



Sacrifice in Judaism and its Challenges to Christian Religious Worship in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis

CLEMENT TIEMO DOYAH
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

Abstract. This comparative analysis explores the concept of sacrifice in Judaism and its challenges to Christian religious worship in Nigeria. Sacrifice holds significance in both faith traditions, influencing worship practices in diverse ways. The study focuses on theological implications, historical contexts, and contemporary relevance of sacrificial practices in Judaism and Christianity. In Judaism, sacrifice historically played a central role in religious worship, with rituals of animal offerings serving as means of atonement, thanksgiving, and communion with God. The Hebrew Bible outlines detailed instructions for sacrificial practices, emphasizing purity, obedience, and spiritual intent. However, with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the practice of animal sacrifice ceased, leading to new interpretations of sacrifice within Jewish theology. In Nigeria, Christianity has become dominant, coexisting with traditional religious practices involving sacrificial offerings to deities and spirits. The introduction of Christianity in Nigeria has presented challenges to traditional sacrificial practices, resulting in theological debates, cultural conflicts, and shifts in religious identity among Nigerian Christians. The tension between traditional sacrificial rituals and Christian teachings on sacrifice has influenced religious worship practices in Nigeria, showcasing the complexities of religious syncretism and cultural adaptation. This analysis examines the challenges that the concept of sacrifice poses to Christian religious worship in Nigeria, exploring how the legacy of sacrificial practices in Judaism influences Christian perspectives on sacrifice, redemption, and divine worship. By comparing sacrificial traditions in Judaism and Christianity, this study aims to deepen understanding of how religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and theological perspectives interact and evolve in diverse religious contexts.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Judaism, Christianity, Religious Worship, Nigeria, Comparative Analysis, Theology, Rituals, Syncretism, Cultural Adaptation

1. Introduction

In the realms of religious worship, sacrifice stands as a cornerstone of reverence and spiritual devotion, intricately woven into the fabric of belief systems across the world. Within the realms of Judaism and Christianity, the concept of sacrifice holds immense significance, shaping theological doctrines and ceremonial practices in profound ways. As we embark on a comparative analysis of sacrificial traditions in Judaism and Christianity, we delve deep into the historical underpinnings, theological implications, and contemporary relevance of these age-old practices.

Beginning with Judaism, the roots of sacrificial offerings trace back to ancient times, with rituals of animal sacrifices serving as a pivotal pillar of religious observance. The Hebrew Bible, particularly the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, meticulously lays down directives for conducting various sacrifices, emphasizing purity, intentionality, and obedience to commune with the divine. In Judaism, sacrificial rites were closely tied to concepts of sin atonement, expressions of gratitude, and the nurturing of a deep covenantal bond with the Almighty, providing a conduit for devotees to manifest their faith and petition for divine benevolence.

On the other hand, Christianity, as a distinct doctrinal tradition emanating from the teachings of Jesus Christ, portrays sacrifice through the prism of the crucifixion – wherein Jesus assumed the role of the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of humanity. The sacrificial aspect in Christianity finds its zenith in the crucifixion narrative, which is deemed a redemptive act bridging the chasm between humanity and the divine, offering deliverance to adherents. Through the ritual of the Eucharist or Holy Communion, Christians partake in the commemoration and spiritual participation of Jesus' sacrificial demise, symbolizing spiritual nourishment and solidarity within the communal body of Christ.

In a nation as diverse as Nigeria, characterized by a tapestry of religious beliefs encompassing traditional practices, Islam, and Christianity, the interplay of sacrificial customs within the context of Christian worship introduces a nuanced dynamic. Nigerian Christians encounter a confluence of traditional sacrificial rites and Christian doctrines on sacrifice and redemption, navigating the intricate juncture of varying religious traditions within a multicultural milieu. This comparative scrutiny endeavours to unravel the complexities of sacrificial rituals in Judaism and Christianity, probing into how the legacy of sacrifices in Judaism informs Christian interpretations of worship and redemption, notably within the Nigerian landscape. By scrutinising the parallels, disparities, and dilemmas posed by sacrificial traditions in these two faiths, we aspire to enrich our comprehension of the diverse intersections among religious convictions, cultural norms, and theological elucidations in an increasingly globalised society.

The ritual of "Sacrifice" was the center of the religious life of ancient Israel, Daly (1978a: 1-207; 1978b: 11-47), amongst other reasons it was an act of worship in Judaism. It is one of the threads that bind Judaism together with Christianity. Christianity no doubt, is an offshoot of Judaism, according to Oxenberg, Richard (2017),

Christianity extends the revelation of the One God, originally bequeathed to the nation of Israel, to the world at large. In doing so it does not replace Judaism, or 'supersede' Judaism, or override Judaism, it fulfills one of Judaism's important missions. And we must remember that, at least at the outset, it was Jews who did this. Jesus was a Jew. Peter was a Jew. Paul was a Jew. Christianity, in its origin, is Jewish. I would say that it is Jewish in its essence as well. Or, to put it another and better way, the heart of Judaism and the heart of Christianity are – ideally – the same.

Notwithstanding, lots of metamorphosis has taken place with regards to the concept of sacrifice. Christianity holds a differing opinion; it is believed that the death of "Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of all that the sacrificial system of Judaism pointed to; hence there is no longer provision for physical sacrifice". Daly further stated that,

In early Christianity, because of its fierce rejection of both Jewish and pagan ritual sacrifice, just the opposite appears to be the case. From New Testament times, however, Christians thought and spoke of Christ's death as sacrificial, of their own community as the new temple in which spiritual sacrifices were to be offered, and of Christian life itself as sacrificial (Daly, 1978a, 208-307; 1978b, 53-83). Before many

centuries had passed, the central act of Christian worship, the Eucharist, was referred to as "the sacrifice of Christians" (Augustine, City 10.6; Daly, 1978a, 498-508; 1978b, 127-34; 1989, 152-3).

Furthermore, in Christianity, there is also the theology of continuity in symbol and discontinuity in principle of the ritual of sacrifice, this view is upheld by J. Carleton Paget & J. Lieu (Eds.) (2017).

In the contemporary Nigerian context, a great deal of variation is observed and there is no uniform belief system apropos the ritual of sacrifice. There is a disconnection from the original intent and practice in most churches. More so, there is the incursion of Traditional religious beliefs and practices into Christianity (syncretism), as such the purpose and process are corrugated. The issue of sacrifice has become a bane in the Christian religious worship system in Nigeria.

