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**Reciprocity of Mythology and Literature: A Retrospective study of the Genesis,
Development and usages of Myth in Literature and vice versa**

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The entire question of man's association with civilization has always engaged a position of dominance in the novel too. An enormous epic can be inscribed on a rock or written on a cloud or wind, but a few immense novels spotlight exclusively on man's relation with usual forces. The main concern of a novel is unavoidably with the incidental reality, the very web and texture of civilization as it exists or as it used to exist. Almost all the great European, English, and even American scholars are methodically engrossed by man's place in the social web and his efforts to refuse or be incorporated by it. Starting with Richardson's *Pamela*, for instance, and Fielding's *Tom Jones*, to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, Faulkner's *Absalom* and Saul Bellow's *Herzog* - all are associated with the particulars of personal and social associations.

The growth of the form of novel in England corresponded with the rise of the middle classes and the broad stirring of the public to civic issues. Democratization and secularization of society-the two arrangements that had been gradually taking root in the admired mind-tended to focus attention on the troubles of men in their routine social survival. It is not the most complex to comprehend why F.R. Leavis should have situated the great custom of the English novel to lie in social realism, the realism of George Eliot, for example, of man defining himself through social associations. E.M. Forster, for example, was not overstating when he stated that the theme of all his novels was the troubles of connections: "only connect." Two centuries of the regal adventure in India have made the trouble of connection mainly relevant between the western cultured elite and the great loads of people, most of whom live obscure, quiet and tradition-bound lives in country India. Traditionally, ours is one of the oldest incessant cultures with mores and values slowly crystallized through time. Consequently, the tribulations faced by individuals in their affairs with others are bound to be prejudiced by the subtle and complex Indian scene altering unnoticeably almost against its will. Democratization, industrialization and modernization have worsened the disagreement between persons. The attack of westernization and reconstruction and its consequences have augmented the yawning gulf between the elite and the vast mainstream in India. It is this altering India that is the backdrop for the works of these three novelists.

Females' stipulation is no better in today's civilization. They have undergone a lot right from the beginning of world civilizations. Let us converse for a moment their struggle for self-identity. The history of the human race starts with the woman since woman carried the Original human genetic material as she does to this day. Hitherto for generation the historians have always considered 'Man' as the star whereas in reality the woman was silently getting on with the task of securing a future for humanity-for it was her labor, her



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skill, her biology that held the key to the fortune of the entire race.

The prototype of a traditional woman was deeply occupied from dawn to dusk. Her chief responsibility was food-gathering and this occupation kept the clan alive. At no juncture in the past did women, with or devoid of the kids, relies on their chasing mates for food. Mass evidence also shows that the earliest families consisted of females and their children since all tribal hunting societies were centred on and organised through the mother. The young males either left or were driven out, while the females stayed close to their mothers.

The Chief Priest of Sumeria, sung a first hymn in the praise of the God in around 2300 B.C. It was the world's first known poem but what is important is this that this first known poem to claim the consideration of the world was written by a woman. Coincidentally, the first known priest was also a woman. From the very initial stage, as humankind emerged from the darkness of prehistory, God was a woman. Though, later ages rejected accounts of Goddess worship as "myths" or "cult." Women were the Goddesses on the earth, who held power, to which man customarily delayed. A man only became a king when he is engaged to the source of power; he did not have power within, he had to invoke it from a woman. It is recorded in the history that in the 18th dynasty of the Egyptian monarchy, the Pharaoh Thutmose-I had to give way the throne to on the death of his wife to Hatshe-put, his teenage daughter, even when he had two sons. Such custom of royal blood and the right to rule descending in the female line occurs in many cultures. These are called cultural myths and they are corner stones of any civilization. The entire ethnicity rests on it. Every great civilization has some profound myths, on the basis of which the entire race of any given culture derives the meanings of their activities.

