

## RELI 1730 3SEP2015

3 areas of focus:

- (i) Academic Study of religion:  
Concerns and approaches  
Studying religion academically: What is religion? Can/should it be defined?
  - (ii) Major components of religion  
What kind of sacred media, religious experience and myth exist.  
How do they work?  
What does religion consist of?
  - (iii) Religious worldviews, especially their functions.  
Their outcomes in the lives of individuals and groups.  
How various components work together to create a system (i.e, a world view)?  
Does it help people to cope by offering answers to the big questions and providing maps to 'how to live'.  
Does it provide motivation/meaning/hope/purpose?  
Relationship between morality and religion  
Rules/outcomes do religion come in society.
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## RELI 1730 10SEP2015

**Defining religion:** preliminaries, problems and propositions

- Definition is a prerequisite in any study: Should have an idea of what religion is: is it fair? Comprehensive? Accurate?
- Should respect the standards and goals of the field.

### **Definition of religion**

#### 1. Useful analytically

- (a) Its diversity: all religions should be considered.  
Consider the diversity even within religions.  
[Many strands in one tradition, variation according to background.  
Means differently to different individuals from different backgrounds.  
Can be different even for members of the same religion. (age, gender)]
- (b) Its complexity and multi-dimensionality  
Multiple dimensions:
  - Intellectual: Myths, doctrines, theologies
  - Emotional and experiential (love, awe, fear)
  - Practical & ritual (worship, festivals, moral duty and behavior)

-Social and institutional (communities, leadership, group organization).

The individual and the social aspects of religion are crucial!

READ: Sacred quest 14-15 example of Theravada Buddhism.

Monks are 'renouncers'. Rely on the society for food etc. They can't progress in the path of the Buddha if people do not support them. In exchange teaching ordinary Buddhists about Buddha's doctrines, required to support accomplishing and performing Buddhist rituals (Reciprocity and exchange).

-Material, cultural and artistic (architecture, music, paintings, clothing)

2. Being as precise as possible without being too narrow in scope.

To draw boundaries: to include something and exclude something

To be able to say that 'x is religious and y is not'

RISKS:

**Being too narrow:**

Exclusion of certain religions/some aspects of religion

'Tests' of inclusiveness and complexity

VS

**Being too broad**

The need to distinguish 'religious' from 'non religions' phenomena (politics/economics)

'Test' of distinctiveness.

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3. As free as possible from bias

**Western bias:** presuppositions tied to our western heritage and perspective (especially Christianity).

Not all religions center on the belief in a Supreme God. Example: Polytheistic religions

**Gender bias**

**Value biases:** Avoid judgments about the truth/falsity of a religion or evaluate the value of a religion over another.

Rather, we should:

-Bracket our prior convictions and preferences; keep them away from our definitions and interpretations.

**Confusion between spirituality and religion:** Should not see them both as separate or the opposite, try not to prefer one over the other.

Example of a definition with biases, "Religion is some kind of inner experience."

**Western protestant bias:** Not complex enough and leaves too much out. Gives a spiritual aspect to religion. Social dimensions, rituals, etc are left out. It is taken for granted that religion is or ought to be about 'belief' (i.e an individual's inner thoughts and feeling)

**Value bias:** Preferring spirituality to organized religion when defining and studying religion academically.

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### **PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Briefly: Bracketing biases, being accurate, complete and fair, remaining open, 'trying on' new ways of seeing

#### Goal of the phenomenological method:

- Respect the standpoint of religious belief: Respecting and understanding means to include the standpoint of the believer, that is, the intentions and the motivation.
- Gain a sense of what and why "Others believe, act and live the way they do" (SQ Page 8)

#### **Towards a resolution:**

1. Adopt a pragmatic attitude

(a) No universal definition is possible:

Give religions variety, there is no single theory that can tell about ALL religions

(b) Opting for a working definition:

Useful for a particular projects (open to criticism and modification)  
Provisional and adjustable

#### **A proposal**

Aim for inclusiveness and specificity; A combination of both substantive and functional elements.

- Substantive element: what is religion/what makes it unique/what differs a religion from another?

- Functional: What does it do for people and society; the outcomes/functions  
Functions as giving people a way to organize themselves, act as organizing principle, gives society a structure, provides answers to existential questions, ways to deal with life's ill.

- The '**Sacred**' is what distinguishes between school of thoughts, for example, difference between political thought.  
The "Sacred" is THE distinctive feature shared by all religions.
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## “SACRED REALITY”

### (reference to proposal of a phenomenological approach)

Defining the ‘Sacred’

‘Sanctus’ literally means that ‘is set apart’ from everything else, especially distinctive.

#### **1. A diversity of manifestation**

-Example: Evolution in Protestant conceptions of God (before God was seen as a prosecutor, as a judge, now he is more seen as a friend).

Not to forget the various nations of the Sacred within a religion.

-Shift from ‘religion’ to the ‘sacred’, its origin as a concept.

Its value: not specific to any religion, no tradition specific. Religion is about the sacred (NOT about God, Gods, supernatural, spirits, etc because those are TRADITION specific)

We should take a general stance, distance from our own to see the stance of the insiders’ point of view.

#### **2. Made manifest in human experience**

-The Sacred is expressed and experienced through the world and human bodies: the ‘material’ dimension of religion.

We live in a material world, with material things. The Sacred is embodied in material things, bodies, gestures, words, writings, dancing. All to communicate the experience of religions.

#### **3. Long lasting ways of thinking/feeling/acting**

The intellectual emotional and practical side.

Recognition of its:

Complexity

Tendency to persist in time

“Tradition” trader, handing down, “hand down”

#### **4. With respect to problems of ordering and understanding existence.**

Worldviews that offers maps of how to live according to what is deemed sacred.

Norms/models to organize individual and social life.

Example: God’s Decree for Jews to observe the Sabbath

The Buddha and his compassion as model to follow.

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### **The concept of the Sacred**

The Sacred as distinct from the ‘Profane’

Etymology: *‘profanus’* that literally means ‘outside the temple’.

Profane as in ordinary, familiar, mundane, and utilitarian.

Markers of the Sacred:

- The Sacred is often marked off symbolically and/or literally

- They serve to call and focus our attention to the special quality of a place
- Shinto (Shinto meaning Way of the Kami).  
Kami refers to a wide range of Sacred beings/powers/ideas that can manifest themselves in nature.

Examples of markers of the Sacred (shown in pictures):

- The Torii (the gateway) and Shimenawa (sacred straw rope): The markers show where a *Kami* resides
- Mycenaia in Greece (1500-1200 BCE), The Lion's Gate
- Mont Saint-Michel, Normandy (France). Found on a peninsula, high walls and high Tides are examples of the markers. It was dedicated to the archangel St Michael.
- Chartres Cathedral, France.

### Sacred Spaces

They communicate special meanings.

Many have markers that communicate meanings and command appropriate behavior with respect to the Sacred.

Their meanings and messages vary from one religion to the next. And even within one religion.

### Various Sacred Media

- The Sacred as an abstract, empty category
- In principle, anything can become a vehicle of the Sacred
- Space, time, persons, objects activities, etc could be vehicles of the Sacred
- Thereafter they share its distinctive character: 'More than ordinary'

- **About the Sacred (SQ P51)**

Is it revealed to humans?	Do humans create it?
<b>Insider's perspectives:</b> it manifests itself in our world. <b>Hierophany:</b> a manifestation of transcendent divine, spiritual beings/forces The work of Sacred beings and forces	<b>Outsider's perspectives:</b> A quality attributed to certain things A particular way of treating certain things The work of humans

**Food for thought:** Example from Catholicism

What is the difference between ordinary water and the Holy Water?

The sacred. Not only the work of the Gods but the human and religious work of:

Interpretation – Sacrilisation –Ritualization

## RELI 1730 24.09.15

### Sacred Reality

Religions posit the existence of an alternate reality:

- That is beyond our immediate experience  
Yet thought to be fully 'real' and greater than ordinary reality.