A comparative analysis of sacrifice in Judaism and contemporary Nigeria Church reveals a regrettable decadence and abuse of process and intent. It has become a breeding ground for cultic practices and a means for extorting gullible miracle seekers.

This essay seeks to identify and x-ray the challenges of the ritual of sacrifice confronting the contemporary Nigerian Church. And to make recommendations that would help to curb the menace.

2. Literature Review

In the exploration of sacrifice within Judaism and Christianity, it becomes apparent that sacrificial practices have served as foundational elements of religious worship, theological beliefs, and communal identity. This literature review embarks on a comprehensive analysis of the historical progression, theological implications, and current dilemmas surrounding sacrifice in these two faith traditions, specifically in the diverse religious landscape of Nigeria.

In Judaism, sacrificial rituals were meticulously detailed in the Hebrew Bible, serving as integral components of worship and spiritual connection with the divine. The destruction of the Second Temple ushered in a new era of interpretation and understanding of sacrifice within Jewish theology, as outlined by scholarly works like those of Neusner (2001).

On the other hand, Christianity views sacrifice through the lens of Jesus Christ's sacrificial death, symbolizing redemption and reconciliation between humanity and God. The practice of the Eucharist stands as a central

sacrament where Christians commemorate and actively participate in the sacrificial act of Jesus, fostering spiritual nourishment and communal unity in their faith.

In the context of Nigeria, the coexistence of Christianity with traditional religious practices has engendered a complex interplay between sacrificial customs, cultural adaptation, and religious syncretism. Studies by Ogunbameru (2015) and Ezeh (2018) shed light on the intricate dynamics of sacrificial practices in Nigeria, unveiling the negotiation of religious identities amidst diverse cultural traditions and colonial inheritances.

Through the examination of the historical trajectory, theological interpretations, and contemporary challenges surrounding sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity, this literature review aims to pave the way for a comparative analysis that delves deeper into how sacrificial traditions shape religious worship and identity in the Nigerian context, enriching our comprehension of cross-cultural religious dynamics.

2.1 The Origin of Judaism

Mordecai Kaplan (1934) defines Judaism as *the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish People*. While Marc Zvi Brettler (2014) differed by saying, *I believe that it is difficult to find a starting-point for Judaism, and I find problematic the standard models, which begin Judaism either in the Babylonian exile or later, for example, when the term "Judaism" started to be used in the Hellenistic period. There is much continuity between the biblical period and later periods, and to my mind, these suggest that Judaism had a long history, and the biblical period comprises a bit less than the first third of this history.*

Drawing from the above opposing views, it is difficult for one to be emphatic as to when Judaism originated. Notwithstanding, one cannot be docile about its origin. From available records the word "Jew" (in Hebrew, "Yehudi") is derived from the name Judah, which was the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons. Judah was the ancestor of one of the tribes of Israel, which was named after him. Likewise, the word Judaism literally means "Judah-ism," that is, the religion of the Yehudim (Jews or Hebrews). Other sources, however, say that the word "Yehudim" means "People of God," because the first three letters of "Yehudah" are the same as the first three letters of God's four-letter name.

Originally, the term Yehudi referred specifically to members of the tribe of Judah, as distinguished from the other tribes of Israel. However, after the death of

King Solomon, the nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms: the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel (I Kings 12; II Chronicles 10). After that time, the word Yehudi could properly be used to describe anyone from the kingdom of Judah, which included the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, as well as scattered settlements from other tribes. The most obvious biblical example of this usage is in Esther 2:5, where Mordecai is referred to as both a Yehudi and a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

In the 6th century B.C.E., the Northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and the ten tribes were exiled from the land (II Kings 17), leaving only the tribes in the Southern kingdom of Judah remaining to carry on Abraham's heritage. These people of the kingdom of Judah were generally known to themselves and to other nations as Yehudim (Jews), and that name continues to be used today.

In common speech, the word "Jew" is used to refer to all of the physical and spiritual descendants of Jacob/Israel, as well as to the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and their wives, and the word "Judaism" is used to refer to their beliefs. Technically, this usage is inaccurate, just as it is technically inaccurate to use the word "Yorubas" to refer to all the indigenous people of Nigeria. However, this technically inaccurate usage is common both within the Jewish community and outside of it, and is therefore used throughout this paper.

2.2 The Concept of Sacrifice in Judaism

Sacrifice and offering are activities and concepts endemic to the human race. According to Sibani, C.M. (2009) *sacrifice was a regular feature in Ancient Near Eastern religion. Israel appears to have shared many of the techniques and conceptions of sacrifice of her neighbors, but her own observances were firmly rooted in the framework of God's revelation at Sinai..... Certainly, he said, it was a daily ritual in the temple.*

The first act of worship outside the Garden of Eden was the presentation of offerings and sacrifices to Yahweh (Gen 4:1-4). Noah's first act of worship after the great flood subsided was the presentation of "burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20). Before his call Abram was acquainted with sacrifice and offering. Soon after obeying the Lord's command, he built an altar at the oak of Moreh (12:6) where the Lord had revealed Himself. He built another altar between Bethel and Ai and called upon the name of Yahweh (12:8; 13:3), and another at Hebron by the oaks of Mamre (13:18). Three months after the Israelites came

out of Egypt, God called them together at Sinai. There He gave them the Torah, which included instructions for worshiping Him by presenting sacrifices and offerings (Ex 19-Num 10:10).

As R. J. Thompson (et al) (p. 249) noted:

It is with the rites of Israel as they appear in Old Testament, rather than with their origin, or the original meaning of their terms that the study of Judaism sacrifice must chiefly deal. The origin of much of the material in Old Testament that deals with Judaism sacrifice and offering is highly controversial.

The ritual of sacrifice is universally understood to mean, the offering of gift(s) to God as an outward manifestation of our veneration for Him and with the object of attaining communion with Him. Strictly speaking however, this offering does not become a sacrifice until a real change has been effected in the visible gift (e.g. by slaying it, shedding its blood, burning it, or pouring it). Atonement we talk of 'change', we mean either visible or invisible realities that happen as a consequence of what has been done. This makes sacrifices rituals. According to Janowitz, Naomi (2011), *every theory of sacrifice correlates with a general theory of ritual*. However, it is equally important to note that the English origin of the term 'sacrifice' is Latin where sacer infers 'holy' or 'sacred', and facer stands for 'to make'. This makes the conjoined term imply something made holy or through destruction is dedicated to the deity (divinity). The scientific significance of sacrifice lies in the fact that the material of the bloody sacrifices is taken from things used as food. Drinks are also used, and the best of these possessions are required. In most cases, sacrifice connotes slaughter and the shedding of blood. It is the symbolic significance of blood that bears much meaning as life is given (offered) to God to whom the sacrifice as a form of worship is directed. This implies that the worshipper and the sacrificed victim should have a certain degree of association - the gift should be of high value and associated with the physical well-being of the worshipper. Leviticus 17:11)

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.

