

**RITUAL AND ANTHROPOLOGY****\*Dr. Mohammad Mosa Foqara**

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**Abstract**

Ritual is a type of behavior that has a symbolic character, in which religious rituals and practices are reflected and sometimes expressed in the context of customs and traditions in social traditions. The forms of rituals also differ according to religions, beliefs and cultures of peoples, as the culture of each society is what determines the rituals of this society to promote a social phenomenon. Or historical or to establish a legendary event or religious belief, just as rituals work to revive the distant past so that it becomes the present. Most rituals are practiced in religious and magical acts and in practices imposed by customs and traditions. To know the nature of rituals and their interpretations, several trends prevailed, including the historical trend whose works appeared at the hands of some great anthropologists such as Durkheim, Fraser, Smith and others.

**Keywords:** Ritual, Symbol, The dignity of saints, Shrines, The cross, The Christian religion.

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**INTRODUCTION**

All peoples have rituals, which represent a special type of observable behavior, which can be viewed as a way to describe or identify a person. Man may be defined as a rational being, or an economic or political being, and he may also be viewed as a ritual being. The Arabs have been known since ancient times to sanctify places, beings, and even people. They used them to help them fulfill their needs, considering them sacred things with divine powers. This belief still prevails to this day, represented by the sanctification of saints, where the life of the saint is renewed in the imagination of individuals and groups, by holding celebrations. Popularity and the practice of rites, rituals and symbols, out of admiration and awe of him at the same time, because of the spiritual authority this saint represents. This authority, which directed their behavior and produced values and standards, became popular heritage rules. Wearing special clothes, offering sacrifices, offerings, dancing, and other practices and rituals are all symbolic examples that do not have the quality of holiness in themselves, unless they intersect with the emotional, emotional, and mental state in which individuals are on the one hand, and the social and cultural framework in which these rituals are practiced. Ritual is a type of behavior, which we can rely on to understand the essence of this human being, and therefore the nature of society, just like language, which is a symbolic system based on established laws, and therefore rituals can be viewed as a symbolic system of actions. It is possible to explain the behavior of rituals by referring to the complex relationship that exists between ritual and language.

**Objective of the Article**

**First:** Enriching the field of scientific research on the topic of "Rituals and Anthropology" in the midst of the topic of anthropology.

**Second:** Access to theoretical concepts in the social and anthropological sciences, such as religious sociology, symbolic anthropology, and social anthropology.

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**The Significance of the Article**

This article seeks to delve into knowledge of the phenomenon of rituals and its relationship to anthropology, through its social and psychological dimensions for humans, through their practice of many religious and popular rituals.

**DEFINITION OF RITUAL**

Language: It was stated in the book (Muhit al-Muhit, by Al-Bustani Boutros): "Ritual is used by Christians to refer to the rituals and celebrations of the religion, and it is a word similar to the word (thexis) in Greek, which means order and arrangement. The plural of the word ritual is ritual (Al-Bustani 1987). It also means the path, and it is predominantly religious, as it means order, arrangement, and performing rituals. As for the terminology: it is a word derived from the Greek word (rituals), and it means the customs and traditions of a particular society, and it also means the types of celebrations that call for beliefs that are outside the empirical framework (Tawalabi, 1986). The scientist Leach believes that rituals: "are a type of social behavior that has a symbolic character, reflected in religious rituals and practices and sometimes expressed in the context of social customs and traditions (Farhat, 1986). The ritual also means a group of repeated and coded actions (Codifie's), taking various forms, kinetic and oral, full of symbols, and based on beliefs in the existence of influential sacred forces. Through these rituals, the individual and the group attempt to communicate with these forces. The ritual, as Ahmed Bayoumi defines it, is: "the scientific expression of the religious experience or the person's complete response to the supreme truth that takes the form of action, and we must view the practice as an action that takes place in a place and time and in a content that may be shaped by different circumstances" (Bayoumi, 1999). The ritual does not mean religion, but rather it is an expressive means and an act known to society to express the relationship that exists between a person and what he believes, and it is also an expression of repeated behavior linked to belief, taking a second form in performance to achieve the desired effect.

