

The most important OT sacrifice was the todah or sacrifice of thanksgiving

Cardinal Ratzinger in *The Feast of Faith*

- It is critical to understand the todah in order to understand the Last Supper and the Eucharist

Eucharist is the Greek term for Thanksgiving; Eucharist is the Greek word that translates the Hebrew “todah”

Read CCC 1345 from Justin Martyr

Matthew 26:20 Luke 22:14-17

- When he had given thanks (eucharistia)

Luke 22:19 Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks (eucharistia)

Todah is an ancient Hebrew sacrifice found in:

- Lev 7:12; 22:29
- Thanksgiving sacrifice

To understand the meal we must understand the context

- The context was a special offering when you had a particular reason for offering thanksgiving

Typically

- a person became ill, was in great peril of death, it appeared as though you were doomed to die. So you made a vow, “Lord, if you will deliver me from this, then I will give you a sacrifice of thanksgiving, a todah.”

If you were going into battle and it looked likely that you would be killed,

- You made a vow, “Lord, if you get me through this I will honor you with a todah
- A sacrifice of thanksgiving

The todah presupposes a specific situation

- Your life was in great peril, You were rescued from death, From grave illness or surgery, From persecution that poses the threat of death

Then the divine deliverance is celebrated by a worship service built on a thank offering as a new foundation for the person’s existence. He confesses or gives thanks and praise verbally – a confession that God has delivered him from great peril. Then he invites those who belong to his community or family. He contributes a lamb for a sacrifice. Then in the meal offering he celebrates with those invited the start of his new life. The thankful acknowledgment of God is also expressed in songs of thanksgiving

Key elements of a todah:

1. Your life is in great peril

2. You are delivered or saved
3. You want to honor God for saving your life
4. Go, gather all your closest friends and family to have a special meal
5. A lamb would be sacrificed in the Temple
6. At the same time the lamb is sacrificed in the Temple, bread would be consecrated for the meal
7. The person whose life was saved would get up
He would take a cup of wine
He would give thanks, explaining how the Lord saved him
8. Then they would eat the meal

The lamb that was sacrificed stood as a sign

- A sign of how he was as good as dead
- Yet he was delivered
- The lamb was a sign of the persons death and redemption

Key elements of a todah

- Bread
- Wine
- Lamb
- Hymns of thanksgiving

Many Psalms are todah hymns

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his steadfast loves endures forever: Ps 118, Ps 69

The structure of a todah

A Lament that recounts how your life is in peril, great trouble, great anguish, great suffering

Petition - Cry out to the Lord

Deliverance – then God saves us

Thanksgiving - The person gives thanks and praise

Jonah 2 My vow to the Lord I will repay

- A sacrifice of thanksgiving

Hezekiah king of Israel

- Hezekiah is sick and at the point of death
- **Isaiah 38: 1; 9-20**

Not only do we find this with individuals but al key moments in Israel’s history we find the whole people gathering together to celebrate a todah sacrifice:

1. Passover
2. David brings the Ark to Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 16

David celebrates a great feast with all of Israel

- This is a todah sacrifice
- A community today

1 Chron 16:3

“Ashisha” does not mean a cake of raisins, rather flagons of wine

The key elements of the todah are here:

- Bread, wine and sacrificed meat

1 Chron 16:7 David appointed that thanksgiving be celebrated – a todah – that the Exodus is finally fulfilled! At which time they sing Psalms like Ps 105

1 Chronicles 16:37

The Levites, especially Asaph’s brethren, were divided into 24 groups (see 1 Chronicles 25) for 24 hour adoration.

They are to be before the Ark of the Lord continually as each day required

- The word there for “continually” is Tamid, which means *perpetual*

Here in the Old Covenant at the beginning of the Temple Liturgy God has established through David that the Levites should give perpetual adoration before the Lord.