Woman used to be a symbol of wealth and fame. In Sparta, in ancient Greece, the women owned equal land as the men did. Arab women possessed flocks which their husbands merely pastured for them. In Egypt, a man's financial independence of her husband was such that if he borrows money from her, she can even charge him interest. Marriage rules, respected women's rights as individuals, and honored them as associates. In Babylon, if a man dishonored his wife, she could bring in an action for legal separation from him on the grounds of spitefulness. Diodorus, the Greek historian, mentioned an Egyptian marriage contract in which the husband vowed his wife to be:

"I bow before your rights as wife. From this day on, I shall never oppose your claims with a single word. I recognize you before all others as my wife, though I do not have the right to say you must be mine, and only I am husband and mate. You alone have the right of departure... I cannot oppose your wish wherever you



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desire to go, I give you... (here follows an index of the bridegroom's possessions).”

The myth is the foundation of any civilization; it is the timeless blueprint, the moral formula into which life flows when it replicates its traits out of the comatose. Thomas Mann, one of the scholars on mythology, emphasizes the transcendental and everlasting trait of myth. Mann looks at myth as an inevitable reference to which a man turns to, when in need of a scheme to universalize his individual predicament. The author taken up for study, Arun Joshi, has made use of myths in his novels to universalize their private experiences. The study aims at the pressure of myths in the lives of the author and his works. The use of myth by the contemporary novelists has led to a novel type of criticism, namely myth criticism. Myth criticism studies the works of literature based on the myths used by the writers. This exclusive approach of critical analysis has given rise to a need of sympathetic the concept ‘Myth’ in relation to man’s life. “I know very well what it is provided that nobody asks me, but if, I am asked and try to explain I am baffled,” said St. Augustine when he was requested to define the time. It is the same predicament of anyone attempting to define myth. Myth is like ‘Time’, something effectively felt but yet hard to put into words. Myth has an insubstantial omnipresence with a propensity of manifesting itself physical in man’s everyday life in the form of rituals, dreams, customs, religious beliefs and to name a few. It has a variety of facets for a range of purposes and thus various definitions are made to approve the given context. A single inclusive definition of myth cannot even be thought of. Every fact is distinctive and realistic to the point of tangibility to the perceiver who deliberately or sub-consciously accepts it or inverts it. One could say that no human being is beyond the influence or beyond the pale of myth.

Myth controls and figures not only the individual consciousness but also the whole cultural aspect of a people. Myth in fact associates the people of a community or nation together with a set of symbols. These representative symbols form the epitome and help in unification of people taking them on. Consequently, Myths have not only become the rudiments of culture but projections of subconscious urges and prototypes. It is something whose presence, though recognized by man, is not completely intelligible to him. A stratagem to man, myth confirms itself to be twofold edged, difficult to deny and hard to define, thus establishing itself a challenge to man’s wisdom as rightly written by Ruthven, “Seemingly immune to rational explanation myths nevertheless stimulate rational inquiry.”

The mysterious and unmanageable part of man’s mind declines to accept anything in a docile manner and tends to indenture myth in comprehensible terms and words. Man’s longing for power and his arrogance in his intellect try in vain to elucidate myth with various backgrounds. The philosopher, the Philologist, the



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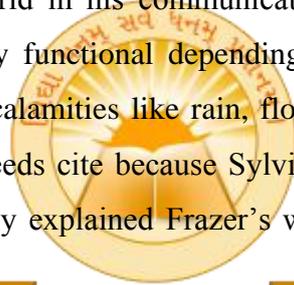
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Psychologist, the Atheist, the Anthropologist, the Sociologist and the Linguist all try to explicate the idea of Myth. Such intellectuals from different fields attempt an interpretation of Myth focusing their standpoint on their individual fields of scholarship, thus giving myth a kaleidoscopic character. A purview of the liberally obtainable and accessible definitions of Myth helps us to list the subsequent as being mostly accepted by the respective scholars of the declared fields.

Frazer's name situates at the summit of explanation of Myth. With the publication of his *The Golden Bough*, (1890), Frazer has awakened the world awareness into a new standpoint, which, until now was only anticipated. Frazer's masterwork not only influenced Anthropology but also transported about a new approach in literary criticism, which is of vast significance to the students of literature. A work of enormous scholarship, it is genuine with loads of descriptive material from anthropology and folklore, highlighting the social and sacred significance of the customs of diverse people. He has endeavored a structural approach highlighting resemblances and parallels in different cultures, thus carrying into limelight the fact that the working of man's mind all over the world in his communication with the weird and the mysterious is similar, while the dissimilarities are only functional depending upon environmental/geographical, cyclic separation of seasons, degree of natural calamities like rain, floods, lightning, earthquakes, fertility of the land and its people etc. Frazer's name needs cite because Sylvia Plath, the American poet reproduces his influence on her works. Malinowski justly explained Frazer's work as the "greatest scientific Odyssey in modern humanism."