Sacred reality in various religions:

- The way that it is envisioned varies greatly between religions and even within the same religion. Example: Various conceptions of the Divine
- Still, the 'Sacred' can be used to refer to them all. (From Yahweh to Nirvana to Mother Earth).

### **To what extent is it distinct from ordinary reality in:**

#### 1. Religions of Transcendence

- Absolutely distinct: Transcendent' climbing over/going beyond the natural and human order.

- Mostly western religions:

Monotheistic- professing belief in One all powerful and personal God.

-Common ancestry: e.g (Gen 12:1) Abraham

-The 'religions of Abraham'

-Share the same God with differences in how one should view and worship Him.

### **The Christian exception (SQ 43):**

The doctrine of the Incarnation: Debated for a few centuries but made official.

God's words became 'enfleshed':

-Jesus as Divine AND human.

-The Sacred as immanent at a certain point in history.

The emphasis remains on transcendence in certain points, groups and forms of Protestantism.

#### 2. Religions of Immanence

Closely related and/or interrelated

Immanent means 'to dwell within; The Sacred as dwelling in our midst

Between the Sacred, humans and nature, there is mobility from one status to the next and closeness/intermingling.

Example: The *Kami* of Shinto (sacred beings and powers)

- Immanent to nature:

Technically they are 'not' supernatural. Hence the Sacred is not equivalent to the supernatural.

- Nature itself as a living, sacred force
- The goal of harmony between the Sacred, natural and human realms, not hierarchy
- Possibility for humans to become Kami (example Japanese emperors)

Other examples of Religions of Immanence: Most indigenous religions, Hinduism, Confucianism (even though they may have concepts of transcendence)

### **Ideal types: Transcendence Vs Immanence**

No true ideal types. They are scholarly tools to try to get at a concept of the Sacred that can include all the religions. Engaging in generalizations.

These types of religions are NOT absolute. There are always exceptions. Hence elements of immanence can be found in religions of transcendence and vice versa

### **The 'Sacred' vs The 'Holy'**

- Are NOT equivalent: 'Holy' often implies transcendence as understood in the west
- God as perfect, unique, absolutely transcendent
- Radical separation between the Greater and creation

### **Sacred Power**

- How distinct is it from ordinary power?  
The Sacred as wholly Other, the tendency to hold ultimate power
- The tendency to hold limited power

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## **The character of the sacred and modes of relating to the sacred**

The concept of the sacred

1. Specially distinctive or set apart from all else
2. To some extent, beyond all volitional control of humans
3. Specially prominent with respect to human welfare
4. Properly determinative of various aspects of human existence.

How independent is the sacred from human considerations?

- Religions of transcendence
  - Sovereignty of the sacred

VS

- Religions of immanence
  - Human influence over the sacred

### **Sovereignty of the sacred (IE. Christianity, Judaism, Islam)**

- not subject to the will or desired of human beings SQ 31
- God as creator and Ruler
  - He controls the destiny of humans and the universe
  - He gives life and he takes it away

SQ 30-31

- The biblical story of Uzzah

The “mysterious ways” of the Lord

- God and his reasons are beyond human understanding

### **Humanity’s compelling influence over the sacred**

- The sacred as more amenable to answer petitions
- Through prayers, rituals, and offerings, humans have the capacity to access and influence the sacred
  - Specially religious specialists

### **EX; Korean Shamanism (SQ, 31-32)**

- Very ancient
- The prominence of women as:
  - Shamans (mansin)
  - clients
- Religious professionals
  - Initiated and trained
  - Paid for their ritual services
  - Respected for their powers in healing and divining

Household gods and ancestor spirits

- Reside in the house and are enmeshed in daily life
- Watch over the family’s welfare and interests
- Protect it against bad spirits
  - In exchange for attention, respect and offerings

The *mansin* helps when things get off balance

“When the roof beam god is out of sorts, the master of the house is out of sorts. When the foundation god is out of sorts, the lady of the house is out of sorts” – Shaman chant Kyonggi

How does one become a mansin (shaman)

- 3 stages

- A traumatic “possession sickness” (their lives become disasters)
  - A sign of her extraordinary calling
  - “Resistance is futile”
- An initiation
- An apprenticeship with a more experienced mansin
- A destiny that was chosen for them by the spirits, no control

After being a victim of the gods and spirits, she becomes their master

- Capable of
  - Entering trance and possession, states at will, can control the spirits and can resist being possessed. She will choose when to envoke them and bargain with them.
  - Communicating their messages to the living
  - Influencing them to do her bidding (experienced shaman)

Shamanism still exists.

- Specially prominent for human welfare
- Properly determinative of how humans should live

### **Religions of transcendence**

- Absolutely
- All plans, all desires and the ultimate fate of humanity are the province of sacred reality **(SQ 33)**

### **Religions of immanence**

- Not as absolute
- The sacred as a guide and a source of power in the quest for harmony and happiness
- Hence, humans should still order parts of their lives according to sacred realities.

### **RELI 1730 A 01.10.15**

Midterm exam tips for the 13th of October:

Objective test items

Class material from September 3 to October 8: Excluding the readings on myth

Required Readings: Focus on and supplement what was discussed in class

-Review lecture notes, the concepts issues, and important passages/sections, do not leave examples in the preparations, patterns- religions of transcendence.

Multiple choice, fill in the blanks, matching sentence.

### **The Prophetic and Mystical Modes of Experiencing the Sacred(cont.)** **3. Modes of Relating to the sacred**

- The prophetic, the mystical and the sacramental
- Such ideal-types are scholarly tools used in the study of comparative religion
  - To be placed within the larger context of a tradition's history and complexity
  - The mix of patterns is common: particularly accents/emphasis/characteristics tendencies (prophetic, mystical, sacramental, mixture of these tendencies).

### Religious Experience

- Any kind of experience thought to be religiously significant by the person who lives by it.  
Gathers together different kind of experiences.
- Any kind of experience thought to be religiously significant by the person who lives it.  
e.g: Conversions, prophecies, visions, voices, Enlightenment, Reading the thoughts of others, levitation.
- Prophetic, mystical, sacramental

### The Prophetic

- From the Hebrew word *nabi*: "One who speaks with the authority of another"
- A "prophet" is one who is:
  - Chosen by God to receive his message
  - On a divine mission to proclaim God's commands
- **Communal** and personal types of revelation
  - Kessler, "experiencing the Sacred" (2008), 131

Example of 'The Prophetic': **Muhammad (c. 570-632)**

#### Pre-Islamic context

- Polytheistic
- Presence of Jews and Christians in Mecca
  - Some arabs were interested in the idea of One God.

*"The night of Power and Excellence"*

- 610 CE in a cave near Mecca
- An angelic voice pressuring him to recite
- The start of a series of revelations that would last 22 years.  
Quran ("The Recitation")
- "The messenger of Allah"

Who is the author of the Quran?

- **Not Muhammad**

- It contains the very words of Allah transmitted by the angel Gabriel to Muhammad in Arabic.

### **Other Examples of Prophets**

-Moses

- Joseph Smith

Key facets:

- **Divine Revelation**
  - As foundational and central
  - As the primary medium of the sacred
  - Scriptures, divine word, preaching, written word
  - 'Learn what God revealed to the Prophets'
- Prophetic religions: Judaism, Protestantism, Mormonism
- Importance of words, scriptures, doctrines.

### **The Mystical**

Example: Siddhartha Gautama

-566-486 B.C.E or 448-368 B.C.E

-Northeastern Indian (many believe in Nepal)

- Enlightened at 35
- Founded a fourfold Buddhist community: made of monks, nuns, ordinary buddhists, etc
- Taught and charged his disciple to spread the *dharma* (i.e Buddhist teachings)

### **RELI 1730 A 06.10.15**

### **The mystical and sacramental modes of experiencing the sacred:**

Resource Bernado Bertolucci's little Buddha (1933)

What are the 4 great sights?

