



## Ritual Abuse: Modern Hysteria or Ancient Practice?

*„They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not... And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to (the demon) Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD“*

**\*\* If you are a survivor of ritual abuse, please be in a safe place before reading the following article, as it mentions groups that practice ritual abuse as well as the historical groups that they are descended from. \*\***

In this article, I will be discussing ritual abuse in a historical context. Later articles will share about ritual abuse from the perspective of its effects on the survivor as well as significant others.



1. Ritual abuse: modern hysteria or ancient practice?

Ritualized forms of abuse have been practiced since the dawn of human history. Violence in the name of a religious or ideological belief is not new; it has been practiced for thousands of years.

Here I will discuss a few groups that have been documented as practicing secret, esoteric, or abusive rites to place modern ritual abuse in a historical context. Please be aware that this is only some of the documented ritualized abuse that we know of from ancient until modern times, and is by no means complete.

The ancient Assyrians and Phoenicians worshipped the sun god, Baal, who they depended upon for the continuance of their crops. The antiquity of the worship of the god or gods of Baal extends back to the 14th century BCE among the ancient Semitic cultures. Worship of Baal extended from the Canaanites to the Phoenicians who also were partially an agricultural people. Baal, the sun god, was fervently prayed to for the protection of livestock and crops, and the rites also included animal and

human sacrifice.

Another co-current deity was Molech, whose rituals were also costly to human life. (excerpted from Alan G. Hefner).

Many of these rituals were adopted by the ancient Hebrews, as mentioned in the Bible (Leviticus 20 and 2 Kings 23) These rituals were carried out for over a thousand years, both openly and secretly.

Ancient Babylonia also practiced Mystery Religions, which involved worship of the sun god, and sacrifices to this deity.

In Europe and Indo-asia, the ancient Druids also were known to engage in human sacrifice and rituals before the coming of Christianity to the areas occupied by the Celts in Europe and Britain. Caesar commented upon this practice:

“The whole nation of the Gauls is greatly devoted to ritual observances, and for that reason those who are smitten with the more grievous maladies and who are engaged in the perils of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow to do so, employing the Druids as ministers for such sacrifices...”

(Gallic War, 6, 16)

By the medieval ages, Christianity had entered Europe, and groups were formed who practiced rites that were the antithesis of the organized religion of the day. Many of these groups claimed roots founded in the rites of the ancient druids and Canaanites. The Knights Templar were one such order. They were founded by medieval lords and barons to protect pilgrims who visited Jerusalem, which had been captured during the First Crusade. They were also quite wealthy, and financed the leading kings of Europe at the time, creating the modern banking system of lending at interest. They were disbanded in the early 1300s by the Pope and the King of France because of fear due to their power, as well as their esoteric religious practices. The Knights Templar began corrupting their Catholicism, and incorporating elements of mystery religions, which included rituals with candles around the body of a young virgin, and homosexual practices. They also began summoning demons during these rituals. Although officially disbanded, the Templar knights continued practicing their rites in secret, founding the thirteen orders, each with their own symbol.

Rosicrucianism. This group was publicly founded in the 17th century in Germany, supposedly by an individual in a novel known as Christian Rosenkreutz. The order was based on the traditions of the “Rose Cross” order. This group emphasized the need for “enlightenment” through following certain spiritual principles, and had both a public and covert philosophy.

Meanwhile, in South America and Mexico, the Incas and Aztecs were also performing rituals which involved the taking of human life. This has been documented in the annals of the early Spanish conquerors.

Up until modern times, esoteric, hidden practices have continued around the world. Brutality, and sacrifices in the name of religion are not limited to one locality or one time in history.

In Africa, ritual murder is still ongoing, and has been extensively documented. (see articles by Oke (1989) for more information. In Thailand, India, and Malaysia, sacrifices and rituals are still conducted, similar to those of ancient times, and has been documented in articles by Newton (1993) and Constantine (1995).

Modern Europe has also reported incidences of ritual murder in recent years (see articles by Newton, 1993a for discussion of cases of ritual murder that have been convicted in Dusseldorf and Spain).

In strife-torn Peru, human sacrifice remains a daily fact of life, dating back to the time of the Incas. For some practitioners, the ritual offering of human lives is believed to insure bountiful crops, control the weather, and prevent such natural catastrophes as floods and earthquakes. These rituals, called “paying the earth,” are also employed by wealthy businessmen, including mine owners and beer distributors, to insure continued prosperity.

In neighboring Chile, human sacrifice is such an established tradition that the courts recognize “compulsion by irresistible psychic forces” as grounds for acquittal in cases of ritual murder. (Tierney, 1989)

There is much, much more evidence of documented continuing ritual sacrifice around the world. It would take a strong denial system to refute both the historical and circumstantial evidence that ritual abuse has been a reality throughout the ages, and continues to be until this day.

Why am I sharing about the history of ritual abuse? One of the things that often perplexes survivors of ritual abuse is the denial with which their memories or accounts are often met. They are told: “ritual abuse is a modern-day witch hunt,” “Things like that don’t happen in this day and age” (as if man’s entering the Industrial Revolution changed human nature), or “I don’t believe you.” Comments like these can be devastating both to the survivor of ritual abuse, who often WISHES the memories were not true, and the family and support people for the individual, who know the individual, and that they are NOT lying.

Comments like these only reinforce what the individual was told by the cult group: “If you tell, no one will believe you,” or “You will be laughed at, or shunned.” The survivor courageous enough to not only remember, but then disclose their abuse, will be faced with a society that often appears in denial. “Why isn’t anyone doing anything about this?” the survivor wonders, as they share the atrocities. “Why isn’t it stopped?” “Why do more children have to be hurt?”

Societal denial is complex. People often do not want to think about or hear about painful topics. Thirty years ago, teenage girls who shared that their middle class father was sexually abusing them were told that they were “lying”, or worse, “delusional”. Twenty years ago, medical professionals who suspected that battered children were being seen from not only the poverty levels of society, but also the middle class and well to do, were told it wasn’t possible. Society closed its eyes to the facts before it, until enough people finally came forward and disclosed.

Hopefully, placing ritual abuse in a historical context will help the reader see that:

Ritual abuse is NOT a “new” phenomenon, or a modern day “hysteria”

Human beings have been capable of great cruelty throughout the ages, and to believe otherwise refutes the historical record.

Those who are abused tend to abuse. Why would this well known psychological fact be different in the context of familial, generational ritual abuse? Where the abuse has been passed down for generations, in a codified manner?

That ritual abuse is occurring around the world. It is NOT a phenomenon limited to the United States, or to people “recovering memories” in therapy. Newton, Ryder, and Lockwood (“Other altars”) have researched and proven this.

My hope is that at the least, this article has helped raise some questions about a topic that is often overlooked and misunderstood. – Svali

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Source: <http://svalispeaks.wordpress.com/2008/09/29/ritual-abuse-modern-hysteria-or-ancient-practice/>