There are some particular aspects to consider in the choice of a sacrifice like age, health and physical appearance. The bloody sacrifice in this case has a symbolic significance - the self-giving nature of the worshipper, who through the offered sacrifice receives acceptance or recognition from the deity. As Girard (1982) observes:

Theoretically, sacrifice then becomes 'gift-giving' where the gift given represents the giver himself. It is only in this respect that we can understand the meaning, importance and significance of sacrifice as a rite.

2.3 Types and Forms of Sacrifice in Judaism

There are several types and forms of sacrifice in Judaism. These include: the burnt offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering that were bloody sacrifices, involving the slaying of oxen, sheep, goats, doves, and pigeon. Others were the meat (meal) offerings; these were bloodless oblations, consisting of vegetable productions, such as corn, flour, meal, bread, cakes, oils, perfume and salt. It was not, however, till the Israelites were settled in Canaan that the whole Levitical law was binding on them or could possibly be obeyed.

2.3.1 The Burnt Offering

One cannot possibly talk about burnt offering without referring to "The Altar of Burnt Offerings". Drawing from Sibani (2014). *It is important to note that this is an altar meant for Burnt offering. All animal sacrifices were made here at the door of the Tabernacle.* (Exodus27:1-8). The Altar was 7.5ft (2.3m) square and 4.5ft (1.37m) high. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze, and had a horn on each corner. The fire on the altar was to be kept burning at all times and the daily sacrifices were offered in the morning and afternoon.

The burnt offering was so called because, unlike all other forms of sacrifice, the whole of the body of the victims (except the skin) was entirely consumed by the altar fire, and ascended in smoke to God. Only male animals without blemish were permitted to be offered as burnt sacrifices, it was however in the opinion of the offerer to bring any of the animals already named in (Leviticus chapter 1), according as his piety might prompt him, or his means might admit.

When an Israelite brought sacrifice, it could be any of the following prescribed animals as his ability could allow - a bullock, a male sheep or goat, a turtle dove, or young pigeon as his offering, he led it up to the door of the tabernacle, where the priests, arrayed in their robes of office, were in attendance; and if on examination they declare it to be without blemish, that is, free from any disqualifying defects enumerated in (Lev.22:17-26), he was permitted to offer it to the Lord there, even before the entrance to the holy habitation. Death was the penalty for offering sacrifices elsewhere. This was in order to prevent idolatry. After

putting his hand on the head of the victim, and by the solemn act devoting it to the Lord as his substitute or representative, he slew it probably on the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:11),

And he shall kill it on the other side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood round about upon the altar.

The officiating priest then receives the blood, and sprinkle it around the under part of the altar. The sacrificer then skinned and cut up the carcass, in which he may have been assisted by the Levites. The legs and inward parts were washed with water and sprinkled with salt, and all the parts of the body (some say in nearly natural order) were laid on the altar by the priest, and the whole being consumed by fire, ascended in smoke to God, to whom it was of sweet savor. The inspection of the victim, sprinkling of the blood, and the laying of the parts of the victim on the altar, were principally the functions of the priests and constituted the presenting of the sacrifice. It is expressly said that the sheep or goat was slain on the north side of the altar.

A turtle dove, or young pigeon, brought by a poor man, was as efficacious as the offering of his richer neighbor; so that the rich and the poor met at a level at the altar. The priest, not the offerer, killed and prepared the bird for the altar. This, probably, was with a view to saving the blood, to the effect which great care and experience was required.

The burnt offering was evidently intended to be an expiatory sacrifice - the victim bleeding, suffering, and dying for the sin of the offerer, in order that he might escape deserved punishment; "it was to make atonement for him". It was a self-dedicatory offering as well, and some opine that self-dedication was pre-eminently its design - the entire body of the victim consumed on the altar being significant of the dedication of the offerer of himself to God. The International Bible Dictionary (1977) states that: *every burnt offering contained an acknowledgment of general guilt, and a typical expiation of it. The burning of the whole victim on the altar signified, on the part of the offerer, the entireness of his devotion of himself and all his substance to God; and on the part of the victim, the completeness of the expiation (Leviticus 1:3-9)*

Romans 12:1, evidently points to the burnt offering and helps confirm this view:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Burnt offerings, brought as individual might be prompted; it could be at the removal of ceremonial uncleanness of different kinds (Lev. 12:16; 14:19). The following were the public burnt offerings: daily (Exod. 29:38); weekly (Num. 28:9, 10); monthly (vv. 11-16); yearly (vv. 16-26).

2.3.2 Meat Offering

When the Scriptures were translated into English, "meat" did not mean "flesh," as it does now; it meant food in general. Thompson (1977) sees it as *that which represented the work of the man's hands, his possessions and accomplishments to the Lord*. According to Sibani (2014) *a handful of his meal offering was burned on the Altar of Burnt offering and the remainder belonged to the Priests for their food. All the frankincense was burnt on the altar because the frankincense was a holy perfume unto the Lord and it was not to be given to the Priests. That is why our worship is never to a Priest or any man but only to the Lord Himself.*

The following were varieties of meat offerings: - *Firstly*, a meant offering of flour, upon which oil has been *poured*. *Secondly*, a meat offering baked in the oven, consisting of leavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. *Thirdly*, a meat offering of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil, and baked in a pan. When baked it was parted in pieces, and oil poured on it, the oil being used as butter is poured on the bread. *Fourth*, a meat offering made of fine flour, with oil, and baked in the frying pan. *Fifth*, a meant offering of first fruits – "green ears of corn dried by the fire," with oil and frankincense (Lev. chapter 2).

The offerer brought his offering – one or other of the foregoing – to the priest, who took a part of it, called a "memorial", which he laid on the altar to be burned. What remained of the offerings, after the memorial or the Lord's part was taken out of them, belonged to the priest. No honey or leaven was allowed to be mixed with the meat offerings (v.11), but salt (v. 13) was applied to them all. Leaven, though useful in making bread, has a tendency to corrupt it. Leavened bread will only last a few days at most, while unleavened bread will keep a long time. This, probably, was the reason that leaven was forbidden in the offerings. Salt has quite an opposite tendency; it is a powerful preservative, and as applied to the offerings, was designed to show the enduring nature of the covenant between God and the Hebrews. Drink offerings of wine commonly accompanied meat offerings. They were, however, never Practice separately; and both

formed part of the stated public sacrifices offered daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly (Numbers chapter 28).