How do their religious experiences differ?

What makes each a "sacred" figure?

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Great Sight: And Ascetic**

- Ancient Indian Context (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>c.BCE)
- A movement of world-renunciation
  - Homelessness
  - No possessions
  - Wandering
  - Forest-dweling

*Samnyasin*

## Asceticism

- *Askèsis* (Greek)  
-*Self-discipline of the body and mind*
- Ascetic practices
  - > The denial of comfort for the sake of spiritual progress
  - > To counteract human passions and worldly concerns, obligations and desires
  - > A means to transform the person to welcome the sacred; A mean to attain something, *Nirvana* in the context of Buddhism etc.

Examples: Meditation (control wandering mind, clear mind of everything), fasting, periods of meditation, no washing, standing/sitting for hours, celibacy.

## Samsara

- > i.e. "Endless cycle of rebirth"
- > Viewed negatively: As a world of suffering
- > New religious goal and path
  - Liberation from samsara through world-renunciation

## The middle path between the extremes of:

- Self indulgence (Worldly pleasure, luxury)
- VS
- Severe asceticism

1<sup>st</sup> sermon: "The instruction on the Middle Path":

Moderation in all things

## How do their religious experiences differ? (Between Mohammed and Buddha)

- Their encounter with the sacred
  - Personal (Allah, Gabriel) vs. impersonal (*Nirvana*)
  - *Nirvana* is to be realized, not worshipped
- The quality of their religious experiences
  - '**Numinous**' vs '**mystical**'
  - Moses and Mohammed: numinous (having a strong religious or spiritual quality; indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity)
  - Buddha > mystical experiences

<b>Numinous</b>	<b>Mystical</b>
Muhammad	Buddha
i.e 'spirit	i.e 'to unveil a truth that usually remains hidden'
Experience of the 'holy'	

<p>-The mysterious presence of the wholly other</p> <p>-Feelings of awe, fascination, terror</p> <p>Other e.g: "Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God" (Exodus 3:1-6)</p>	<p>Experience of liberation from: suffering</p> <p>-The state of being 'awake' as key</p> <p>-No God, no voices</p> <p>-Quietness, stillness, serenity</p> <p>-'Enlightenment' coming to know something that was hidden before, knowing something new</p> <p>-Buddha for e.g got to know the true nature of all things.</p>
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- Way of accessing and speaking the Truth
  - Revealed from outside vs discovered within

What makes each a "sacred" figure?

<u>Muhammad: prophet</u>	<u>Buddha: Sage and Teacher</u>
<p>His relationship with God:</p> <p>-Chosen by God</p> <p>-Speaks with His authority</p> <p>Speaks God's truth, because he knows the truth, truth was revealed to him</p> <p><b>"Emissary" prophet:</b> to get others to believe the divine truth</p>	<p>His teachings</p> <p>-Discovered a liberating truth and taught it to others</p> <p>-Speaks on the authority of his own insights</p> <p>Attained dharma by his own effort, his own experience, by what he lives, can give us a way to escape the world of suffering.</p> <p><b>"Exemplary prophet":</b> to get others to try it out for themselves</p>

Experiencing the sacred Kessler page 136

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### Religious Experience

- Numinous and mystical experiences as exceptional
  - Most are of the **confirmatory** type.  
Example: Sensing God's presence when praying at church
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### **3. Modes of Sacred Appearances: The sacramental**

1. Through words: prophetic
2. To person achieving a certain enlightened state of mind: mystical
3. Through the medium of material reality and the human body: sacramental

#### The sacred as embodied

- Most indigenous religions:  
Australian & African tribal religions  
Shinto
- Forms of Hinduism and Christianity: catholic and Orthodox.

>The centrality of/most important way to access the Sacred:

- Rituals
- Religious specialists as: mediators of the sacred (priests, shamans, etc.)

#### Functions:

\*Kessler, "Sacred Space and Time" 111-114

- Provide openings to superhuman power  
Rituals provide these. For example church, or go a shrine to visit a Saint, ask for blessing, the saint has the power to give all kind of blessings. People feel closer to the Sacred
- Establish boundaries
- Orient people in time and space

#### Illustrations:

- Mount Kilimanjaro as sacred space
- The Dreamtime as made manifest through rituals

#### **1. Mt Kilimanjaro as a sacred space:**

Sacred space for the Chagga people.

- The symbolism of Mountain is widespread:  
Seen as the center of the world  
Abode of the divine  
The sacred made manifest, for e.g Mt Fuji in Japan
- Akin to "numinous" experience: feelings of awe, fascination, fear.
- Myth:  
-Kibo: God Ruwa (and his 2 wives)  
-Embodies all that is divine, beneficial, eternal
- It centers and orients the word of the Wa-Chagga: both vertical and horizontal. Vertically, orients them towards the Sacred. Orient their life s individuals, community, structure of the village

- It creates Social and cultural boundaries:
  - Closeness indicates superiority
  - The higher up you live, the more blessed you are.
 Makes distinctions between

**Its functions as a sacred center:**

- Its significance throughout religious, social and cultural life:
  - Used to express respect and wishes
  - Where ancestors reside
  - To orientate whole villages
- It helps the Chagga to:
  - To anchor and order the world
  - Give meaning to life
  - Establish an identity
  - Reinforce a sense of belonging

**2. Australian Aboriginal Religion**

- The Dreamtime: The time of origins

The awakening of the “Dreamings”:

- Creators of all things
- Established the laws and the rituals that must be performed to keep the cosmos in a good working order

The Dreamtime made manifest in rituals

In the realm of sacred time, “once connected means always connected.” (Kessler, 112)

The rituals enable them to recall and reconnect with the Dreamtime and tap into its creative power.

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[Documentary - *Tribal religions* (Film for the Humanities & Sciences, 2004)  
Ayers Rock, *Uluru*

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**Language(s) of the Sacred**

- A special language that enables humans to:
  - Communicate **with** the sacred
  - Communicate **about** the sacred and experiences of sacred with each other

- Its complex character
  - Highly symbolic, metaphoric, mythic, poetic in order to be capable of disclosing the extraordinary

### **Sacred Languages**

- Muslims (Arabic)
  - Orthodox Jews (Hebrew)
  - *Rg Veda* (1500-1200 BCE) in Brahmanic Hinduism
  - Hymns honoring various deities (EX Agni –fire)
- Learned and Recited by *brahmans* during worship only in their original language (Sanskrit)

### **The Oral, the Written and the Visual**

- 3 principal ways that religions that have been expressed, communicated & preserved.
- Distinction between oral and scriptural cultures
- Such preservation:
  - “Found and sustains” religious worlds, each with their own emphasis (SQ, 64)
  - Provide an overarching context for human life

### **Oral Cultures**

- Literacy is **not** universal in the history of religions.  
Example: Australian aboriginal tribes or indigenous people, tribal cultures in Africa
- Thanks to oral traditions, many people were able to
  1. Know and access the sacred
  2. Share common principles, values, a way of life
  3. Forge and maintain an identity and community
  4. Survive and, at times, flourish

### **Oral Aspects of Scriptural Cultures**

- The oral beginnings of most religions. Example: Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.
- As the preferred means to learn, use and transmit some sacred texts. *Rg Veda* for *Brahmans*-Priest. More than 3000 years traditions transmitted orally.
- The oral as prevalent within scriptural religions. Example: Ordinary Catholics until the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> c.

### **Scriptural Cultures**

- “Scripture”, Latin etymology: ‘that which is written’. More accurately means ‘written **authoritative** texts’

- ‘Writings that, by reason of their particular authority, are considered privileged and normative for a tradition’.(SQ, 63)  
-They set the norms for how to relate to the sacred and how to organize human life.

