

The sacrifice

The Sami religion had no church, no priesthood or holy scriptures. There were no centrally controlled directives on how the religion was to be practiced. The beliefs and rites were part of daily life. The rites also followed the cycles of the natural year.

How sacrifices were made varied from area to area and from family to family. The vast majority of sacrificial ceremonies were performed at home, in the hut "*kåtan*" or at the temporary residence "*vistet*". It was women and men, individually or together, who sacrificed. It is difficult to see any traces of these ceremonies today. They sacrificed food and drink, animals such as roosters, cats, goats, cattle and horses, but above all they sacrificed reindeer. All stages of life gave rise to sacrifice. Daily meals, pregnancy and birth, illness, and other crises, but also happiness and success.

In connection with the reindeer slaughter in autumn, it was common to make sacrifices for the good of the reindeer and for one's own reindeer luck. At other times, parts of the hunting prey or fish could be sacrificed for hunting and fishing luck.

The reindeer to be sacrificed was marked with a colored thread in the ear. When the time was right, the reindeer were killed and slaughtered. The muzzle, ears, eyes, heart and lungs and a piece of meat from each part were given to the divine. The other meat was cooked and all ate together. Nothing was to be saved. The marrow-split bones were left at the sacrifice site, along with parts of the sacrificed animal. *Sejten* and wooden posts at the site were smeared with the animal's blood.

In some sacrificial places around the 11th century, jewelry, coins and arrowheads were sacrificed. Why were they put down, who were they intended for? Those are the questions we think about.

Sacrifice was a way of communicating with the divine world. It was a give and take from both sides. If the communication didn't work, you had to abandon the offering place and find new places and new ways to meet.