By bringing a meat offering, an Israelite dedicated to God a part of the choicest of those mercies constituting his daily bread, and by this act acknowledged that he was indebted to his Maker not only for that sample of His bounties, but for the stock, even for all that he possessed.

Although God did not stand in need of food, yet these gifts were of a sweet savor to Him, and His ministering servants were nourished by them –the greater portion going to them, it being only a small part (the “memorial” or God’s part) that was burnt on the altar.

2.3.3 Peace Offering

Peace offerings were taken from the herd or from the flock, and consisted of the same kind of animals that formed the burnt offerings, and like them, required to be without blemish; they might, however, either be male or female (Lev.3). They were slain and skinned, and their blood sprinkled in the same manner as the burnt offerings, but only the fatty parts were burned. The priests got the breast and the right shoulder (Lev. 7:31-34), which, from the peculiar way they had to present these to the Lord, the one being lifted or heaved up and down, and the other waved to and fro from right to left in the air (vv. 30, 32), were called the “heave” and “wave” offerings. All that remained of the carcass belonged to the offerer, who might invite his friends and the poor to feast on it along with him. The priests ate their own portion, and the altar fire devoured God’s part. The offering being shared among these three parties, and each of them partaking of it, signified their being at peace and holding communion together, hence the offering is appropriately called a peace offering. Peace offerings of a national character, and on a grand scale, were sometimes offered (Lev. 9:18; Josh. 8:31; 2 Sam.6:1). This was offered not for purposes of atonement for sins, nor to represent the self-dedication of the offerer to God, but rather to express thankfulness to God. Hence it is sometimes called a “Thank Offering.” An Israelite wishing to express thankfulness to God for mercies received, might do so by bringing a peace offering; or, if he wished to supplicate for blessings, he brought the same form of offerings, thus thanking God for the past, while soliciting new favors. Peace offerings were evidently intended to keep alive in the bosoms of the Israelites the combined flame of gratitude, piety, and charity. Sibani (2014) postulates that, *the worshipper who offered a peace offering was keeping himself in conscious fellowship with the Lord.*

In the same light McCain (1996:37) posits that, “The purpose of peace offering was to show one’s gratitude to God.” McCain (1996:37) posits that, *the purpose of peace offering was to show one’s gratitude to God. That it was given for unsolicited blessings.*

2.3.4 The Sin Offering

The animals used for sin offering, with the exception of the birds, were the same as those for burnt offerings. The particular one, however, the offerer was required to bring was prescribed by the law, yet with an obvious regard to his position in the commonwealth (Lev. 4:3-28).

The Priest’s offering: A priest who had committed any of the specified sins, brought a young bullock, without blemish (Lev. 4:3-13), to the door of the tabernacle, and there, putting his hands on its head, confessed audibly (according to Jewish writers) the sin he was guilty of, and for which he desired to make atonement and kill it, and the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock’s blood and bring it to the tabernacle of congregation, he shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the Vail of the sanctuary and he shall put some of it on each of the horns of the golden altar and on returning to the court, pour out the residue at the foot of the brazen altar. After this, he took off from the carcass the fatty parts, and put them on the altar, where they were burned, and ascended in smoke to God. The fatty parts, next to the blood of the animal, were considered the most precious. All that remained (the head, flesh, the legs, and the dung) he was required to carry (of course, with the assistance of the Levites) out of the court, and beyond the camp, to a clean place, where the ashes from the altar were poured out, and there burn them.

The Sin Offering for the Congregation: The sin offering for the whole congregation was the same as that for the priest – a young bullock without blemish (Lev. 4:13-22). It was brought by the representatives of the congregation, the elders, who put their hands on its head, confessing, as they did so, the particular sins of which that people had been guilty. It was slain either by the elders or the priest. The ceremony of sprinkling the blood, burning the fatty parts of the altar, and removing the remainder of the carcass beyond the camp, was the same as in the case of the priest’s offering.

The Ruler’s Sin Offering: The sin offering was a young he-goat (Lev. 4:22-27). Having put his hands on its head, and confessed his sins over it, he slew it. The priest having received the blood, dipped his finger in

it, and rubbed on the horns of the altar of burnt offerings, and then poured out what was left at the foot of the altar. After this, he burned fatty parts of the animal on the altar fire. What remained of the victim was not carried beyond the camp, as was the case with the priests' and the congregation's offering, but became the property of the priests, who feasted upon it in holy place.

The common person's sin offering: If one of the common people had sinned, the law prescribed for his offering either a young she-goat or a she-lamb (Lev. 4:27-35). It was presented to God in the same way and with the like ceremony as the ruler's offering.

The sprinkling of the blood before the vail, and the carrying of the carcass beyond the camp to be burned, in the cases of the priests' and congregation's offerings, were intended to denote that the sins of the priests were more heinous than the same sins when committed by a single individual.

2.3.4 The Trespass Offering

It is not easy to distinguish, in some cases, between the sins and offenses for which the law prescribed a "trespass offering" or a "sin offering" but you will find the particular sins for both classes of sacrifices enumerated in Lev. 4, 5, and 6. "Sin offerings", we have seen, might be brought by priest, congregation, ruler, or private person; trespass offerings, however, were only to be brought by individuals (Lev. 5:1-19). The usual animal for a trespass offering was a young she-goat or she-lamb; but a poor person was permitted to bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons – the one to be offered as a trespass offering, and the other as a burnt offering; or if he were too poor to offer these, the law mercifully admitted of his bringing instead a meat offering of fine flour, which, however, was not regarded as meat offering, but as a trespass offering, and hence had an expiatory character which the ordinary meat offering had not. Although a she-lamb or she-goat was the usual trespass offering, yet some trespasses, looked upon as peculiarly heinous such as those "in the holy things of the Lord" required the sacrifice to bring a ram. The sacrifices under the law effected the temporal remission of punishment, they could not, however, cleanse the soul from the guilt of sin, nor purchase spiritual and eternal blessings; for "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4; 9:12-16). An Israelite who, by sinning, had incurred the penalty of death, provided he had not sinned presumptuously (that is, knowingly, willfully, and deliberately), on bringing the prescribed offering, was pardoned (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; Num. 15:28, etc.); or,

one who had become unclean either by violations of the ceremonial law or otherwise, and, in consequence, had been banished from the encampment, on bringing the prescribed sacrifice, was cleansed, and restored to his place in the congregation (Lev. 13:46-59; 14, 15; Num. 12:15). And, in general, to the individual or nation sacrificing, as the temporal blessings and privileges which as a people the Hebrew enjoyed. To what extent the bulk of the nation understood the typical import of the sacrifices we are not informed; it cannot, however, be doubted that these sacrifices were means of grace to pious Israelites, who were sincerely striving after deliverance, not merely from its spiritual and eternal penal consequences. Such Israelites have glimpses through these types of the coming Messiah, and by faith in him as their sin offering to be sacrificed for them had their conscience purged from the guilt of sin by virtue of His atoning blood. Some, no doubt, had stronger faith, and saw with greater clearness than others. Jacob could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and the seraphic Isaiah depicted the greater sacrifice as distinctly as if with his bodily eyes he had witnessed the crucifixion.