Canonical Scriptures

- “Canon”, Greek etymology meaning, ‘a rule’.
  - A list of books that is authoritative for a community
  - With time a consensus may be reached
  - Highly revered (Example The *yad*)
- *The* reference in:
  - All matters of belief and practices
  - Guiding daily life

**Various levels of Authority and “Normativity”**

<i>The highest level</i>	To various degrees in other religions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 3 ‘religions of the books’ Judaism, Christianity, Islam</li> <li>• -Canonical criptures as central, since they are seen as inspired by God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different basis of authority. i.e past wisdom</li> <li>• Less consensus across a whole tradition</li> </ul>

**What’s the main difference between Oral traditions and Scriptural traditions?**

<b>Oral traditions</b>	<b>Scriptural traditions</b>
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<p>More room for diversity of form, new stories to come up, accessibly,</p> <p>More room for adaptation change and diversity</p>	<p>Fixed for all times, although different interpretations may exist.</p>
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### Language(s) of the Sacred (cont.)

#### The Visual

- Probably the earliest form of symbolization
  - Iconography means ‘writing in images’
- The Dreamings*, Ancient Australian Aboriginal art on rock

#### **3 functions of Sacred Art (SQ 66-7)**

1. As a “direct vehicle that lets one ‘see’ into the world of the sacred”  
-Murti (Divine image) in Hinduism
2. As teaching tools: paintings and statues in Catholic Churches
3. As a form of religious statement: form of communicating one’s faith

#### **Religious Symbols/Art as Fashion Accessories in Popular culture**

Madonna (1983): She started using crosses. From then used as fashion statement

Victoria’s Secret angels: Angel wings as accessories

Baby Buddha Bikini (2004)

#### Case Study focus

<u>Judaism on the non-use of religious images</u>	<u>Hinduism on the use of religious images</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exodus (20:17)</li> <li>• Torah (i.e., the “instruction of God”) -First 5 books of the Hebrew Bible 10 commandments, were given to God to Moses, to tell Jews how to live according to the Will of God.</li> <li>• List of the 10 commandments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Murti</i></li> </ul>

The vertical	The Horizontal
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.</li> <li>2. Thou shalt have no other gods before me...</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Thou shalt not murder.</li> <li>7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.</li> <li>8. Thou shalt not steal.</li> <li>9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.</li> <li>10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house...nor any thing that is your neighbour's</li> </ol>
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### The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment in Practice

The most important prayer in Judaism: The Shema

- P. Gwyne (2009), 29
- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” (Deut. 6:4-9)  
*Tefillin, Mezuzah*

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment

- Key to how Jews understand God
- Exodus 20: 4-5
- Ban on making and using images
  - of other gods
  - of God himself

### **Anthropomorphism: (i.e “of human form”)**

- The attribution of human qualities to the divine.
- Nothing can stand for God – Unbridgeable gap between Creator and Creation
- Such images in the *Torah* must be seen as metaphors. Example. “The hands of God”

### **Idolatry**

- The interposing of something else before God:
  - Gwyne (2009), 29
  - Worshipping as God those ‘things’ which are not God
- Grave sin:
  - It reduces God to something finite, visible, material.
  - No mediating image, object or being should be used to represent, pray or connect with God.

### **Icon:**

- “Likeness” (Greek)
- An image that:
  - Represents the likeness of a sacred figure
  - Mediates notions of the sacred to believers (SQ, 148)
- Example: The oldest surviving Greek orthodox icon of Christ, 6<sup>th</sup> century. –St Catherine’s Monastery, Mt Sinai

### Aniconic:

- “The absence of iconic images”
- Aniconic religious traditions
  - Religions of transcendence
- Any anthropomorphic or representational likeness of the divine is discouraged.

Aniconic, non-representational, abstract art:

[Shown in images] Old New Synagogue, Europe’s oldest active synagogue, 13<sup>th</sup> c. Prague

### Commonalities between Islam and Judaism

- God’s unity and uniqueness
- Ban on images
- Aniconic artistic tradition
- Idolatry as a grave sin
- Muhammad’s status as a human being
  - His face is never drawn, in part to prevent his deification

### Iconoclasm

- Movements that destroy sacred images and art, usually those of other people
  - Such images are “idolatrous’ and, hence, an affront to God who prohibited them
- Example (a) Episode in the biblical story of Moses, Exodus, destruction of the golden
- (b) early protestant churches

### Spring 2001

- The Taliban’s destruction of ancient Buddha statues – Bamyam, central Afghanistan

### **The use of Sacred Images in Hinduism**

- Hinduism: immanent and sacramental
- “an imaginative, an ‘image-making’ religion which the sacred is seen as present in the visible world’
- The importance of the visual

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### **Hinduism**

#### The use of images in Hinduism

- Focus on Devotional Hinduism
- Immanent and sacramental
- Both anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic, iconic and aniconic images

**Immanent:** Takes for granted that sacred manifest in whole continuum of life: people, animals, things

**Sacramental:** Images, man made images used to depict the Divine  
No trouble in depicting the divine in images in comparison to Judaism/Islam

Hindu Images

- Generally, the divine is portrayed in human form with the superhuman traits.
- At times, a combination of human and animal traits.

[Image 1] *Murti* of the Goddess Durga.

[Images 2 & 3] The God Ganesh: Combination of animal and human traits.

Historical context of Devotional Hinduism

<i>Bhakti</i> “devotion”	The use of the iconic image
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love of a personal God</li> <li>• Emerged around the 4<sup>th</sup> C.</li> <li>• Predominant today</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began in the 1<sup>st</sup> C</li> <li>• Grew between the 3<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> c.</li> <li>• Central in Hindu practice today.</li> </ul> <p>As the rise of iconic image grow, the number of temples too did as the same time. Correlation with other religions like Buddhism, who started the use of iconic images too.</p>

Widespread Western & value biases	Academic and Insider viewpoints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hindu images as “idols” and their use as “idoltrous”</li> <li>○ Antagonism rooted in the Hebraic 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Icons</li> <li>-<i>Murti</i> (divine images)</li> <li>-<b>NOT idolatry!</b></li> </ul>

“No people would identify themselves as ‘idolators’ by faith.” ~D. Eck (2000), 158

The Hindu Viewpoint

*Not* the worship of a statue, but the divine that has made itself present in the status

“Divinity will always transcend the image (...), but something of divinity is authentically captured, in the artistic representation as well.” ( \*Gwynne, 43)

**The use of *murti* as fully justified by:**

**1. The Hindu conception of the divine**

**(a) Both transcendent and immanent**

- Brahman as beyond all, yet as pervading the universe.
- In Hindu terms, the twin concepts of:
  - > **nirguna** (“Without qualities”): impersonal
  - > **Saguna** (“With qualities”): personal

Saguna as key in *bhakti*

**(b) Both one and the many**

[Image shown: Ten *avatars* of the God Vishnu]

- Unity-in-plurality
- The Supreme Being takes on multiple: names, forms and **avatars** “incarnations”
- Beware of Hinduism’s *apparent polytheism* !

**(c) Both supreme and accessible in images**

- *Murti* as one of the 5 forms taken by the Supreme Being to be accessible to humans

As Krishna tells Arjuna, “In whatever way people approach me, in that way do I show them favour” ~*Bhagavad Gita* (4.11)

**2. A collection of Hindu sacred texts: *Shilpa Shastras***

- “Treatises on Art”
- 1st-2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE
- Instructions on how to create *murti*

**3. Their ritual creation and consecration**

- Artists must follow the rules
- A priest must purify it and invite the divine presence

Then, *Murti* = **embodiment of the divine**

**DARSHANA**

“AUDIENCE” OR “SEEING”

- The practice of worshipping before a *murti*
- Contact is made through an exchange of vision: “Seeing and being seen” as key to receive divine blessings
- As facilitating and enhancing the relationship between the divine and the devotee
- Gwynne, 43

**Darshan online**

- Interesting development combining tradition and innovation
  - Suitable because of the emphasis on the visual in Hinduism
-

### **Myth**

- Does **NOT** mean something that is false!
- From *mythos* (Greek) meaning 'story'

#### Myth as a **sacred** story

- Featuring sacred/forces and exceptional beings (heroes,saints, etc.)
- Relating their sacred actions in the world
- 1<sup>st</sup> religious function:
  - To reveal something of the sacred (SQ v, 57)
  - A way to connect and get a sense of the sacred

#### Myth as a **true** story

- From a religious perspective
- Not in the sense of "factual accuracy"
- In the sense of revealing something significant about:
  - The human condition
  - The meaning of human life
  - The world in the humans live
  -

Insiders believe in their myths because it rings true even though they can't factually prove it.