1 Chron 16: 41 they were “expressly named to give thanks (todah) to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

1 Chon 16: 42 They do this through sacred songs which are the Psalms

The Levites are designated to perpetually adore the Lord

David establishes a new order for the Liturgy

- Before this point the tabernacle and the Liturgy were movable as the people journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land
- But now that God has given Israel rest from her enemies and firmly established her in the Promised Land the Levites role has changed from moving and guarding the Tabernacle
- Now their role is to offering the Todah sacrifice before the Lord
 - To offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Eucharist) to God
- The Levites are set aside now to give thanksgiving to the Lord because He has delivered and established Israel
- Thanksgiving becomes the heart of the Temple liturgy - the Temple Todah liturgy
- David makes the Todah front and central to the liturgy of Israel
- David gives a new order for their liturgy based on their new circumstances as a delivered and established people
- Their liturgy is now focused on the Todah – the Eucharist!
God wanted their focus to be on Thanksgiving

2 Chronicles 20 When Jehoshaphat is in great peril he gathers all of Israel together and celebrates a Todah offering even before they are granted victory. He celebrates the Todah giving thanks to Yahweh for delivering Judah from the Moabites and Amorites, even before the battle is won. As soon as they celebrate the Todah – their battle is won!

Examples of Todah Psalms:

- Psalm 116 which is in the midst of the Hallel Psalms 113-118 which were sung at the Passover and the Last Supper

What will I give back to the Lord for delivering me?

- At the Todah sacrifice I will lift up the cup of wine, the cup of salvation, and I will declare how God saved me through thanksgiving!
- This is so important to what Jesus is doing at the Last Supper
- Jesus is singing this Hymn at the Last Supper

116: 14 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people

- A public acknowledgement of thanksgiving

116: 15-17 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. O Lord, I am your servant, the son of your handmaid, you have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you a *sacrifice of thanksgiving* (todah – Eucharist)

Ancient saying of the Rabbis recorded in the Mishnah

In the coming age of the Messiah (when the Messiah comes) all sacrifice will cease except for the Todah sacrifice. All hymns will cease except for the hymns of thanksgiving.

When the Messiah comes – all sacrifices will cease but one – One sacrifice will continue after the Messiah – that is the Todah, The Eucharist, The sacrifice of Thanksgiving.

Cardinal Ratzinger *The Feast of Faith* p. 57

- Anyone who understands the Todah will understand the connections with the Last Supper
- Structurally speaking, the whole of Christology, indeed the whole of Eucharistic Christology is present in the Todah spirituality of the Old Testament
- The Lord's Supper is the Todah of the Risen One

The Passover is Israel's community Todah

- What are the main elements of the Passover? Bread, wine and a lamb sacrifice
- What is the Passover commemorating? Israel's deliverance

Jesus and the Last Supper

- Jesus, by giving thanks, is celebrating a Todah
- Jesus is taking the Passover – Israel's Community Todah
- But He is transforming it into his own New Passover
- The New Todah

Even before Jesus is raised from the dead

- Jesus gives thanks to the Father for redeeming his life from death
- Giving thanks to the Father that he will see Jesus through death and into new the new life of the Resurrection
 - Jesus give thanks ahead of time

On the Cross Jesus is fulfilling the Todah hymns or Pasmns; Psalm 22; Psalm 69

Luke 23: 34 They cast lots to divide his garments

- Fulfilling Psalm 69
- Through this we see the deep trust in the midst of suffering
- Jesus is the absolute fulfillment of these suffering Todah hymns
- Think of Jesus in His Passion on the Cross
 - **Read Psalm 69**

Psalm 118 begins and ends with thanksgiving

- 118: 22 Jesus identifies himself with the stone that is rejected and yet redeemed

Every time we participate in the Eucharist

- We are to see the Eucharist not just as a thanksgiving by word
- When Jesus gives thanksgiving
- He gives his very self

When the Person is to offer thanksgiving in Israel, he is to give the Lamb for himself

- Jesus becomes the Lamb for His own sacrifice
- And Jesus becomes the Lamb for Our sacrifice
- Jesus is the Lamb who saves us and delivers us

Now every Eucharist we gather together because we are the New Israel

- We have been redeemed in the New Passover
- The New Todah

We have been saved from the consequences of our sins – saved from death and in the midst of the greatest struggles of life we have to have this todah spirituality of trust in Yahweh, trust in our Father who delivered us through the blood of His Lamb, Christ.

Todah Spirituality

- A spirituality of thanksgiving and trust

On the Cross Jesus can cry out

- Into your hands I commit my spirit
- That is the Todah spirituality
- Entrusting ourselves into the hands of our loving Father
- We do this each time we go to Mass!