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Frazer says there are three ages of man, "an age of magic, an age of religion and an age of science, the last one just beginning." This explanation provides a schema for the study of myth beginning from its beginning and its fela lion to magic, religion and science. Frazer has put an end to the belief that Myth is about prehistoric and savage people only. *The Golden Bough* to Northrope Frye "is not really about what people did in the remote and savage past; it is about what the human imagination does when it tries to express itself about the greatest mysteries, the mysteries of life and death and after life." Frazer's point of view runs equivalent to the Vedic point of view.

The Vedas are thought the mythological books of the Hindus and Sri. Aurobindo declares, "They are not the work of rude, barbarous and primitive craftsman, but the living breath of a Supreme and conscious art, forming its creations in the puissant but well governed movement of a self-observing inspiration."

The expression 'Primitive Savage' with context to the ancient men who shaped the myths needs to be used with caution. The expression seems extremely prejudiced when one considers the modem world where



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devastation has become the way of life. If they seem 'primitive savages' to the contemporary mind, the vice-versa too cannot be discarded. The prehistoric man was the pioneer who recorded met with the universe, and he knew that his information was invaluable. It was his cleverness that made him formulate the myths, which are authenticities, but indirect in allegory and exemplified through symbols. The capacity of man to reach the reality is in amount to his power of imagination.

That, perhaps, is one reason why poets narrate myths, because both are based on mind's eye. The Vedas, the Upanishads, Aranyakas etc., are exceptional examples of stories of mythology veiled in allegories and illustrated through symbols. Every essential force, natural object, natural phenomenon has a story behind it, and these books record them. Gerald A. Larue wondering on the origin of myth writes, "Somewhere in the forgotten past, perhaps of uncanny or mysterious encounters mythic patterns began to emerge as one answer to the need of psychic survival." The normal forces, which concerned the primitive man, were many- especially, the natural calamities occurred. He was in need of explanation for his survival and the experience he acquired through his encounters with these forces patent in the form of myths. Thus the myths became defense mechanisms for his survival. Myths gave purpose to his otherwise purposeless world. Man being a creature of system and association, had to fit in the unknown and unmanageable into a slot, which suited his pattern of life and myths helped him by defining his situation in the universe in relation to his natural background.

In creating a prearranged surrounding he began to give 'Order and structure to the world.' Survival being the privilege, for the prehistoric man, he had to follow and implement the order discovered through life experiences. He had to preserve the design or delusion of safety to ensure the continuity of life. Myths assisted him in sustaining and enforcing the existing social and moral values helpful for his survival and this was possible only through some kind of cerebral submission. Malinowski in his act of defining of myth highlights the above fact that myth to the prehistoric man "was not just idle rhapsody, not an aimless out pouring of vain imagining but a hard - working extremely important cultural force."

Myths were rational blueprint to the prehistoric man; they were not fabrication of imagination. The prehistoric man in his serious desire to express his knowledge and beliefs put them in the form of rituals, as Malinowski rightly says it, "Myth is a narrative resurrection of primeval reality." The myths hold in them the supernatural or uncanny experience of the prehistoric man. They disclose the concealed meanings to the modern man when he starts to understand them. When the above mentioned definitions are considered, one could securely endorse Francis Ferguson's vision that myth stands for the "deepest wisdom in man." The



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prehistoric man though uneducated and devoid of any information, had thrived in surviving the calamities through the use of his way of thinking capability. The Encyclopedia Britannica also defines Myth. It gives an almost inclusive definition of myth as having created for the fulfillment of a variety of requirements of the prehistoric man. At the same time it also provides an essence of all the varied available definitions corresponding to singular aspects of myth. It efforts an understanding of myth with its multidimensional purposes as follows:

“Myth is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest but a narrative resurrection of primeval reality told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions even practical requirements. Myth fulfills in primitive culture an indispensable function, it expresses, ‘enhances and codifies belief, it safeguards and enforces morality. It vouches for the efficiency of rituals and contains practical rules for the guidance of man.”