#### Religious debate

- Should myths be understood literally or symbolically?
- More pressing since the rise of modern science
- Ex. Evangelical Christians' literal understanding of the biblical myth of Creation (Genesis 1)  
[Image show: *The creation of Animals*, 16th c. Jacopo Tintoretto]

#### **Myth:**

- Sacredness and truthfulness: only apply to 'our' myths, not those of others
- Ex. Buddhist doesn't believe in the biblical myth of origins.

#### Myth as a **traditional** story

- Passed down for generations
- No single author:
  - A myth 'comes out of the experience of a people' (SQ, 58)
  - Its power comes from being 'remembered and re-created in a community'
- Oral telling of mythical stories:

- Entertaining, educational and helps to keep mythical and traditional knowledge alive
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> expressive function of myth (Kessler)

### 4 types of myth

Read Kessler

1. cosmogonic/cosmological
2. Etiological
3. Eschatological
4. Hero/savior myths

#### Cosmogonic myths

- About the origins of the cosmos and humanity, i.e creation myths
- Cosmic in scope and convey foundational meaning
- Assume that the 'world is "depended on a sacred 'other from which it derives its significance.'" (SQ, 57)
  - By giving humans a sacred origins, they endow humanity with meaning and purpose
  - They act as a buffer against the notion that our lives are meaningless.

❖ [Class exercise]

Watch Movie 'Noah' [2014]

- What foundational meanings are conveyed?
- How does it make the world and humanity significant?

Genesis 1

[Image shown: *The creation, 1541*, Lucas Cranach the Elder]

- \*SQ, 57
- God is independent of the world and 'stands outside' it
- The world was created as good
- At the centre of the cosmos, both as apex and steward, stand Adam and Eve
- One example among many:
  - Diverse religions, diverse cosmogonies
  - In Buddhism, no beginning, no end.
  -

Comparison to Brahman, where he is both transcendent and immanent.

#### Cosmogological myths

- About the establishment of the natural order and the human/social order
- Distinct from cosmogonies, yet interrelated. –Often appear as a 2<sup>nd</sup> act in cosmogonies
- Often involve a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of gods who combat primordial chaos and create the natural and human/social orders.

### Enuma elish ('When on high')

- Myth honouring Marduk, the high God of ancient Babylon
- Composed c. 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE
- **Act 1:** Cosmogonic  
Abzu & Tiamat = new generations  
-Difference with biblical cosmogonic myths – creation comes of divine will  
-Things just emerged in this Babylonian myth – accidental kind of beginning to the Universe.
- **Act 2:** Cosmological
  - Conflict between the old and younger gods:
    - > Chaos versus order
    - > Marduk is chosen, but demands to be king if he wins
  - He kills Tiamat and, out of her body, creates the natural order
  - Next, comes the human/social order of Babylon:
    - >as a reflection with its of the order achieved by the gods
    - > Humans created out of demonic blood to be slaves to the gods

### Etiological Myths

- Explains the reason or cause of something
- Kessler: 'Myths of lesser beginnings'
  - In the natural order such as sacred mountains
  - In the human order such as institutions (marriage) and rituals
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> religious function of myth
- Its ritualistic function:
  - To describe the origins of a ritual or an observance
  - Ex. Genesis I and the Sabbath

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### **3. Eschatological Myths**

- The term refers to the last things; the end times
- At the cosmic and collective level
  - Ex—Last Judgment in Western religions, Christianity's *Book of Revelations*
- At the individual level
  - EX—Death and individual journeys to the afterlife

### **4. Hero/Saviour Myths**

<b><u>Cultural heroes</u></b>	<b><u>Religious heroes</u></b>
	-Special connection to the sacred (prophets) or both human and divine (Jesus)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typical pattern<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Special birth/upbringing</li><li>○ Trials, quest, victory over a</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Same with a few differences<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ EX. Siddhartha</li><li>○ Additional spiritual and, at</li></ul></li></ul>

fierce adversary ○ Boons for the community	times, sacrificial aspects ○ Benefits to humankind in this life and the next
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- Religious heroes have remarkable births
  - EX—Buddha's birth: Just out of his mothers' womb, he could stand, talk and walk. And as he walked, lotus flowers grew in his steps.
- Heroes are predestined for greatness. And people around them can see signs of this greatness.

### **Context: 1350-1200 BCE (?)**

- Debate over its historical bases
- No external evidence for Moses, slavery of Hebrews, the exodus
- Insider viewpoint: embedded in Jews' historical religious experience
- Is the story of Moses historically true? Did it exist?
  - These questions are still debated
  - Some scholars argue that there is a historical basis of the existence of a person named Moses.
  - But some doubt not only his existence, but also that there was no evidence that Jews were even in Egypt. They also think there is no corroborating event of the Exodus—Moses leading the people of Israel that were bonded in Egypt to the Promised Land.

### **Moses according to the Exodus**

- Setting: Hebrews' suffering as slaves in Egypt
  - Pharaoh decrees the killing of all their firstborns because he wanted to diminish the number of Hebrew slaves in the nation. They were becoming too numerous
- His remarkable birth
  - Because the Pharaoh ordered all firstborn Hebrews to be killed, his mom puts him in a basket on the river. The Pharaohs' daughter finds him and raises him as her own. He grown up in Pharaohs' house
- His exile after killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew
- God's intervention
  - God manifests himself to Moses as The Burning Bush
    - The Burning Bush wasn't consumed by fire
    - Moses was experiencing a *numinous* experience—having feelings of awe, and fear
- Moses
  - Chosen as prophet and liberator of the Hebrew
  - Learns God's name (YHWH)—means, *I am who I am*
- With God's help, Moses is victorious over the Pharaoh
  - Plagues, death of Egyptian firstborn

### **The myth's ritualistic function**

- God spares the Hebrews

- Who sacrifices a lamb and marked their door with its blood
- Divine order
  - To repeat it yearly for forever
- In their haste to depart
  - Unleavened cakes
- This is the story of Exodus being recounted in a ritual manner

**Moses and God's law**

- Wandering
- Face-to-face with God on Mt. Sinai
  - The Decalogue—The Ten Commandments
- A cultural hero, with its social/cultural boons
  - Liberation from oppression
  - Foundation of the Hebrew nation and its laws
  - Moses enables the Hebrews to have a sovereign nation. He also unifies the people, giving them steps on how to organize themselves

**Moses as a Religious Hero**

- Prophet
  - Mission and message
- Model to follow and the 1<sup>st</sup> rabbi (teacher)
  - The best of humanity (SQ, 41)
- 3 main events at the heart of Judaism (\*Kessler, 66)
  1. Liberation from slavery
  2. Revelation of God's name
  3. The giving of the law
- A "Religion of Exodus"

**Functions**

<u>Religions</u>	<u>Social/Cultural</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierophanic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ritualistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Identity (Individual and Social)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EX. The story of Moses</li> <li>○ At the base of Jewish identity and nation</li> <li>○ Their link to God, his plan and act in the world</li> <li>○ A unified people under God</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Cosmological</li> </ul>	

**Their Cosmological Function**

- Provide a picture of the order of the universe
- Make the world humanly significant
  - Ordered, coherent
  - Anchored in a sacred story
- Crucial for human self-understanding
- The “big questions” are handled through stories:
  - Origin, cosmology, destiny, home, identity
- EX. \*SQ. 64
- A framework that provides ultimate meaning and purpose for the human journey

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### Functions of Myth

#### 1. Religious:

Hierophanic

Ritualistic

Cosmological

#### 2. Social/Cultural:

Expressive

Identity (Individual & Social)

#### 3. Ethical (SQ) or Ideological (Kessler)

#### 3. Ethical or Ideological

Myths express the worldview of a society

-The encode its principles, values and normal in a story

They serve as a guide for life and action *in* the world

- Inspire and energize individuals and groups, communities and whole societies.
- Ideals and models to follow (Moses, Jesus, etc.)  
Shape our sense of selves. Models to emulate, to follow in life. Offered as models for generations.
- Mythical stories still serve this function.
- How we should live? What must we do to be saved?

