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SEMIOSIS OF LITURGICAL RITUAL
AS A MANIFESTATION OF SYNERGY

The spiritual development of believers does not commence with cognitive conceptualization of faith objects, but rather through ritualistic foundations that systematically facilitate the internalization of faith concepts within the prepared consciousness. Consequently, to comprehend the epistemological and integrative functions of ritual, analysis must begin with its empirical application.

The synergistic efficacy of ritual in worship contexts cannot be overstated. A thorough examination of ritual's sacred dimensions is prerequisite to understanding this

synergy, without which the ontological transition from profane (secular) temporality and spatiality to sacred liturgical dimensions remains unattainable.

A common misconception regarding religious ritual posits that it merely symbolizes mystical experience or transmits sacred knowledge about supernatural encounters. However, linguistic, gestural, postural, and visual components cannot independently convey experiential and affective dimensions. This leads to a more comprehensive conceptualization: "ritual constitutes an integrated structural system generating phenomena that cannot be produced or communicated by any isolated constituent element"[1]. Consequently, comprehensive understanding of ritual necessitates complete participatory engagement rather than external observation or partial performance.

Within traditional Christian theological frameworks, two distinctive approximation types are instantiated in the Christological doctrine of divine incarnation and the liturgical doctrine of Eucharistic transubstantiation. The first dogma is accepted by the Christian as an immutable fact on which the Christian religion as such is based. The second dogma is understood by believers through a ritual (the sacrament of the Eucharist - communion), which enables a layman to penetrate deeper into the essence of the divine service and synergistically participate in the Liturgy. Thus, sacrality represents an essential semantic component of liturgical ritual systems.

Beyond sacrality, additional communicative characteristics of liturgical ritual contribute to its synergistic efficacy. Particularly significant is the oscillating reconfiguration of addresser-addressee relationships. While worship participants nominally initiate communicative acts, theological understanding posits that the impulse toward ritual engagement originates in divine inspiration. Consequently, while formally positioned as the addressee in liturgical communication, the divine paradoxically functions as the initiator and therefore the authentic addresser. Throughout liturgical progression, addresser-addressee configurations fluctuate according to the teleological orientation of specific ritual segments.

From analysis of Anglican liturgical practices, five conditions for achieving ritual synergy can be identified: faith, loyalty to Tradition, involvement, diligence, unity with each other in the name of Lord [2].

Non-compliance with any aforementioned synergistic conditions and the consequent profanation of associated characteristics results in ritual desacralization. Semiotically, this phenomenon represents an inversion within the symbolic system, redirecting religious ritual semiosis toward theatrical semiosis, thereby transforming liturgy from manifestation to representation, from sacrament to simulation.

References

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