After accounting a variety of definitions concerning the origin of myth and its use to the prehistoric man, one needs to see its social convenience. Warner’s explanation with reference to myth and society is as following:

“Myths offer a lens which can be used to see human identity in its social and cultural context - they can lock us up in stock reactions, bigotry and fear, but they're not immutable, and by unpicking them, the stories can lead to others. Myths convey values and expectations which are always evolving, in the process of being formed, but - and this is fortunate - never set so hard they cannot be changed again.”

This is a hint that the major purpose behind the origin of myth was ‘explanation’, clarification elastic enough to adapt any situation even when it arose suddenly. At this point, one notices the aptitude of prehistoric savage who, had to direct an actively practical life harassed with a multitude of difficulties, and had to be practical in his outlook. He had to be ever ready for emergencies in his life, as Malinowski says, “Mythology the sacred lore of the tribe, is as we shall see, a powerful means of assisting primitive man, of allowing him to make the two ends of his cultural patrimony meet.” A glimpse at the above description, leads to the termination regarding the origin of myth by its helpfulness to man in the formation of societies.

Durkheim in *The Consciousness of Myth* writes that “the function of myths is to bind a society, create a structure governed by rules and habits.” Mark Schorer also describes its proportional basis when he writes, “Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life of a primary awareness of man in the Universe, of many configurations upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend.” As



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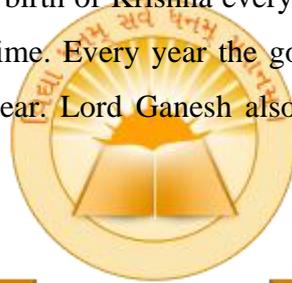
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myths were insensible responses to external motivation; they lean to stay as remainders in the collective comatose, forming the very groundwork of life. They stay as a strong inspiring force in the mainstream awareness and shape man's reactions to the activities around him. Consequently, people react to them even when their technical knowledge and reason oppose them as illogical and paranormal. Myths continue to be residues in the subconscious not only of the individual but also in the community or nation, thus determining their characteristics.

Myths are, thus, persuaded with a sense of vitality, being the essential components of human civilization, serving in conception and maintenance of codes of conviction, faith in rituals and doctrine of morality exhibited in religious faith, cultural behavior and communal attitudes. It would not be an overstatement to say that the essence of a society is myth. Any intercultural study or comparative analysis becomes a contrast of mythological rudiments, as myths persuade the whole viewpoint of man depending on his inheritance. The Church emphasized religious myths via re-enacting the birth of Christ, his revivification etc. In Hinduism too, one has the festivity of the birth of Krishna every year. Festival of Durga, in Calcutta comes every year. It follows cyclical nature of time. Every year the goddesses come and are submerged into the water anticipating their return the next year. Lord Ganesh also comes back every year. Thus myths and festivals are supplement to one another.



Myth and the Supernatural

Frazer talks of the age of magic, when the prehistoric man understands the recurring order of usual happenings. Through the minute surveillance and continuous meet with the natural forces he experiential the cause and effect scheme existing in the universe around him. The prehistoric man's mind, which had trained him, the art of survival for extra mile his capability of survival with the novelty of magic. The age of magic thus became the first phase representing man's intellectual development. Frazer note, "Just as there has been an Age of Stone on the physical level so on the intellectual side there has everywhere been an age of magic." Frazer has completed a widespread study on the types of magic found in the world. Sympathetic Magic, and Homeopathic Magic are originated to be the most influential. Magic came into derivation when the prehistoric man derivative the natural occurrence using esoteric words to induce fear in his fellowmen. Though magic has lost its original position in manipulating people it has not become vanished.