In traditional religious context, option of choices is limited., models found in religious myth, they are normative. In Christianity for example, Virgin Mary, women were expected to follow this model, to become devoted/loving mothers.

Compared to today, we can choose to model ourselves in a variety of role models.

From Stories to Norms

- They sanction norms and models of behavior
  - A standard to measure beliefs and behaviors
  - Pressure to conform

- They often work to explain and justify the social order
  - Ex. Why do we do this or that? (Passover, marriage, etc.)
  - Because it was so in the beginning
  - Because God decreed it, etc.
- 

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### What is Ritual?

- Basically, it's a **meaningful action**
    - J.C.L., 75
  - The pervasiveness of ritual in human life
    - Religious, social, political, familial rituals, etc.
  - From simple to elaborate
- 

#### **Class Exercise:**

Baraka (Ron Fricke, 1992)

1. What are some of the basic elements of ritual?
2. What makes these rituals "religious"?

Videos shown:

Balinese Money Chant (2:23)

6/7 Adornment/Dance(0-3:59)

9 Varanasi Sunrise(0-2:49)

20 Eclipse – Sacred Journeys (0-4:46)

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#### 5 Basic Elements

1. Set apart from everyday life: clearly marked beginning and ending
  - Clearly marked beginning and ending
2. Traditionalism
  - A script sanctioned by tradition
3. Formalism
  - Standardized, stylized and codified behavior
  - Rules to follow
4. Invariance:
  - Repeated expressions and gestures, repeated at appointed dates and times
5. Embodied performance
  - Rituals as:
    - A performance, a doing, an activity: Knowledge is gained through engagement and enacted through the body.
    - Participative: Involving the whole person and all the senses

- A multi-medium: dance, music, food, colours, etc.

---

## What is a Religious Ritual?

### 3 Salient Features

#### **1. The Sacred**

- A ritual carried out in a sacred context (J.C.L., 75)
  - i.e., a means of access, communication and communion with the sacred

#### **2. The Collective**

A means of interacting with the sacred and other human beings

#### **3. The transformative**

- **AKA** Performative or Sacramental aspect
  - More than simply signifying
  - A means of transformation (Status, identity, condition of the participants) (J.C.L., 92)
  - **It actually produces what it means to effect:** It makes things happen. It is efficacious.
- 

## Types of Rituals

### Rite of Passage

- AKA: Life-cycle rituals
- They accompany & dramatize major events in life
- They **mark** and **effect** a person's transition from one stage of life to another.

## The Study of Ritual

Arnold Van Gennep (1872-1957)

Rites of Passage (and other rites) have **3 stages:**

1. Separation from society
2. Liminality
3. Reincorporation, with a new identity, role or status

Victor Turner (1920-1983)

Liminality's religious and social significance

Took Arnold Van Gennep's studies and went deeper in them, worked on them

### Liminality and Symbolism

- The creation of symbolic stages and passages that leads to transformation
- The predominant symbolism of the ritual process
  1. Symbolic death of the old self
  2. Symbolic stage of ambiguous or no-identity
  3. Symbolic rebirth to the self

Example: Church weddings.

Example: Marriage

- Pre-Liminal
  - Bachelor/Bachelorette party
  - “Enterrement” or burial of the single identity
- Liminal (<on/over the threshold>)
  - Ambiguous Identity
  - Neither this nor that / both this and that
- Post-liminal
  - Walking down the aisle and through the door, as symbolizing the emergence of the newly constitutes couple.

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### Liminality

- Symbolism
- Transformation
- *Communitas*

### Liminality and Transformation

- Ritual creates a liminal space and time which:
  - Makes changes and renewals possible
  - Enables participants to access the sacred and tap into its creative and transformative power
  - is temporarily liberated from ordinary life
- Both personal and social transformations

### Liminality and *Communitas* (\*J.C.L., 78)

- The Spontaneous bond of communion that can occur during a rite
  - More open, direct, inclusive, egalitarian
  - Feelings of oneness and solidarity
  - Special camaraderie and bonding
  - Often seen as sacred.
- How is it achieved?
  - Liminality temporarily dissolves or loosens the categories, inequalities and norms that govern social life.

Example: Pope’s Washing and Kissing of Feet on Holy Thursday

- In imitation and remembrance of Jesus who did it for his 12 disciples (John 13:15)
- Humility and service to others.

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Rites of passages

Traditional Societies	Modern Western Societies
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important</li> <li>• Obligatory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely relinquished</li> <li>• Voluntary</li> <li>• New non-religious rites - Graduation</li> <li>• Still significant for many, even for some who aren't "religious"</li> </ul>
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[CASE STUDY]

**The Apache Ritual Initiation into Womanhood**

- Inés Talamentez
- The Mescalero Apache: New Mexico

*Images shown from [archserve.id.uscv.edu/courses/rs/natlink/apadhe/apa\\_life6.html](http://archserve.id.uscv.edu/courses/rs/natlink/apadhe/apa_life6.html)*

**Sierra Blanca, New Mexico: Home of Isanaklesh**

Isanaklesh:

- 1 of 5 deities present at creation
- "Woman (isana) of Earth or Clay (klesh)"
- She is Mother Earth
- Creative Power, Wisdom, compassion, Healing
- Ideal of Motherhood

Isanaklesh Gotal

- "Ceremonial song for Isanaklesh"
- 8 days around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July
- Established by the Goddess as a gift:
  - To ensure that girls have a strong & long life
  - To provide a way to counter disease, suffering and disharmony

**1. The Public/Collective Aspect**

Many participants: Initiate, female sponsor, Medicine man, relatives, community

Much preparation

**2. The public/collective**

- The celebrative festival  
A special moment in a girl's life
- Womanhood as a sacred aspect of life
- Reconciling, festivity, forgiving.

**3. The transformative**

Rite designed to raise the sacred power needed to accomplish the change

- She runs toward the east to meet and bring back the Goddess

- She temporarily becomes the Goddess
- 4. **The constitutive**  
It effects the permanent transformation of the girl into woman: not line in her eyes but in the eye of the community  
Not only in her eyes. After the ritual, she will effectively be an Apache woman; full member of the community
- 5. **The Educational Aspect**
  - Apache traditional knowledge, ritual and Healing
  - What it means to be an Apache Woman
  - Her rights and duties:
    - To emulate the goddess
    - To apply the teachings
    - To keep and transmit Apache Traditions
- 6. **Healing, Protection and Well-being**  
Blessing members of the tribe  
Being Blessed by members of the tribe

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### **Calendrical Rituals**

- Based on fixed points in the year
  - Periodic
- Mark the passage of time and make it appear to be an ordered series of cycles
  - Serve mainly to bring a group together and ensure its well-being

Calendrical rituals can be distinguished between:

## 1. Seasonal

- Cycle of nature and the changing seasons

Example: Halloween: harvest festivals, symbols associated with it, harvesting pumpkins.

