

Religion

Religion, as the Latin of the term suggests, means what binds us to God. Religion, in other words, is an action or set of behaviors which draw us to the divine. That 'set of behaviors,' if one interprets it a little loosely, is to be found in all cultures—these remarks are, of course extremely generalized and rough--thus can be viewed as part of the traits that make man human.

How is this 'binds us to god' achieved? Religions characteristically employ a variety of means to ensure that their followers will enjoy the benefit of adhering to them. A fertile and successful religion is likely to operate in a standard building—a church, mosque, or temple of some sort. Some kind of ritual tends to be foremost in the activity within that structure, and the ritual will be repeated at regular intervals. Such repetitive action will be fitted into a memorial service, which holds up for the worshippers' minds the recollection of a sacred event or spiritual action the memory of which helps the worshipper to approach some kind of knowledge of the creator, god. It will normally be the case, in the construction of a religion, that some kind of prayer system assumes a central role, serving as the text of a long running dialogue with the God to whom the religion is addressed.

It will customarily be the case, that a religion will correspond to its followers' interests and desires. The major religions are those in which the largest variety of needs are met, and in which the widest range of benefits will occur. There are religions that promise their worshippers peace and everlasting life, as there are religions which offer their worshippers altered states of consciousness, like some peyote induced religions inside Native American culture.