The notion of sympathetic magic has shown it too strong to be ingrained out. Occasionally a piece of the cloth damaged by the person to be shattered or a lock of his hair is used with the faith that anything that contributes to the whole becomes the whole and is used to damage or obliterate the real person. The simple



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clarification being that if the images suffer so will the man. Adopting the rule of performer, Sylvia Plath one of the celebrated poets being analyzed here discarded the religion, which failed her. Sylvia Plath shattered herself in order to annihilate her husband as she took him to be her counter-part prejudiced by Frazer's concept of sympathetic magic. Sylvia's method is hardly shocking, when it is an ordinary sight in today's so called world of science, to see models of people overcooked to show wrath against an evil or superfluous person. The magic concealed in the inmost psyche of man explodes sometimes in tremendously absurd manners. The annihilation of evil by building images of these deities, who cause suffering, too is not untried even in today's society both in the West and the East. It only highlighted the fact that, the prehistoric nature of man has not been totally rubbed out. It leaves inundated to erupt with unexpected force at the most random time, in the most random manner.

Myth and Creed

The evolution from myth to creed was both normal and predictable. The religious priests transformed the supernatural power into creed. The authorities were credited to God. As priests were the peacekeepers between God and man, they turned out to be sort of demi-gods, exercised great power in the society. Throughout religion the myths are imposed in society, instilling a sense of fear concerning social behavior. Jung defines religion as "a peculiar attitude of the mind which could be formulated in accordance with the original use of the word 'religia', which means a careful consideration and observations of certain dynamic factors that are conceived as 'Powers/ 'Spirits/ 'Dreams/ 'Gods/ 'Laws/ 'Ideals' or whatever name man has given to such factors in his world as he has found powerful, dangerous or helpful enough to be taken into careful consideration or ground, beautiful and meaningful enough to be devoutly worshipped and loved." Jung explains man's propensity of distinguishing the forces, powers and notion outside him and classify them into defensive and dangerous. For Frazer, religion has two rudiments a theoretical constituent and a practical constituent namely, a faith in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate them. Faith stands on a higher plane, as it comes on the first place, as only faith or trust in a better being leads to propitiation of the same.

Thus belief leads to performance, which becomes religion. St. James writes, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone," Action throughout love or fear of God becomes faith. Up till now, there lay a bare difference among religious beliefs and rituals. Religion requirements not essentially manifest it in sacrament. The chief objective of religion is propitiation of deity. It can be done through aid, mercy, purity and not unavoidably through prayers and sacrifices. This idea is exemplified in Frazer's writing. He is closer



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to the Hindu and the Christian attitude of religion where the heavenly can be satisfied through service of the poor, honesty, normal living and noble thoughts etc. Religious myths in order to inspire man into performing right deed created the concept of ecstasy, heaven and hell. The myths all over the world have stood for paradise. The mind ragged between magic and religion was assured respite through the concept of paradise, explained in glorious terms. A promise of tranquility and harmony, where, fear and nervousness did not exist. Myths of heaven show the closeness of the prehistoric man with nature.

The belief subsisted that one could reach heaven by mountaineering a tree. It was a state of ecstasy and was shattered by the fall of Adam. The association of man and God was mutual, Gods came down and human beings went up, it was like reciprocal relationship. Religion made use of God, paradise and torture to ensure conformity through assure of everlasting ecstasy and fear of everlasting suffering. Heaven was made gorgeous through promise of freedom from earthly anguish. Hell was made terrifying through images of dreadful sentences. Even with the aid of myths, religion could not do anything about the mortal body. Just as mythology shaped religion, religion has fashioned myths. The Hindu, the Greek, the Islamic, the Chinese, the Christian religions have a whole amount of myths woven around them to strengthen existing faiths.

The result of the requirement of the life of after death led the humanizing of mythological characters, which are celebrated as worthy of worshipful location in religion. Heroes were sacred and Gods were civilized. Ghost and forebear worship and typical notions with 'numinous quality' have been the demonstration of this religious knowledge. The thought was to create in man an awareness of the heavenly potential in him and to make him struggle for its achievement. It was self-realization and the self, as a entirety is beyond words and impossible to differentiate from a God image as man is measured as a part of the God. Self-realization, in spiritual or metaphysical terms, thus, amounts to God realization. Man's realization of his location in relation to the cosmos becomes the goal of his life 'Sakshatkara'. The dissimilarity between Myth and Religion is that, the former is intensely alive, and creates the figures and incidents of mythology seem almost real, forever lingering the mind of the man and occasionally appearing more powerful and real than the people of modern world. It is religion which keeps the myth breathing through rites, magical practices, dogmas etc.