## 2. Commemorative

- Recall and recreate important events

Example Christmas (commemorates the birth of Jesus), Buddha's Day (April-May)

### Passover (\*SQ, 73)

- Spring
- 7 days
- 1<sup>st</sup> night: a ritual meal called *seder* (which literally means "order of service")
  - Exodus
  - Unleavened bread
  - Ritual asking (boy) and recounting (oldest male) the events
  - Required by God

#### What are its main social functions?

It serves to:

- Integrate individuals into the group: Socialization
  - Solidify group identity:
    - Remind a group of its heritage, of God's gift
    - Solidarity with ancestors by becoming "ritually one" with them (SQ, 73)
- 

### Religion and Society

- Diverse, even contradictory, functions
- Hard to generalize
- Religion can be a factor in both:
  - Social cohesion and unity
  - Social tension and conflict

### Religion & Social Cohesion

On one hand,

#### 1. It can help to bind and hold people together

- Religion = *Religare (latin)* means 'to bind'
- It has 2 basic thrusts /driving forces (\*SQ 96-98)
  - The horizontal: communion with the people
  - The vertical: Communion between sacred

#### How?

- Religion provides a strong sense of:  
Identity and belonging to a sacred community
  - For social life to be possible, there needs to be:  
A common base of principles and values  
Fidelity to them
  - Rituals are crucial because they periodically:
    - Refresh people's memory
    - Renew feelings of belonging
- 

Five Pillars of Islam

- \*See Kessler, 'Experiencing the Sacred,' 2008, 130

**Salat: The Exception**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar: 5 mandatory prayers per day
- Can be recited anywhere with one exception:
  - Communal prayer at the mosque Fridays at noon
  - Required for Muslim men

Communal prayer

Imam is a layperson, not a priest

Vertical	Horizontal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the signal of the <i>imam</i>, all bow &amp; kneel</li> <li>• Call to submit to God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group action of a large body of Muslims               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worshipping together</li> <li>- Beyond many social categories</li> <li>- Standing close</li> <li>- Same direction (Mecca), movement, focus</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Salat**

- Daily prayers also have defining and unifying aspects
  - Links the worldwide Muslim community 5 times a day
  - Same time, direction, formula movements, focus
- 

**Religion & Social Unity**

- Its power to federate & unify
- Periodic rallying around one symbol and activity
- Temporarily transcends social/cultural categories
  - Liminality and *communitas*

Example: Pilgrimage: Sacred Journey

Both an expression and a way to reinforce inner faith

Gwynne, 376

## Hajj

### “To set out on a journey”

- Annual, obligatory
- Powerful/visible symbol of the worldwide Muslim community as one
- Leveling is symbolized with the *ihram* (white garment)
  - Equality of all pilgrims before God
  - Check out the excerpt from Malcom X's autobiography Pilgrimage to Mecca *Samsara* (R.Fricke, 2011) ,

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## Religion and society

Religion can be a factor in both:

1. Social Cohesion and unity
2. Social tension and conflict:
  - (a) Interreligious
  - (b) Intrareligious

### **Social Cohesion & Unity**

- Religions provides symbolic pillars around which people can:
    - Construct their identity
    - Assemble and Unite
- Example: The **Kab'ha** ('cube' or also called 'the Sacred House'), this is a central symbol of Islam and Islamic unity since 630.  
Represent the unity of muslims, strong sense of identity/belonging.  
Originally built by Adam, the first man.

### **The Paradox of Identity:**

Is as separation as much as it is about unity.

- All Identity is relational: A way to situate oneself in relation to others
- Identity is about **differentiation as much as unity:**
  - “we are X and they are Y”
  - Insider/outsider boundaries, legal/political/moral/religious

### **The problem:**

It always involves both **inclusion** and **exclusion**

“us”	“them”
------	--------

Solidarity, fidelity, loyalty to the 'group', the insiders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No necessarily</li> <li>• Difference</li> <li>• At times, animosity and hostility.</li> </ul>
--	--

### Religious Identity

There are various ways to demarcate:

Rituals, establish boundaries between insiders and outsiders.

Example is **Baptism**.

Those who are baptized are insiders and the outsiders are not baptized.

The Religion has a tendency to associate:

The "us" with the sacred	The "them" with
Example: Church or Ummah as a sacred community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At best, the profane</li> <li>- At worst, the immoral, evil, or the demonic</li> </ul>

### Sacralisation and Demonization

- Powerful forms of identification
  - SQ 86-87
  - Diverse notions of the sacred
  - The sacred, which binds a group together, can become a source/factor in interreligious conflict.
- Strong distinction between 'us' and 'them'
- Tendency toward absolutes: the opponent as totally evil, inhuman, satanic
- May result in the purging or destruction of the "other"

### **Religion and Social Conflict**

- No religion is above it
- Secular movements are also responsible for it (example: Nazism)
- Vast majority lead peaceful lives
- Religion can work to reduce it
  - Moral ideals and values of cooperation
  - Leaders promoting interfaith dialogue

[Picture shown: *The Golden Rule*. Normal Rockwell (1894-1978)]

Key Distinction:

<b>Exclusive</b> religion	<b>Inclusive</b> religion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One truth about ultimate reality</li><li>• One valid religious path</li><li>• Likely to stress absolute transcendence</li><li>• Distinct identities &amp; exclusive loyalty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fluid, more inclusive Does not require exclusive loyalty/fidelity to particular set of beliefs, no affiliation to one community.</li><li>• Tribal religions: Many ancestors, many religions</li><li>• Japanese religion<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Plurality of religion; one engages in many religions at the same time</li><li>- Shinto &amp; Buddhism as valid (Shinto wedding, Buddhist funerals)</li></ul></li></ul>

**Intrareligious conflict**

- Divisions within religious groups, especially when they insist on:
  - Orthodoxy: right belief (as defined by the majority of those in power)
  - Orthopraxy: Right practice
- In the West, doctrine has been given a defining function: to create/maintain identity and social cohesion.

Differing interpretations

- Over beliefs and practices can lead to discord and conflict:
  - Issues of import to insiders
  - Why? Salvation is at stake

Different responses to discord

- Reform (renewal)
  - Religious change may be accepted or rejected by the majority
  - Often, an attempt to return to origins
  - The example/teachings of the founder or the first community  
Example: The Franciscans
- Various forms of division: Heresy, Schism, New religious tradition

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Religion & Society (cont)

**Various forms of division:**

- **Schism** (Greek, "to tear or separate")

- Distinct entity that still holds much in common with the original community
- Ex. Protestantism > 16<sup>th</sup> C, Catholics & protestants could not agree on key aspect of tradition, therefore Protestantism broke way from roman catholic church. However they have a lot in common, they have diff interprets of key things, but they still have those key aspect in common. The difference leads to divergence in key aspect of practices, beliefs. The reform movement change core beliefs, it evolves in new religious tradition
- **New religious tradition**
  - Divergent views on key matters resulting in a new religion
  - EX. Hinduism/Buddhism; Judaism/Christianity
- **Heresy**
  - 'False belief'; more accurately, 'false choice': one who chooses to deviate from the truth with respect to points of doctrine.
  - Effort to place outside those who claim to be inside
  - Illegitimate and subject to disciplinary action even expulsion, prison, execution, etc.

#### ❖ **Christian Orthodoxy: A historical overview**

- Diversity and internal conflicts
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c: Consolidated efforts to achieve greater unity and uniformity
- 4<sup>th</sup> c.: Consensus over a set of doctrines, which were declared "orthodox" and had to be accepted by all > outside of the 'one true church', there can be no salvation.

#### The establishment of Orthodoxy

- 312: The Roman Emperor Constantine adopts and supports Christianity (d. 337)
  - The assumption that Christianity, with its one God, would be a unifying force.
- 381: Theodosius I makes orthodox Christianity the only official faith:
  - Jesus who was crucified by the Romans became the empire's ally.

#### > Political consequences

- Merger of Church & Empire
- Orthodoxy was to be enforced with the aid of secular
- Deviations from orthodoxy could become an offense punishable by the state. Heresy became a kind of revolt akin to treason.