## Ritual and Anthropology

Ritual differs from one society to another depending on religions, beliefs and cultures. The culture of each society is what determines the rituals of this society, and then culture becomes a title for highlighting its behavior and practices with the strength of belief that the ritual imposes on its practitioners (Dernon, 2009). The purpose of these ritual practices is to strengthen, reinforce, and preserve beliefs and their past. They strive to confirm a social phenomenon or a historical or legendary event and revive a mysterious past that becomes present again in a few days, as the celebrants emerge from their earthly time and live in the first sacred time. If earthly time is linear time that moves from the past to the future through the present in an irreversible way. Sacred time is a reverse time that can be restored and experienced through ritual. It is a kind of eternal present that a person can enter in order to return to what happened in the beginnings and use the power of the past to renew the present. The ritual has no meaning except within a religious framework. Likewise, it cannot have the character of realism if it does not contain within it something characterized by holiness (Al-Kharaiji, 1990). For example, visiting the shrines of saints is a ritual passed down through generations, practiced to reinforce the belief represented in the dignity of saints.

Rituals, as defined by social anthropologists, are a group of repetitive behavioral movements, agreed upon by the members of society, and of different types and forms, commensurate with the goal that prompted the social actor or group to carry out them. Anthropologists also believe that the term ritual takes several different uses, some of which emphasize the symbolic nature of rituals, and some of which define rituals on the basis of the relationship between the means and the end that lies in social behavior and is known among specialists, including sociologists and anthropologists, that most rituals are practiced in actions. Magical and religious, and in other types of practices imposed by the social customs and traditions prevailing in society.

The scholar Douglas says: "Rituals take the place of religion in most anthropological literature, as long as what is meant by them are symbolic actions associated with sacred things and beings of primitive peoples" (Al-Kharaiji, 1990). However, R. Brown in his anthropological writings refrains from using the terms magic and religion, as J. Frazer used them. He also avoids using the terms sacred and profane, as E. Durkheim used them, and uses instead of these terms the term ritual values, which was used for the first time in anthropology, and his hypothesis about rituals states that the basic rule of rituals is the application of ritual values to things, incidents, and occasions that can be considered as goals. The same common interests that link the members of one society or symbolically represent all the things that are based on the influence of symbolic behavior of various types. As for the Scottish anthropologist William Robertson Smith, he believes that religious rituals are things that express opinions, which can be transferred from one individual to another and from time to time without causing any change in them. Likewise, all opinions that do not fall within the framework of superstition or biased belief can be expressed through ritual practices. The scholar Leach believes that religious rituals and practices clarify the frameworks of the social structure, as they determine patterns of harmonious social relations between individuals and groups (Farhat, 1986). The anthropologist

Coody analyzed rituals by studying the relationship between the means and the goal of social action. He says: "Rituals are a type of behavior with parallel standards and in which the relationship between the means and its goal is not essential. That is, the relationship between the means and the goal of ritual behavior is an illogical relationship." And no mentality." Ritual behavior is represented by the magical event, customs, traditions, and social norms expressed through behavioral symbols.

### The nature of the rituals:

Several approaches have prevailed to know the nature of rituals and explain them:

#### First - the historical origin of the ritual:

This approach relies on the primary source, through the theory of the historical origin of rituals, as is the case with religions. Success in explaining the global dimension of rituals depends on the possibility of identifying the oldest cultures and beliefs. Scientists believe that if they are able to reveal the origin, they will be able to explain contemporary rituals. Among the people, William Robertson Smith believes that: "The origin of ritual lies in totemic worship, and then Totemism became considered by many researchers to be the early stage of religion and rituals". In the opinion of anthropologists, totemic rituals enhance social and tribal solidarity.

#### The second approach: the functional direction of rituals.

In it, anthropologists moved to emphasize empirical (field) data that are collected through actual observation, and the functional dimension became an essential element that the second approach focused on, which indicates that the nature of weather must be defined in terms of its functional role in society. Hence, the goal of functional theory is to try to explain ritual behavior in terms of collective needs and social balance. This gives weather value as an adaptive response to the social and natural environment. We find that many prominent anthropologists have adopted this approach, such as: Malinowski, Radcliffe, Pritchard, and Edmund, as a functional approach to the study and interpretation of rituals.

#### The Third approach: the religious direction of rituals

This approach revolves around historians' studies of religion, and those who follow this dimension agreed with the two functionalists that theories are useless for explaining rituals. They also rejected functional theory as an appropriate explanation for interpreting rituals, adhering to their opinion that ritual behavior means or expresses the sacred world.

