls on the fifteenth day, which counts as the first day of the week, it decreases by one each day, so twelve on the second day, eleven on the third day, through ten, nine, eight, matching the seventh day with seven bulls, and finally closing the pattern and coming back to normal on the next day with one bull. What is going on? What is the numerical patterning all about? With each day on which the number of bulls is reduced, the number of rams and lambs is invariant, two rams, fourteen lambs. All the commentators note how the pattern of sacrifices in Number 28–29 makes use of the number seven and multiples thereof, thus honouring the Sabbath, the six days of creation and the day of rest. Milgrom's commentary remarks:

> In addition to the frequency of the number seven (and its multiple fourteen) in the above table there are other occurrences of seven: the seven festivals (including the paschal observance, 28:16, and excluding Sabbaths and New Moons); the seven-day Unleavened Bread and Sukkot festivals; the preponderance of festivals in the seventh month (New Year, Yom-Kippur, Sukkot, *'atseret*); the seven festival days, in addition to the Sabbath, on which work is prohibited, listed in 28:18, 25, 26; 29:1, 7, 12, 35; the bulls required for Sukkot add up to seventy; the total number of animals offered on this seven-day festival is $7 \times 7 \times 2$ lambs, 7×10 bulls, and 7 goats.[5]

There seems to be no pattern, just an abundance of sevens in honour of the sabbath.

Alfred Marx's argument about the importance of the cereal offering suggests that we should also calculate the changes through the week of Sukkot for the amounts of flour for the cereal offerings. The amounts are precisely prescribed at the same rate throughout the calendar: for a bull, the cereal offering shall consist of three-tenths of an ephah of flour, for a ram, two-tenths, for a lamb one-tenth, no cereal offering to accompany the goat for the sin offering.

This is what the text of Numbers 28 and 29 requires:

Table 1. Animals for sacrifices through the calendar.

Day	Animal				Complement of Flour
	Bull	Ram	Lamb	Goat	Total in tenths
Daily Burnt offering		–	–	2	2
Sabbath	–	–	2		2 + 2*
New Moon	2	1	7	1	15 + 2*
(Passover)					
15th day of 1st month	2	1	7	1	15 + 2*
First Fruits	2	1	7	1	15 + 2*
Seventh Month					
1st day	1	1	7	1	12 + 2*
15th day	1	1	7	1	12 + 2*
16th day	13	2	14	1	57 + 2*
17th day	12	2	14	1	54 + 2*
18th day	11	2	14	1	51 + 2*
19th day	10	2	14	1	48 + 2*
20th day	9	2	14	1	45 + 2*
21st day	8	2	14	1	42 + 2*
22nd day	7	2	14	1	39 + 2*
23rd day	1	1	7	1	12 + 2*

*The total amount of flour for each feastday is augmented by the two-tenths of an ephah to correspond to the two lambs sacrificed for the daily burnt offering.

In effect, the priestly master of ceremonies has produced a rule for the animal offerings of the mid-week of the seventh month which successfully brings the daily declining number of bulls from thirteen to seven on the seventh day of the week, and it ends up with a multiple of seven, a total of seventy bulls. He has choreographed a dance or made a poem in honour of the sabbath, a kind of rhyming with numbers, obviously very deliberate and no mean mathematical feat. But we still only have a plethora of sevens.

Alfred Marx observes: "Fourteen bulls, seven rams, 49 (7×7) lambs are brought for burnt offerings in the feast of unleavened bread, with a cereal accompaniment of 105 (15×7) tenths of flour. At the end of the harvest seven times the amount of lambs and of cereal prescribed at its opening phase are required. In the first 7 days of the feast of Booths, 70 bulls are sacrificed, of which seven on the seventh day. In the course of this same festival 105 (15×7) lambs were offered as a burnt offering." So, still lots of sevens. But

Table 2. Animals for Sukkot

The seven days of Sukkot, plus the inaugurating and closing days, in the seventh month:					
15th day	1	1	7	1	12 + 2*
16th day	13	2	14	1	57 + 2*
17th day	12	2	14	1	54 + 2*
18th day	11	2	14	1	51 + 2*
19th day	10	2	14	1	48 + 2*
20th day	9	2	14	1	45 + 2*
21st day	8	2	14	1	42 + 2*
22nd day	7	2	14	1	39 + 2*
23rd day	1	1	7	1	12 + 2*
Totals	71	14	49	7	364

then he goes on to calculate the cereals for the festival as a whole: "Three hundred and sixty four (7 × 52) tenths of flour are offered, in all, between the 15th and the 22nd day ..."[6]