#### > Historical Consequences

Recurring cycle of demonization and persecution of other Christians as Heretics.

The Waldensians (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c)

Image 1: Johannes Tinctoris' *Traité du crime de Vauderie*, mid 15<sup>th</sup> century

Witches (16-17<sup>th</sup> c.)

Image 2: Compendium Maleficarum 1626

### Heresy

- Related to defining and enforcing internal unity and conformity
- Issue of power and authority.

### Religion, Social Tension & Conflict

Between 'sects' and the larger society.: **\*No group calls itself 'sect' or 'cult'**

- Polemical: used by a religious majority to disqualify minority religions and the larger society
- Common: used to disqualify the religions of others"
- Sociological: A neutral term used for a particular kind of religious organization; an ideal type.

### **Classical Distinction**

- Max Weber & Ernst Troeltsch: Early 20<sup>th</sup> c
- SQ\*, 87-88
- 5 points of contrast.

Church	Sect
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Involuntary, Ex. Infant baptism</li><li>2. Universal goal: Open and inclusive membership</li><li>3. Relative ethics<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Minimum</li><li>- Option to adopt a strict discipline (monks &amp; nuns)</li></ul></li><li>4. religious specialists (trained &amp; paid such as priests)</li><li>5. A state of positive tension with society:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Symbiotic</li><li>- Example: The church and the Roman Empire (4<sup>th</sup> c.)</li></ul></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Voluntary adherence, voluntary entering the community</li><li>2. Quality, not quantity; Closed and exclusive membership: Reserved for the religiously committed</li><li>3. Very strict ethics</li><li>4. Surround themselves of charismatic leader, most likely of the prophetic type.</li><li>5. A state of negative tension with society:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Rupture</li><li>- Non-conformity</li><li>- Isolated, communal life-style</li><li>- Conflicts with the civic powers over religious principle</li><li>- Often the object of discrimination.</li></ul></li></ol>

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### Early Christianity

- Very much organized as a sect. They were a sectarian movement
- As a result, they were objects of rumors, discrimination and persecution.

Many of them died prosecuted in the name of their religion, refused to worship roman emperor, and to adhere to the roman norms and society

\*SQ 89-90

- All sects/cults must be seen in the light of their place in history
- At first, most are at odds with the larger culture, but this may change.

Personal note: Religions are always changing; they are dynamic, even if they have a tendency to emphasize traditions. This also apply to new reli organization, The sects may become the religions of tomorrow.

The process of **Institutionalization**

**Institutionalization:** the creation of order and stability on a more permanent basis

- Necessary for a group's survival and success
- Often accompanied by:
  - A move toward the church-type
  - Greater social acceptance
  - Moderation, modification or abolition of some of the most controversial beliefs and practices.

Personal note: But it comes closer to a church type of organization, as it becomes tightly organized it may even become normalized in society, gain greater and greater social acceptance. It is seen as something normal.

The group's beliefs/practices may change; some of things which were most controversial becomes de-emphasized. Some groups moderate these beliefs, modify them, even abandon some controversial beliefs/practices. Some may stay there but fade in the background.

**Example of institutionalization: Joseph Smith and the LDS (Mormonism)**

- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)**
- Arose from the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> c in the USA
- Object of persecution until the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. and, still today of discrimination
- 

**Joseph Smith (1805-1844)**

- Prophet
  - Encounter with the angel "Moroni"
  - Location of a book that contained the "fullness" of the gospel
  - i.e *The Book of Mormon*
- Founder of the LDS and its charismatic leader.

The early LDS

- Quick growth
  - Move westward to avoid persecution
  - Murder of J. Smith (1844)

- Period of division and, the, institutionalization under another charismatic leader (B. Young)
- Although core tenants have remained, some have changed: Example Abolition of polygamy in 1890
- Today: from 5 to 14 million worldwide

The lesson

- “To resist the temptation to demonize” sects/cults and their members (M/K. Muesse, 225)
    - They are human beings, just like us.
- 
- One of interpreting religions, of being religious, and living a religious life

### Religion and Morality

- Distinct, yet interrelated
- Religion: the sacred(the vertical)
- Morality: Human welfare
  - Leads to thinking of human welfare
  - The horizontal
  - A set of culturally transmitted norms that govern the conduct of humans with one another.

Complex relationship

\*See “Religion & Morality.” *Harper Collins Dictionary (1995)*

<b>Complimentary</b>	<b>In tension</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religions have help it by:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying</li> <li>2. Legitimizing</li> <li>3. Rewarding</li> <li>4. Renewing moral conduct</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At times, religions have put too much stress on right conduct/lifestyle, which led to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immoral teachings &amp; practices</li> <li>- Authoritarian and dysfunctional situations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

How religions help:

#### **1. By identifying moral norms & models**

(a) Moral norms:

- Religious codes of moral conduct: widespread & minimum
  - Example: The Decalogue and
  - The *Pancasila* (The 5 buddhist precepts, no harm, theft, sexual misconduct, lies, intoxicants.)
- Ideally, one should try to maximize virtue

(b) Models of Modal Excellence

- Capacity to inspire & motivate people to reach higher
- Religious figures from either:

- The past (Siddhartha, Jesus, Muhammad)
- Mythology (Isanaklesh).  
Women should try to emulate her, the ideal of motherhood, she's an embodiment of power, healing, compassion.
- People are inspired by his motivation to find the truth, his compassion.
- Inspire people to do more, lead to better community society but also leads to religious rewards.

#### Double Ethics

- Religious codes of moral conduct: Required
- Quest for moral perfection:
  - Recommended but not required
  - Exception: Reform movements and sects  
They want to make ideals a reality that is lived individually but communally

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### RELIGION AND MORALITY

The complimentary side:

\*See "Religion & Morality" 1995

#### **4 ways Religions have helped morality by:**

##### 1. Identifying moral norms and models

2. They help to **legitimize moral norms** by tracing their source to sacred realities:

- Religious morality defines right and wrong in sacred terms:
  - The sacred grounds and sanctions moral normal
  - In the process, they acquire greater authority
- **Example (a) western religions**
  - **God = source of morality.**  
Creator of everything thus creator of rules that humans must obey
  - It is a duty to obey the divine law, revealed and written in scripture
  - *Attempt* to put it beyond contestation, i.e humans still have to *interpret* God's law.
- **Example (b) Theravada Buddhism**
  - **Nirvana = source of morality**  
Moving forward/back in relation to the goal of liberation from *samsara*
  - *Pancasila* are guidelines require for progress
  - Progress depends on wisdom *and* virtue: good karma = progress

3. They help to **reinforce moral conduct**

- By affirming the **reality of moral retribution** (i.e reward/punishment)
- Serious and, often, long term effects: everyone will reap what they sow.

Why should we follow moral norms/obligations? Knowing that there's no guarantee that it will make our life easier.

Morality is embedded in a larger religious worldview

IMPLICATIONS:

- It acquires a **sacred** and, oftentimes, an **eschatological** significance
- One's moral behaviors is linked to one's destiny (here or in the hereafter)

#### **Example (a) Western Religions**

- **The day of Judgment at the end of time (\*SQ 136-137)**
  - He decides the fate of all according to His standards
  - Dat day of reckoning.
- Aims to reform behavior here and now Fear (damnation) and hope (paradise).
- A good life is part of salvation

#### **Example (b) The Indian context**

- **Moral retribution is effected by the law of karma**
  - Intrinsic
  - One's karam will determine future rebirths
  - **SQ, 10,6 \***
- Real accountability
- Motivated by the idea of karmic consequences for future rebirths and ultimate release

#### 4. They help to **renew moral conduct**

- They contain both fear and the means to assuage fear and guilt over moral failures
- **Rituals** as means to redress failures and renew commitment to one's salvation or liberation: Example catholic confession and penance