

Introduction

- 1. Ritual:** Forms and orders of ceremonies (private and/or public) (often regarded as revealed)
- 2. Narrative and Mythic:** stories (often regarded as revealed) that work on several levels. Sometimes narratives fit together into a fairly complete and systematic interpretation of the universe and human's place in it.
- 3. Experiential and emotional:** dread, guilt, awe, mystery, devotion, liberation, ecstasy, inner peace, bliss (private)
- 4. Social and Institutional:** belief system is shared and attitudes practiced by a group. Often rules for identifying community membership and participation (public)
- 5. Ethical and legal:** Rules about human behavior (often regarded as revealed from supernatural realm)
- 6. Doctrinal and philosophical:** systematic formulation of religious teachings in an intellectually coherent form
- 7. Material:** ordinary objects or places that symbolize or manifest the sacred or supernatural

The Practical and Ritual Dimension: (cont)

- ii. Initiation into religious community (often synonymous with adulthood):** Sacred thread: presented to guru receive instruction; circumcision in Aboriginal tribes: ritual killing, resurrection of the victim into a new existence; Bar mitzvah: 13 yr boy reads from Torah and becomes a member of the congregation.
- iii. Transition and Transformation:**
 - 1. Rites of Passage** – mark or bring about change of social position and status, change in physical or spiritual being of initiate; change of life phase (life-cycle rites: birth, puberty, marriage, death). Example: Death rite in Hinduism: pyre, son recites prayer to fire, burns, strikes head
 - 2. Seasonal, calendrical rites:** harvest; rains; birth and death

The Practical and Ritual Dimension:

What the adherents of a religion do as part of that religion

- a. Prayer:** private and solitary moments of quiet reflection on God; noisy, group singing and chanting; fully prostrate, while prayer is conducted by a priest; kneeling down, reciting memorized prayers bowing down repeatedly in direction of Mecca, chanting from the Holy Qur'an
- b. Asceticism:** severe self-discipline, renouncing pleasure; desert fathers and martyrdom, yoga and world-renunciation (thorns); Self-mortification:** flagellation, hair shirts - still the senses; snake handling and drinking poisons in the Appalachians
- c. Possession:** hook hanging, fire walking, possession by demons, gods; speaking in tongues glossalalia): Pentecostal, divine language
- d. Modes of dress:** Muslim women and the purdah; Muslim man who dies his beard red after pilgrimage to Mecca; novitiate in a monastic order shaves head (tonsure)
- e. Pilgrimage:** to Mecca to circle round the shrine (Ka'bah), kiss the stone; holy temples in the Himalayas
- f. Ritual:** prescribed patterned action in a religious tradition.
 - i. Sacrifice:** ritual death in which a sacrificial victim is offered to god as part of a reciprocal relationship between god and human beings. Aboriginal: life force of victim released. Aztec human sacrifice; Hindu - buffalo sacrifice; Hebrew bible - Abraham and Isaac. Christian: Death of Christ, sacrificial lamb, commemoration in communion