He actually gets this result by counting in the fifteenth day inaugurating the week and the twenty third day closing it, each with only one bull. The result is extraordinary, it could not have happened by accident. The Jews had a lunar calendar, so 7 x 52 does not refer to the days of the year. There are, however, approximately fifty-two sabbaths in the year, and when a year of sabbaths is multiplied by seven we have the seven years of the jubilee cycle. The sum of the units of flour for the nine days comes to the number of sabbatical weeks in the year, fifty-two, multiplied by seven, which can only refer to the seventh year sabbath of rest for the land which produces the cereals. (Chapter 25 of Leviticus expounds this very fully.) So apart from the reference to the seventh day, this particular multiple of seven carries a more complex reference to the sacred calendar.

If it makes sense to ask why the number of bulls declines each day by one there are three possible answers. One could be that it is calculated to arrive at the sum of seven bulls on the seventh day. Another could be to arrive at a multiple of seven, seventy bulls by the end. A more interesting one comes from the fact that each bull calls for three-tenths of an ephah of flour, so that the changing amount of flour, three-tenths of an ephah of flour less for each decrease in bull numbers, combined with the invariant amounts of flour to be given along with each ram and lamb and the lambs of the daily offering, could come out to the sum of sabbaths in a calendar year!

When attention shifts from the animals to the cereals it suddenly appears that it is the cereal offerings which are calling the shots, not the other way round; the bulls are only dancing (as it were) to the tune of the tenths of ephahs of flour. The column for cereals declines in proportion to the declining numbers of bulls, until when the list is complete the apparently haphazardly repeated celebration of the sabbatical seven has produced in the column for cereals a result to achieve which requires a perversely brilliant talent for numeral acrostics. But the argument for the autonomy and dignity of the cereal offering in the priestly books does not depend on this curious calculation. It has been worth quoting because it illustrates how completely the precedence of the animal sacrifices has been taken for granted, and the cereal offering played down.

The main case is convincing because of scrupulous examination of the texts. At the end the author asks what the obscuring of this independent series of cereal offerings means. To explain how it has been so well-forgotten, he delves into the controversies surrounding the offerings of Cain and Abel in Genesis. Why did God reject the vegetable offering of Cain? Was it because vegetables are the product of the earth and of human hands, whereas the herd animals are his own creation? This suggestion refers to the curse which God placed on the earth when he discovered the disobedience of Adam and Eve: "Cursed is the ground, because of you!" (Gen. 3:17). Or was it a reflection of the general rejection of everything to do with the Canaanite religion, which prominently featured horticultural products in offerings to Baal? Was it an ideological bias in favour of nomadic pastoralism, the open country, the free life of wandering shepherds, as against the bourgeois materialism of farmers and immorality of cities? Marx reviews but does not choose between these possibilities.

His own conviction is that the teaching of the priests in Leviticus and Numbers was at variance with subsequent readings of the Bible. The members of any religious community may all read the same books, but most certainly they do not read them in the same way. It is not only a matter of reading, it is to miss their message not to see that the priestly books are taking a different line on many points. They accept the earth and all of God's creation, they believe in the forgiveness of God after the sacrifice of Noah, they remember that when God swore never again to destroy the earth he also blessed the descendants of Noah, telling them to be fruitful and multiply, and he established an everlasting covenant with them, with the sign of the rainbow. The words of Genesis for describing the pleasing odour of Noah's sacrifice, which occasioned God's change of heart, are used again repeatedly in Leviticus for the pleasing odour of the cereal offering, thus giving the latter convenantal status, as well as referring to the first covenant which was with all humankind.

This chimes perfectly with my own findings in trying to read Numbers and Leviticus with an anthropologist's eye. To show that Leviticus is not

besotted about impurity, I have had to establish different meanings for key words, such as unclean, teeming and abominable. On other counts I find that Numbers favours friendship with the sons of Joseph in Samaria.[7] Leviticus has no rules about marriage partners, it makes no laws for marrying inside the community, or against marrying foreigners. Both Leviticus and Numbers are solicitous that persons who are living among them but not related by birth to the people of Israel shall be included in the cult. For an Old Testament source for Mark, 12:28–34, (also John 13:34; 15:12), "the great commandment, greater than them all, first you shall love the Lord your God", see Deut. 10:12; 11:13. Deuteronomy also tells the people to love their neighbours, the strangers who live among them (Deut. 10:19); and Leviticus actually gives the words of the second great commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19:34).

