

QUESTIONING ANTIQUITY AND SACRIFICE IN AMISH'S CHARACTER SHIVA

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ABSTRACT

Sacrifice is believed to be as old as the culture. Just like Hinduism, no one could trace back the origin. But it is present everywhere; both in nature and culture. Nature has the infinite life cycle going on forever through the process of substitution but all living species leave their progeny in this world. This progeny carries the energy of the past generation. In this process, the most crucial point or truth that is fixed is the finiteness or death. This chain of substitution of finite contributes to the infinite.

Sacrifice is a cultural feature of substitution as Wendy Doniger attempts to define it as, “the act of giving up something in order to receive something of greater worth.” (207, On Hinduism). In this minimal definition, we see two crucial elements: priority and hierarchy. Something has to be given up for the sake of something else that may or may not be present in front of us. The desire to possess absent things is prioritized over the present or accessible possessions over that which is present or accessible. It is the natural behavior of valuing the absent over the present that colors our priority. The natural behavior of human beings tends to value the absent rather than the present. The whole cycle of life is a series of giving up the present for a (probably) better future. The present comes to us a binary of the absent but the absent presents a much more complex and incomplete study. Understanding the absent because it does not exist, it is an abstract idea. Complex arouses the curiosity and vice-versa, thus succeeding in occupying the higher position in the binary hierarchy.

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