## RITUALS AND RELIGION

Religion is based on three basic elements, according to Firas Al-Sawah: myth, belief, and ritual. We cannot recognize the religious phenomenon in its societal manifestation without getting to know it collectively and cooperatively (Al-Sawah, 1994). Man has striven himself since ancient times to know the truth of this universe around him, and he tried to control nature and subject it to his desires, but nature was waiting for him in many cases, so he surrendered to belief in unseen, compelling and supernatural forces behind the natural appearances around him, manifested, according to his belief, in things that he could

Perceiving it with his senses like stone, fire, and lightning... So he tried to appease her, get close to her, and woo her, and from here religion appeared and developed until it reached two stages: a doctrinal stage, which relies on myth as a means of knowledge and understanding, and a ritual stage whose goal is to appease the gods (Al-Sawah, 1994). Ritual engages in social life with the emergence of circumstances that call for it to be repeated. It also aims to perform the task of coming up with a result by manipulating some practices to attract minds and make them believe in it before thinking about analyzing its meanings. Ritual also differs from those demonstrations that have symbolic energy, which are holidays, occasions, and celebrations. All customs that have an individual and collective character.

If the Ritual is included within these demonstrations, it generally constitutes its maximum moment, around which the entire ceremonial spread is organized, which can be called a ritual event. The Ritual never comes into contact with the circle of the religious field, but it is this circle that touches it and remains attached to it, because it appears through it and possesses the exclusivity of its activation (Pont2006:631), and from here arose the religious rituals that society began to celebrate during certain seasons. Some believe that ritual is an emotional state associated with myth, which may require performing behaviors that restore the human soul to a state of balance, such as dancing, rituals, and chanting. Others see them as stereotypical procedures consisting of actions and symbols, sometimes with a past dimension, and they can be divided into taboo rituals and celebratory rituals, according to what Marcel Mauss stated (Lazraq. 2011).

The Ritual and the Symbol:

Symbol: Geertz asserts: "Human behavior is symbolic behavior and has meaning for the doer of the behavior" (Abbas 1992:7), and it represents a reference to an idea, and the essence of the idea is embodied in the form of a body or a tangible form, representing a simile. For example, the cross symbolizes the Christian religion, so this The symbol did not originate with the emergence of Christianity and was not included in the symbols of early Christianity. The first to make it a symbol of Christianity was Constantine, who claimed to have seen it in a dream.

The cross had a status among sunflowers in the Roman Empire, as a symbol of life, just as it is now among Christians. The cross remained an eternal sign and symbol of the idea of crucifixion and an embodiment of Christ's torment for mankind. Islam also considers the crescent a sign and symbol of the Islamic religion.

Durkheim says: "The relationship between sacred things is a symbolic relationship, not an innate or natural relationship, and that without symbols, religious feelings (rituals) are vulnerable to weakness and disappearance, and that social life, in all its manifestations and at every moment of its history, needs this broad symbolism in order to continue in its existence." Existence (Syring.1992). The religious symbol has forms and images through which it expresses its religious inclination. The source of the symbol is the material world close to the senses and the life circumstances that the individual feels from himself and from others, that is, from the emotions, actions, and values (Zidan. 1991).

The feeling of communication between a person and his sanctity, whether it is a god or something else, is only achieved through establishing a relationship between them through an act or behavior such as a ritual (Bayoumi, 1999). Rituals are the scientific and procedural expression of religious tendency, or they are a response to an invisible truth in the form of (sacred) actions on the part of the group (Bayoumi, 1999). We must view the practice as an action that takes place in a place and time, and this action carries a content that is shaped by different circumstances.

## Conclusion

Man may be described as a rational being, an economic being, or a social being, and he can also be viewed as a ritual being. Rituals are a type of behavior that has a symbolic quality, in which rituals and religious practices are reflected and sometimes expressed in the context of customs and traditions (Farhat1986:51), as the forms of rituals differ in different religions, beliefs and cultures of peoples, as the culture of each society determines the rituals of this society, to enhance a social or historical phenomenon or to consolidate a mythical event or a religious belief. Rituals also work to revive the distant past so that it becomes present again and powerfully in a day or a few days, as rituals become a media means that expresses the types of events and social behavior, and rituals have no meaning except in a religious context. Like visiting sanctities, shrines, shrines, and dignity for saints.

## RESULTS

From a social perspective, the phenomenon of rituals leads to people being more socially integrated into society. From a religious standpoint, practicing rituals strengthens the relationship with the sacred, shrines, and shrines of righteous saints, and practicing rituals strengthens popular folklore within society.

## Recommendations and Suggestions

Increasing centers specialized in the subject of rituals, to raise the aspirations of community members to preserve and practice folklore and rituals.

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