The gesture of Jesus in celebrating the Passover supper with his disciples instead of with his family, and they with theirs, would hardly have been censured in that tradition, any more than would his talking to the Samaritan woman and her people (John 4:1–43). When Jesus taught in the temple and astonished the sages by his knowledge of the law and the prophets, I surmise that he was explaining to them this more benign reading of the law inscribed in the priestly books, a reading which had been brushed aside in favour of nationalist exclusiveness in Deuteronomy and ritual cleanness in the rabbinical traditions. Somewhere along the line, the continuity of writing and reading Leviticus was broken.

That this was a serious break is shown by the many paradoxes and complications which arise, and apparently insoluble puzzles that follow from reading Leviticus through the eyes of Deuteronomy.[8] The latter is a very different book, the editor is more of a nationalist politician, brilliant at rousing the emotions of the congregation, a tugger at heart strings, not very interested in the cult nor in metaphysics. With such a different training and outlook he would be sure to miss a subtle and complex literary structure. I put it this way because in the absence of information it is safer simply to state the gap between the two books without speculating on historical causes. But it is possible that some principle that the priests stood for was an underlying political stumbling block, perhaps even the inclusionary principle that would have given non-Jews a right to join the cult might have given offence in later times. We do not know, but it certainly seems that Leviticus has been misread and half the teaching lost. We are able to say this because the book is there to read, and to be set beside the standard interpretations of different generations.

Microcosmic Models

This brings me to the third plank in my argument. I have discussed the attitude to animals as being consistent with high regard for a cereal offering. I have discussed the esteemed place of the cereal offering in the sacrificial

system. Finally I must try to suggest what it could have meant for a master solemnly to tell his followers: "This is my body", while holding a loaf of bread. The first thing is to disabuse modern readers that the simple fishermen of Galilee would not have enough education to understand microcosmic models when they see them. My argument will be that they could have been absolutely familiar with microcosmic modelling from Leviticus and used to a concept of the body that has multiple meanings. You do not have to be literate to understand a series of graphic analogies given in a well-known context. It is much harder to understand a sermon made of verbal abstractions.

The anthropological record is stacked with religions in which temples and bodies are presented as if built on the same principles, and these, the very principles of the universe. The projection of the cosmos can start with the roof as a cover, or with the alignment of the front and back of the body with the entrance and rear of the building; in the vertical plane, foot to head corresponds in an obvious way with floor and roof; in the horizontal plane the right and left of the body can be projected on to the internal space by taking the entry as a fixed point of reference. When this fixed point is the front, if the entry corresponds to the sunrise the whole space is aligned with the cardinal points. Hindu temples are explicitly built on the model of the human body.[9]

When bodies are assimilated with the cosmos the abstractions that are being made from the body and from space can be so closely assimilated to each other it makes little sense to say which generated which, or which is projected upon the other. The biblical system of reference to cardinal points is no exception.[10] The Hebrew language uses the same word for the conventional alignments, for example, the words for south and north are the words for right and left respectively, with the tacit assumption that the body is fronting east in alignment with the tabernacle. We can safely assume that the apostles assembled in the upper room for the Last Supper were perfectly familiar with microcosmic ranges of meaning for the word "body".

The priestly writer is a hierarchist much preoccupied with due times and spaces. He invents analogies and plays them against each other, to make harmonies in time and space. The idea of a body is replete with possibilities for the metaphysician. The body of an animal and the body of a human, and the body of the temple, he speaks the word and makes each one resonate with the meanings of the others. The idea that "a rose is a rose" has no sense in this kind of writing. By analogies of right ordering he teaches the people of Israel to honour in their lives the order of God's creation, and by doing so to share in his work. The living body is his paradigm. In the space of the animal's body he finds analogies with the tabernacle and the history of God's revelation to Israel. When he talks about abstractions such as honesty and justice, he uses simple measuring examples: "You shall do no wrong in judgement, in measures of length or weight or quantity, you shall have just balances, just weights ..." (Lev. 19:35). The body is also treated as a measure

of justice. Only the perfect body is fit to be consecrated, no animal with a blemish may be sacrificed, no priest with a blemished body shall approach the altar, "a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback, or a dwarf ..." (Lev. 21:16–20). Leviticus makes physical blemish correspond to blemished judgement, the scales that judge weight, length, or quantity in the market invoke the scales of divine judgement. We can take it that readers of Leviticus were quite used to the cosmologizing of the body and to microcosmic models of many dimensions and kinds.