3. Purposes of Sacrifice in Judaism

Sacrifice in Judaism is not mean to Feed God. Though, Feuillet and Cazelles (DBS up.) formulated the following hypothesis to explain sacrifice. *They considered sacrifice to be food of the god(s)* (Judge 6:19-24; Lev 3:11; Num 28:2; Gen 8:20; etc.). But the Old Testament seems rather to mock at such an idea (Ps 50:13), and such passages as Gen 8:20 stress the fact that God accepts the offering as pleasing to Him, not as food.

In most other religions though, sacrifice is believed to be a means of feeding deity /gods. On the contrary, in Judaism, sacrifice is not intended to feed God. He said in (Psalm 50:10-14 Niv), "*For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the entire world is mine and everything in it. Do I eat the meat of bulls? Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High.*" In Jewish tradition, sacrifices were not food for God. God does not eat flesh or drink blood, and even if He were hungry for anything at all, it will be arrogant for humans to presume the power to feed God. Actually, *there is nothing man has that was not given to him by God* (1Cor.4:7). Equally, the book of 1Chronicles 29:14 &15 affirms same - "*But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all the things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*". This

means that, even that which human beings give is taken from God's world, just the way a child borrows money from his or her parents to buy a present for them. It is not the gift that God demands, after all, everything is God's, but rather He demands honor from humans through loving obedience to His commandments.

There are Multiple Reasons for Sacrifice in Judaism. Sacrifice in Judaism was not only for the purpose of atonement for sins. There were far more complex reasons for which sacrifices were offered. Only in few occasions it was meant for purposes of atonement for unintentional sins (Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27; 5:15, and 18; Numbers 15:22-31). And for such sacrifices of atonement there were laid down procedures. Though, there were many purposes for bringing sacrifice, but the expiatory effect was often an accompaniment. According to (E. B. Tylor and G. B. Gray). *The concept of sacrifice is a gift to the deity*. Undoubtedly this is a part of the total meaning of sacrifice in Israel, but only a part. Some of the terms indicate that what was brought was a gift (e.g., qorb^hn, matt^hn).

Sacrifices are brought purely for the purpose of communing with God and becoming closer to Him. They were also brought for the purpose of expressing thanks and gratitude to God in love.

Sacrifice was restricted to specific category of sins. Sins in Judaism comprise of several category of seriousness. The lightest in Hebrew was named, "Het Hatta'ah" or "Hattat". This refers to (Fault, Shortcoming, Misstep), an infraction of a commandment committed in ignorance. The second is "Avon", which is a breach of a minor commandment committed with a full knowledge of the existence and nature of that commandment (Bemezid). Then, the gravest kind is the "Pesha" or "Mered", This is presumptuous and rebellious act against God. Its worst form is "Resha" such an act committed with a wicked intention. With a few exceptions sacrifice could only be used as a means of atoning for the first type of sin, which are sins committed in ignorance. Finally sacrifice has no expiating effect unless the person making the offering repents his or her actions before making the offering, and makes restitution to any person who was harmed by the violation.

Expression of Adoration and Devotion: Sacrifices as rituals, are a means of expression of worship and commitment to God. Through the shedding of blood of that which is chosen from among the many (consecrated items) the worshipper offers that which are of ultimate worth: the life of the victim. It is in this case that the language of sacrifice comes through. The

type of the sacrifice is particular, chosen and from among the best, one which is not deformed, undefiled, innocent, tender and highly valued (Lev.1:3, 10; 4:23; Ex.12:15). This implied the pure nature of the sacrifice which was expected to be of the worshipper. This was much more significant in the case of atonement. The understanding here was that the undeserving sinner presented what he treasured most to take his place, thereby expressing a willingness to be reconciled to harmony with the divine. The sacrifice in this case became the means by which the worshipper was purified and consecrated. This was the highest point of prayer which expressed love and commitment, evident in the price one had to pay to part with that which was of excellent value.

3.1 Significance of Sacrifice in Judaism

The significance of sacrifice in Judaism is rooted in its role as a central ritual in the worship and relationship between the Jewish people and God. Sacrifice held multifaceted meanings and symbolism that were integral to the religious and spiritual life of ancient Israelites. Here are some aspects of the significance of sacrifice in Judaism along with some sources:

Symbol of Atonement: Sacrifices were seen as a means of atonement for sin, serving to cleanse and purify the worshipper. The shedding of blood in sacrifices was believed to symbolize the seriousness of sin and the need for repentance. This idea is expressed in Leviticus 17:11, as mentioned earlier, emphasizing the role of blood in making atonement.

Symbol of Devotion and Obedience: Sacrifices were a tangible way for the Israelites to demonstrate their devotion, obedience, and submission to God. By following the prescribed rituals for sacrifice, the worshippers expressed their commitment to God's commandments and their desire to maintain a close relationship with Him. This aspect highlights the importance of obedience and fidelity in the worship of God.

Symbol of Covenant Relationship: Sacrifices were also symbolic of the covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel. By offering sacrifices according to the laws and ordinances set forth in the Torah, the Israelites reaffirmed their commitment to the covenant and their identity as God's chosen people. Sacrifices served as a visible sign of the special relationship between God and Israel, reinforcing the mutual obligations and responsibilities inherent in the covenant.

These aspects of the significance of sacrifice in Judaism can be further explored in the Hebrew Bible,

particularly in the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which contain detailed instructions and explanations regarding the practice of sacrifice. Additionally, Rabbinic literature, such as the Mishnah and Talmud, provide insights into the theological, ethical, and symbolic dimensions of sacrifice in Jewish tradition.