In order to astonish the powers of divinity, Gods are gifted with extra human power and they perform miracles for instance, 'Christ walks on Water', and 'Krishna lifting and balancing mount Govardhan on his little finger.' Priests, as the custodian of religion, are competent of performing some of these wonders. Whereas hell on the other hand induces fear. The souls are explained as being tormented in hell. If heaven's



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position was explained as a place on top of earth, the location of hell was explained as beneath the earth. Heaven is full of glow and hell full of gloom. Priests were aware of the fact that they could not be too severe in the appliance of religious norms; consequently, they assured a salvation through God. Christ's fall into hell in order to save the tormented souls is both a myth and an epitome in the Harrowing of Hell.

Lucifer rules over hell in contrast to God who is the king of the heaven in Christianity and 'Yama' rules 'Naraka' or hell, the Eastern notion of Hell and 'Indra' reigns Lord in 'Swarga' or Heaven. The concept of heaven, hell, Lucifer and god require mentioning as Sylvia Plath refers to them as creature of a male world. The mythical forbidden are rehabilitated into religious precepts and social norms by the priests to control social behavior and curb libidinal urges. Ceremonial of these norms, are compulsory through fear of hell. The reading of myth and its relation to religion becomes essential to sympathetic of the author. He holds religion responsible for their sufferings. Religion has the supernatural excellence of delving deep into the psyche of man. This harmony of myth and religion begins from a positive reaction against fears persuaded by the intellect. Man's progress from the primitive to modern has brought about a change in his way of thinking, wherein emotion has taken a back seat. Intelligence, which dominates, creates a sense of fear concerning certain predictable concepts like death and estranges man from nature. Myth through faith fortifies the emotional side of man and becomes a protection mechanism against the predictability of death.

Myth is the powerful force behind religious observances. Its constituent of dynamism is obvious in the great proselytizing movements, religious war and trials, in heresy of witch hunts, and in the innovative efforts which caused man to build vast graves and places of worship filled with every kind of treasure. Due to the volatile characteristics of myth, the meaning of the myth, which becomes the governing force behind religious precepts, is straight colored by the mind that interprets it. Great myths become pedestal and offensive due to the restricted and narrow vision of the interpreter e.g., Krishna's ardent adventures with the Gopis. A figurative design of the souls longing for the highest soul is explained as a solely sexual encounter. Although there are guidelines to understand myths, they are not fool proof. To sum up, one can say that the dissimilarity between the priest and magician is that the, later one never doubts that the same causes will always create the same results, that the performance of proper ceremony, escorted by the suitable spell, will inescapably be attended by the preferred result, unless his chants are thwarted or blocked by other more potent charms.

He announces dominion over the nature, but that is not limitless. His power comes through scheming of certain forces, through presentation of skillful rites. The magician speaks of his power over Gods and creates



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them bow to his whims and imaginations. However, he treats the universal forces as unconscious and impersonal. Religion on the other hand is not calculating or gaining of power. It is about “propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.”

The priest treats the widespread forces as mindful and personal and therefore, pleases them and pursues them to fulfill his wishes with the help of ‘mantras’. While referring to the Hindu mythology, one finds that ‘mantras’ are more powerful than God as seen when the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are proscribed through mantras by the sages. Religion guided to convinced forms of behavior, which are now found as rites and ceremony. Convinced occurrences with or without historical backgrounds are ratified, bringing the past into the present. Religion works as a connection between the past and the present. In religious ceremony, it is required to narrate the origin of the ceremony before the main observance is demeanor. This system links the modern with the past and makes the man a sustained product of the past. It gives him a sense of being organic. The Hindu sacred ceremonies, where narration, take place ends with the word ‘Phalashruti,’ meaning the result of paying attention to the narration.



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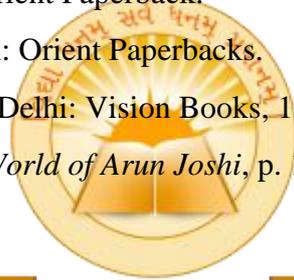
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