The Three-fold Body Logic

To be brief about a long and complicated topic, Leviticus turns out to have made use of a threefold analogy, in which the first two models are the desert tabernacle and Mount Sinai. Each is constructed upon the proportions of the other, and third is the body of the animal to be sacrificed, constructed upon the same proportions. This is a very unexpected thing to have found. For me the discovery started when I read that the mystic philosopher and revered medieval interpreter, Rambam, established this parallel from the Book of Exodus. If he was right about Exodus, it is not surprising that Leviticus should have adopted the scheme and extended it.

Remember that the same priestly hand that edited Leviticus is credited in source criticism with the chapters in Exodus in which God gave Moses the plan of the tabernacle, and fenced off Mount Sinai. God forbade the people to go up into it or even to touch it until permission was given by the sounding of a horn (Exod. 19:12–25). Rambam's parallel between mountain and tabernacle was based on the triple zoning of each and the graduated holiness coming to a climax at the top of the mountain and in the inner recesses of the tabernacle. Nahum Sarna explains that,

> Both Sinai and the Tabernacle evidence a tripartite division. The summit corresponds to the inner sanctum, or Holy of Holies. The second zone, partway up the mountain, is the equivalent of the Tabernacle's outer sanctum, or Holy Place. The third zone, at the foot of the mountain, is analogous to the outer court. As with the Tabernacle, the three distinct zones of Sinai feature three gradations of holiness in descending order. Just as Moses alone may ascend to the peak of the mountain, so all but one are barred from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Just as the Holy Place is the exclusive reserve of the priesthood, so only priests and elders are allowed to ascend to a specific point on the mountain. The confinement of the laity to the outer court of the Tabernacle, where the altar of the burnt offering was located, evokes the parallel with Sinai in the restriction of the laity to the foot of the mountain, where the altar was built.[11]

Table 3. Two Paradigms of the Tabernacle Aligned

Mt. Sinai	*Tabernacle*
Summit or head of the mountain, cloud like smoke Exod. 19:18, God came down to top, access for Moses only, Exod. 19:20–22	Holy of Holies, cherubim, ark and testimony of covenant, clouds of incense.
Perimeter of dense cloud, access restricted to Moses, Aaron, two sons and 70 elders Exod. 24:1–9	*Sanctuary*, table of show bread, lampstand; incense altar and smoke of incense; restricted to priests.
Lower slopes, open access.	Outer court, open access.
Mt. Sinai consecrated Exod. 19:23.	Tabernacle consecrated Lev. 16.

The model makes great play with parallels between fire of God's presence, smoke of fire, smoke of incense, and the cloud of God's presence. It might well be objected that this is a medieval fantasy without application to Leviticus. Jacob Milgrom, Bible scholar and Leviticus commentator, supports the idea that it was an ancient tradition because of the survival of the term, "Tent of Meeting", which name for the tabernacle commemorated the connection between it and the place where the initial meeting between God and Moses took place.[12] The cloud is the sign of God's presence. At Sinai when all the work of the tabernacle was finished, "Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud abode upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exod. 40:35). In Genesis the sweet smoke of sacrifice attracted God's attention after the flood. In Exodus the incense altar was used for the priest to send up clouds of fragrant smoke in the tabernacle (Exod. 30:7–8, 34–38; 40:26). Smoke impedes visibility, like a cloud.

The Sacrificial Meat

Sacrifice invokes the whole cosmos, life and death. Normally throughout the world wherever sacrifice is practised, an elaborate symbolism governs the selection of animal victims, each gesture for the sacrifice is minutely prescribed, the animal parts cut and coded, and every detail loaded with meaning. The first few times that I read Leviticus on sacrifice I saw only a bald account of an animal led to the altar, a hand placed upon its head, nothing said about the manner of its death, a lot about disposing of its blood,

and dividing the meat between the altar, the priests and the people. But no sign of the symbolic load that is put upon the sacrificial victim in other religions. Then I decided to read it again very carefully, paying close attention to the rules about what must never be eaten, the blood and the suet, a part of the liver called the long lobe, and the kidneys, and paying close attention to the placing of the pieces of meat upon the altar.