Sacrifice in Christian Religious Worship

In Christianity, sacrifice plays a central role in the understanding of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. According to Christian theology, Jesus is seen as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of humanity, offering Himself as a perfect and complete sacrifice to reconcile humanity with God. The concept of sacrifice in Christian religious worship is deeply rooted in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, which is believed to have fulfilled and superseded the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

One of the key biblical references to the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death in Christian theology is found in the New Testament in the book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews draws parallels between the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and the sacrificial death of Jesus, presenting Him as the high priest who offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 9:26b-28 states:

"But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." (ESV)

This passage from the book of Hebrews highlights the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death and its redemptive significance in Christian theology. It emphasizes the once-for-all nature of Christ's sacrifice and its efficacy in atoning for the sins of humanity.

Additionally, Christian worship services often include the Eucharist or Holy Communion, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed by the faithful in remembrance of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. This ritual is seen as a reenactment and participation in the sacrificial offering of Jesus, symbolizing the spiritual nourishment and unity of believers with Christ.

The bloody sacrifices, and especially sin offerings, prefigured the offering of Christ for the sins of men in the New Testament. The animals were innocent, so was he who died, not for His own, but for others' sins. Some of them were not only innocent, but patient,

meek, and gentle: and he whom they prefigured was meek and lowly. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7). The animals were without blemish, and He whom they typified was "without spot," "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from the sinners." The eyes, not of erring priests, but those of the all-seeing Jehovah, search the great Victim, and find no fault in Him; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). The offerer put his hands on the head of the devoted animal, symbolically transferring his guilt to it. On Jesus had been laid "the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

It is believed that, the sprinkling of the blood by the priest in the Old Testament symbolizes the blood that flowed from the pierced side of the Redeemer. So, Christ's bloodshed, signifies his life given for sinners; "Who gave Himself a ransom for all." His blood sprinkled on a sinner's conscience saves him/her from spiritual and eternal death. The victim's body which was burned on the altar prefigured the sufferings of Him who groaned and bled on Calvary's cross. The carcass of the animal in the cases of the priest's and the congregation's offerings, being burned beyond the camp denoted the heinousness of sin and when committed by those parties; and so Christ was crucified not within the city but beyond the walls of Jerusalem ("without the gate," Heb. 13:12) thus signifying that the sins for which He suffered were of the deepest dye, and was not of a nation merely, but of people of every nation; for "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sin of the whole world: (1 John 2:2)." If an Israelite transgressed the law, he could escape the punishment of his sin (if it were not a sin that attracts death) by no other means than by sacrifice; or, having contracted ceremonial uncleanness, could not be restored to his place in the congregation, nor be allowed to visit the courts of God's house, unless he brought the prescribed bloody offering. "Without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22)." This speaks to us with no uncertain sound of the "great sacrifice," and of His precious blood as that alone which can give peace to a troubled conscience, save sinners from spiritual and eternal death, and gain admission for, at last into the course of the heavenly temple. Blessed be God, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

The New Testament Christian believes that, peace with God could only be attained through our Jesus Christ and there is no salvation in any other. If you continue to reject Him, your iniquity must remain forever on your head, and you will never be able to escape from an avenging God, nor from an accusing conscience, nor from the pains of hell. Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.

The burnt offering as well as all the animal sacrifices typified an atoning death of Christ; indeed, apart from His death, none of the various victims slain at the altar of sacrifice had any meaning. The self-dedicatory character of the offering was strikingly fulfilled in the life of Christ. His every word and act showed how entirely He was devoted to the will of His Father. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt". "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me". "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?". "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do". These were memorable utterances of him whose life from the manger to the cross was continual burnt offering.

Christians has fulfilled the expiatory aspect of the burnt sacrifice. He who trod the "winepress alone" has done this once for all by his atoning death. The New Testament Church's duty is to constantly look by faith unto Him as crucified for them, and to be continually striving, in their daily life, to fulfill the self-dedicatory aspect of the offering. "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom.12:1)."

Sacrifice holds different meanings and significance in Judaism and Christianity, reflecting the theological differences between the two religious' traditions. Here are some key differences between sacrifice in Judaism and sacrifice in Christian religious worship:

- Nature of Sacrifice

Judaism: In Judaism, sacrifice was a central ritual prescribed in the Hebrew Bible for atonement, thanksgiving, and covenant renewal. The focus was on offering animal sacrifices according to the laws and regulations set forth in the Torah.

Christianity: In Christianity, sacrifice is understood in the context of Jesus Christ's sacrificial death on the

cross. Jesus is seen as the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity, offering Himself to atone for sin once and for all.

- Ultimate Sacrifice

Judaism: In Judaism, the sacrificial system involved the offering of animals such as lambs, goats, and bulls as a means of seeking atonement for sins and expressing devotion to God.

Christianity: In Christianity, the focal point of sacrifice is the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus is viewed as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, offering Himself as the perfect and complete sacrifice for the redemption of humanity.

- Purpose of Sacrifice

Judaism: In Judaism, sacrifices were primarily intended for atonement, thanksgiving, and covenant renewal. They were seen as a means of seeking forgiveness for sins and maintaining a close relationship with God.

Christianity: In Christianity, the sacrificial death of Jesus is understood as the ultimate atoning sacrifice that reconciles humanity with God. Jesus' sacrifice is believed to have fulfilled the need for further animal sacrifices, offering salvation and eternal life to those who believe in Him.

- Continuation of Sacrificial Practices

Judaism: After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the practice of animal sacrifices ceased to be a central aspect of Jewish worship. Prayer, study, and acts of loving-kindness became the primary means of connecting with God.

Christianity: The sacrificial death of Jesus is commemorated and remembered in Christian worship through rituals such as the Eucharist or Holy Communion, which symbolize participation in the sacrifice of Christ.

These differences in the understanding and practice of sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity are influenced by the respective theological teachings and beliefs of each religious tradition.

4. Sacrifice in the Contemporary Nigerian Church Context

The concept of sacrifice in the Contemporary Nigerian church context is divergent. There is no uniform belief & practice of sacrifice amongst the Nigerian churches. Some churches strongly hold the view that there is no

longer any sacrifice for sin, or for any other reasons apart from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the whole world. They believe that the act of sacrifice in the Old Testament (Judaism) was a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The case of the burnt offering in the O.T was seen as symbolic of self-dedication and commitment to God of the worshipers. They view the whole process of the choice, qualification, presentation of the 165acrificiall victim, its' assessment and acceptance by the officiating priest and eventual sacrifice by burnt offering on the altar bit by bit in a specified order, as symbolic of the believer's true worship to God by presenting oneself – Soul, Spirit and body to God in Holy worship (Rom 12:1-2). So, they do not indulge in the act of sacrificing animals to God. In principle, they sacrifice themselves to God through sincere worship and rendering of meaningful service to God and humanity.