The result was to find that the animal's body was seen as divided at the midriff by a block of hard suet fat which covered the liver and kidneys and which divided the upper part, the rib cage, from the lower abdomen, intestines and genital organs. The middle part, that is, the suet and what it covered, was forbidden. Nothing was said about the head, the tongue, the neck, the lungs, or the heart, or the gall bladder, or about any other anatomical items that figure in other sacrificial lists. So I felt I had to assume that the only thing that was important was this three part division of the carcase, with a middle zone forbidden or reserved to God. When I thought of checking this against Rambam's model of the tabernacle, the proportions looked right. Furthermore, the occluding suet in the middle zone of the animal matched with the dense smoke of incense in the tabernacle and the thick clouds in the middle of the holy mountain. Rules of access to each zone also matched to some degree, (not perfectly).

Table 4. Three Paradigms of the Place of Meeting

Mt. Sinai	*Carcass of peace offering*	*Tabernacles*
Summit or head. Cloud like smoke Exod. 19:18, God came down to top, access for Moses only, Exod. 19:20–22.	Entrails, intestines, sexual organs (washed) at the summit of the pile.	Holy of Holies, cherubim, ark and testimony of covenant.
Perimeter of dense cloud, access restricted to Moses, Aaron, two sons and 70 elders Exod. 24:1–9.	Midriff area, dense fat covering, kidneys, liver lobe, burnt on altar.	Sanctuary, dense incense, symmetrical table and lampstand; access restricted to priests.
Lower slopes, open access.	Head and meat sections, access to body, food for people and priest.	Outer Court, main altar, access for people.
Mountain consecrated Exod. 19:23.	Animal consecrated, Lev. 1–7.	Tabernacle consecrated Lev. 16.

What bearing has the system of analogies with the tabernacle on the institution of the Eucharist? First as to the cereal offering: to be convincing I should have said a lot more on how priests had made the two systems run in parallel. In summary, what goes for the animal goes for the loaf of bread. Second, as to the animal sacrifice, I surmise that the congregation knew Leviticus' teaching on the triple-zoned bodies, and were sufficiently used to microcosmic modelling for the mutual projection of the holy mountain and the house of God, each upon the other, and the sacrificial animal on both. So many of the rules for eating have drawn parallels between the body and the temple or altar. Cleansing for one benefits both. These people would have been going around always conscious that their bodies were paradigms of the tabernacle, always enacting its defilement and purification. Eating the sacrificial meat the members of such a congregation would each have had the sense that in his own body he was renewing the banquet of the seventy elders who were allowed up to the middle zone of Mount Sinai (Exodus). If the analogy were to be further pursued, they themselves each became, in the act of communion, the holy meeting place. That in itself is very suggestive for a readiness to hear the words, "This is my body", in an eschatological context.

Here I rest my case. The shift to cereal offerings would have been easy. First, the attitude of Leviticus to animal life is protective and respectful. Second, in Leviticus animal sacrifice is already matched by a well-developed system of cereal offerings. These two points suggest that it would be no great problem to institute vegetable sacrifice. Third, the habit of analogical thinking was deeply ingrained in the language of religion, metaphors of cosmos and body were highly developed. The Christian doctrine of the Eucharist would have grown very naturally from the teachings of Leviticus, without necessarily requiring a violent break with the old religious forms or importing ideas from other religious traditions.

NOTES

1 The idea that it was a systematic break with the traditional celebration of the Passover is the main theme of Feeley-Harnik's fascinating study of the institution of the Eucharist Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table Eucharist and Passover in Early Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981)
2 M Douglas, *Purity and Danger An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, second edition (London Routledge, 1984)
3 M Douglas, "The Forbidden Animals in Leviticus", 59 *JSOT* (September 1993), pp 3–23
4 Alfred Marx, *Les Offrandes Vegetales dans l'Ancien Testament du tribut au repas eschatologique* (Leiden E J Brill, 1994)
5 J Milgrom, *Numbers, the JPS Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA Jewish Publication Society, 1990), p 238
6 Marx, p 100
7 This is a central argument of my study of Numbers *In the Wilderness The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Sheffield JSOTS Press, 1993)
8 M Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, in press (Oxford University Press)

9 George Michell, *The Hindu Temple An Introduction to its Meaning and Function* (London Paul Elek, 1977)
10 M O'Connor, "Cardinal Direction Terms in Biblical Hebrew", *Semitic Studies*, 2 (1991), pp 1140–1157
11 N M Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary, Exodus* (Philadelphia, PA Jewish Publication Society, 1991)
12 J Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (Philadelphia, PA Jewish Publication Society, 1991), pp 142–143