Another group of churches do not hold the same view. This other group believes in sacrificing material things: using different items/ingredient & methods of sacrifice. Some of such kind of materials/methods include, but not limited to, candles of different sizes & colors, fruits such as coconuts, pineapples, oranges, pawpaw, and animals, tuber of yam with other food stuffs and even money inclusive.

There is also other set of contemporary Nigerian Churches that preach and practice sacrifice in the forms of serious donations – seed faith – that is, sowing of seed for specific purposes. Serious worship programs involving several days fasting and prayers, which may be accompanied by various gift items. In the name of sacrifice and ritual cleansing, some denominational heads indulge in illicit sexual act with unsuspecting victims. Such group also conducts ritual baths for their victims and many desperate miracle seeking people do willingly after their bodies for such acts.

There are other churches in Nigeria that go to the extent of carrying out human sacrifices on their church altars, entrances, pillars and foundation.

A careful analysis of sacrifice in the contemporary churches reveals that most of these sacrifices are directed to God but to other deities yet are purported done in His name. God does not support human sacrifice. The case of God stopping Abraham from offering Isaac and substituting him with an animal indicating God hates human sacrifice. And God not stopping Abraham until he lifted the knife to kill his son, shows the extent Abraham could go in obeying God.

5. Purpose of Sacrifice in Nigeria Church Context

To avert one form of challenge or the other, to gain favor, power, wealth & honor, to appease God for wrongs done, to avert sickness, diseases and death, to fight an impending or perceived danger, and to gain promotion. Only a few sacrificed to God for purposes of thanksgiving, worship, adoration and reverence. Everybody was sacrificing for one problem and another because he/she needs answer.

Sacrifice has created a lot of controversies between those that use materials for life, believing that Christ has died to pay the ultimate price of sacrifice, hence, there's no more sacrifice. One other challenge confronting churches in Nigeria is that, due to the new trend getting results/solutions through so called sacrifice in some churches in Nigeria there is sheep stealing ongoing. Some persons believe so much in sacrifice for quick solutions to their problems that they can completely change church or remain in one church but secretly sneak to other churches were they asked to offer all kinds of sacrifice on strange affairs, even shrines m of idols and come back to their original church and pretend as if not happened. This has become a bane.

6. Challenges posed by Sacrifice in Judaism to Christian Religious Worship in Nigeria.

The concept of sacrifice in Judaism, particularly in its historical context as outlined in the Hebrew Bible, can pose certain challenges to Christian religious worship in Nigeria, where Christianity is a prominent faith. Here are some challenges that may arise:

Theological Differences: The understanding of sacrifice in Judaism, with its emphasis on atonement, ritual purity, and the role of priests, differs from the Christian perspective. Christian theology centers on the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as the ultimate atonement for sin, which can create theological tensions between the two faith traditions.

Worship Practices: The absence of a sacrificial system in Christianity, following the belief in the final sacrifice of Jesus Christ, contrasts with the historical Jewish practice of offering sacrifices at the Temple. This difference in worship practices can lead to misunderstandings or challenges in interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

Interpretation of Scripture: Differences in the interpretation of biblical passages related to sacrifice, such as those in the Old Testament regarding sacrificial rituals, can lead to divergent views on the

significance and application of sacrificial practices in religious worship.

Cultural Challenges: In Nigeria, where cultural practices and beliefs may influence religious expressions, the concept of sacrifice in Judaism may clash with local customs or traditional religious practices, complicating the integration of Jewish sacrificial traditions into Christian worship settings.

Symbolic Meanings: The symbolic meanings attributed to sacrifice in Judaism, such as purification, atonement, and covenant renewal, may not always align with the symbolic significance of sacrifice in Christian theology, potentially creating challenges in reconciling differing understandings of sacrificial symbolism.

Historical Context: Understanding the historical context of sacrificial practices in Judaism and their evolution over time can be essential for Christians in Nigeria to appreciate the uniqueness of Jewish religious traditions while affirming their own theological beliefs.

Dialogue and Understanding: Engaging in interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding between Jewish and Christian communities in Nigeria can help address challenges posed by the concept of sacrifice in Judaism to Christian religious worship. By fostering respect, dialogue, and cooperation, religious communities can navigate differences and find common ground for peaceful coexistence.

Navigating the challenges posed by the concept of sacrifice in Judaism to Christian religious worship in Nigeria requires a nuanced understanding of theological differences, historical contexts, cultural dynamics, and the importance of dialogue in promoting mutual understanding and respect between faith traditions.

7. The Challenges of Sacrifice in the Contemporary Nigeria Church

The purpose, materials and methods associated with sacrifice in the contemporary Nigeria church differs apparently from the original intent & practice in Judaism this is grossly precipitated on the fact that a lot of time-gap had elapsed before the OT practice & the current practice in the Nigeria churches. It is also a function of gap in knowledge about the practice amongst the Nigeria churches that indulge in the act of sacrifice. Before now, lots of change had taken place with regards to the practice: the destruction of the 2nd

Jewish Temple led to the total obliteration of sacrifice in Judaism (OT).

Furthermore, the near complete expulsion of the Jews by the Roman Empire and the thorough removal of Jewish thoughts contributed imersely to this fact. According to Canon Edmund Ilogu (1975), within Christianity, there is the incursion of traditional religious beliefs and practices in the contemporary Nigerian churches (P 540 to 524). This latter reason plays a leading role in most contemporary Nigerian churches.

8. Comparison of Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity

Comparing the sacrifice in the contemporary Nigeria church and sacrifice in Judaism (OT) reveals a sharp defiance from the original purpose and method of sacrifice. The process has been hijacked by criminal elements in the name of churches yet as agents of Satan in sheep's clothing, extorting, initiating and controlling destinies of unsuspecting solution seekers who fall prey to their ploys.

9. Recommendations

In light of the comparative analysis of sacrifice in Judaism and its challenges to religious worship in Nigeria, here are some recommendations to address the complexities and promote understanding between these two religious traditions:

Interfaith Dialogue and Education:

- Encourage interfaith dialogue and educational initiatives that bring together Jewish and Christian communities in Nigeria to foster mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation of each other's religious practices and beliefs.
- Organize workshops, seminars, and conferences on topics related to sacrifice, ritual practices, and theological concepts in Judaism and Christianity to promote dialogue and bridge cultural and religious divides.

Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:

- Emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and respect for diverse religious traditions in Nigeria, including Judaism and Christianity, to prevent misunderstandings and promote harmonious coexistence among different religious communities.
- Promote awareness of the historical and cultural contexts of sacrificial practices in Judaism and their significance, while

acknowledging the distinct theological perspectives of Christian worship in Nigeria.

Ethical and Social Engagement:

- Highlight shared values of ethical living, social justice, and community engagement that are integral to both Judaism and Christianity, encouraging collaborative efforts in addressing social issues and promoting the common good in Nigerian society.
- Explore opportunities for joint initiatives between Jewish and Christian communities in Nigeria to engage in charitable activities, advocacy for human rights, and social development projects that reflect their shared commitment to serving others.

Theological Reflection and Exchange:

- Facilitate theological reflection and exchange between scholars, religious leaders, and practitioners from Judaism and Christianity in Nigeria to deepen understanding of theological concepts, interpretive traditions, and spiritual practices related to sacrifice.
- Encourage respectful dialogue on theological differences and similarities between Judaism and Christianity, recognizing the richness of diverse religious perspectives and interpretations within the broader context of faith and worship.

Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation:

- Advocate for peacebuilding initiatives that promote reconciliation, forgiveness, and unity among diverse religious communities in Nigeria, emphasizing the values of compassion, tolerance, and solidarity that are central to both Judaism and Christianity.
- Support efforts to address religious conflicts, interfaith tensions, and communal violence through dialogue, mediation, and collaborative peacebuilding strategies that draw on the shared principles of love and justice in both religious traditions.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders in Nigeria can work towards enhancing interfaith understanding, fostering cultural sensitivity, and promoting collaborative efforts between Jewish and Christian communities to address the challenges posed by the concept of sacrifice in Judaism to religious worship in Nigeria. Through dialogue, education, and engagement, opportunities for mutual respect, cooperation, and shared learning can be

cultivated, contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious religious landscape in the country.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of sacrifice in Judaism and its challenges to religious worship in Nigeria reveals the complexities and nuances inherent in the intersection of these two religious traditions. Sacrifice holds a significant place in Jewish religious history, rooted in biblical texts, ritual practices, and theological symbolism. In contrast, Christian worship in Nigeria, as in many other parts of the world, has evolved away from sacrificial rituals towards a focus on the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as central to atonement and redemption.

The challenges posed by the concept of sacrifice in Judaism to religious worship in Nigeria are multifaceted, encompassing theological differences, cultural dynamics, historical contexts, and symbolic interpretations. These challenges can give rise to misunderstandings, tensions, and barriers to interfaith dialogue and cooperation between Jewish and Christian communities in Nigeria.

However, amidst these challenges lie opportunities for mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration between practitioners of Judaism and Christianity in Nigeria. By promoting interfaith dialogue, cultural sensitivity, ethical engagement, theological reflection, and peacebuilding initiatives, stakeholders can work towards fostering harmonious coexistence and shared values of compassion, justice, and unity across religious boundaries.

Through education, awareness, and dialogue, individuals and communities in Nigeria can navigate the complexities of sacrifice in Judaism and its implications for religious worship, transcending differences to embrace diversity, promote inclusivity, and celebrate the richness of religious pluralism in the country.

In the pursuit of religious harmony and interfaith cooperation, recognizing the significance of sacrifice in Judaism while honoring the diversity of religious worship practices in Nigeria can contribute to a more peaceful, tolerant, and interconnected society where mutual respect and understanding serve as the foundation for building bridges across faith traditions.

References

International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences Vol. 41 (2014) pp 39-52 Online:

- 2014-09-30 © (2014) SciPress Ltd., Switzerland doi: 10.18052 / www.scipress.com/ILSHS.41.39
- Discerning Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christianity. (2017). In J. Carleton Paget & J. Lieu (Eds.), *Christianity in the Second Century: Themes and Developments* (pp. 89-168). Cambridge
- Oxenberg R, (2017). On the Complementarity of Judaism and Christianity. *Interreligious Insight* 15 (2): 46 – 57.
- William B., (1899). *The Tabernacle and its Priests and Services, described and considered in relation to Christ and the Church*. Sixth edition revised and enlarged. With numerous illustrations. Published by Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh and London
- Sibani, C.M. (2009 pp.15). *The Acceptable Sacrifice*. Printed & Published by HOUSE OF GRAPHICS, 10 Udi Street Mile, Port Harcourt, Rivers State – Nigeria
- Daly (1978a: 1-207; 1978b: 11-47), (Daly, 1978a, 208-307; 1978b, 53-83)
- (Augustine, *City* 10.6; Daly, 1978a, 498-508; 1978b, 127-34; 1989, 152-3).
- Mordecai M. Kaplan (1934), *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life* Published by the Macmillan Company
- Marc Z. B, (2014) *The Early Boundaries of Jewish Studies*. Source: Shofar, Vol. 32, No. 4, New Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies (Summer2014). Published by Purdue University Press. Stable URL:<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5703/shofar.32.4.27>
- Rene G, (1982), *the Scapegoat. Violence and Sacrifice*. English Translation (1986) by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986
- McCain D. (1996), *We believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Vol. Two*. Jos: Capro Media Press.
- Janowitz N, (2011), *Inventing the Scapegoat: Theories of Sacrifice and Ritual*. Permalink-<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/055689pg>. *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 25 (1), Peer reviewed.
- The International Bible Dictionary Illustrated (1977). Plainfield: Logos International.
- Sibani (2014 pp. 25-26), *The Acceptable Sacrifice* McCain (1996:37)
- Cohen, Shaye J.D. ("From the Maccabees to the Mishnah." Westminster John Knox Press, 1987.
- Frenkel, Miriam. "Sacrifices in Ancient Israelite Religion: From the Earliest Times to the Exile." Scholars Press, 2004.
- Levenson, Jon D. "The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity." Yale University Press, 1993.
- Neusner, Jacob. "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism." Brill, 1973.
- Olupona, Jacob K. "Religion and Peacebuilding in Nigeria." University of Notre Dame Press, 2014.
- Peel, J.D.Y. "Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba." Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Van der Toorn, Karel. "Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine." University of California Press, 2019.
- Wills, Lawrence M. "Jewish and Christian Doctrines: The Classics Compared." Paulist Press, 1984.