

Mysticism is popularly known as becoming one with God or the Absolute

- may refer to any kind of ecstasy
- altered state of consciousness which is given a religious or spiritual meaning
- the attainment of insight in ultimate or hidden truths
 - human transformation supported by various practices and experiences
- mysticism - extraordinary experiences and states of mind."
- aim at the "union with the Absolute, the Infinite, or God"
 - You can be like God - Genesis 3:5

Etymology

- "Mysticism - Greek - meaning "I conceal"
- mystery or secret
 - initiation is necessary
 - counsels of God, once hidden but now revealed in the Gospel or some fact thereof, the Christian revelation generally, and/or particular truths or details of the Christian revelation

New Testament - mystery is used

- counsels of God
 - once hidden
 - now revealed in the Gospel or some fact thereof

Defintion

- mysticism was referred to by the term *contemplatio* (contemplation, contemplative)
 - both contemplation and mysticism speak of
 - the eye of love
 - looking at
 - gazing at
 - aware of divine realities



Mormon Temple
Salt Lake City



Free Masons



Jewish Cemetery



Great Seal of US



European Art

Union with the Divine or Absolute and mystical experience

- mysticism is popularly known as union with God or the Absolute
- 13th century brought idea of "spiritual marriage,"
 - the ecstasy or rapture was experienced when contemplate both God's omnipresence in the world and God in his essence
- 19th century
 - Romanticism - this "union" was interpreted as a "religious experience,"
 - provides certainty about God or a transcendental reality

- "in mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness through "religious experience"
- distinctive experience
- sensory experiences
- Religious experiences bring personal religion
 - considered to be "more fundamental than either theology or ecclesiasticism (church practice)
 - this kind of experience is ultimately uniform in various traditions

Intuitive insight and enlightenment

- mystical experience involves intuitive understanding of
 - The meaning of existence
 - hidden truths
 - resolution of life problems
- special mental states or events allow an understanding of ultimate truths
- mystical illumination - vision experience
 - results in the resolution of a personal or religious problem
- emphasis on feelings and intuitive insight

Early Christianity

- In early Roman church - "mystikos" soon intertwined the biblical, the liturgical (public worship), and the spiritual or contemplative
 - biblical dimension refers to "hidden" or allegorical interpretations of Scriptures
 - liturgical dimension refers to the liturgical mystery of the Eucharist, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist
 - Spiritual dimension is the contemplative or experiential knowledge of God
- Until 6th century, the Greek term *theoria*, meaning "contemplation" in Latin, was used for the mystical interpretation of the Bible
- came to denote the investigation of the allegorical "truth" of the Bible
 - Allegory - story poem, picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning (moral or political)
- *Theoria* enabled the Fathers to perceive depths of meaning in the biblical writings that escape a purely scientific or empirical approach to interpretation
 - Antiochene Fathers saw in every passage of Scripture a double meaning, both literal and spiritual
- Later, *theoria* or contemplation came to be distinguished from intellectual life
 - leading to the identification of *contemplatio* with a form of prayer

Early modern meaning

- Luther dismissed the allegorical interpretation of the bible, and condemned Mystical theology
- Science was also distinguished from religion
- middle of the 17th century, "the mystical" is increasingly applied exclusively to the religious realm
 - separating religion and "natural philosophy"
 - two distinct approaches to the discovery of the hidden meaning of the universe.^[46]

Contemporary meaning

- mysticism has been applied to a broad spectrum of religious traditions, in which all sorts of religious traditions and practices are joined together
- term mysticism was extended to comparable phenomena in non-Christian religions, where it influenced Hindu and Buddhist
- become an umbrella term for all sorts of non-rational world views
 - parapsychology
 - pseudoscience
 - "a catch-all for religious weirdness"

Variations of mysticism

Shamanism

- the world of spirits is accessed through religious ecstasy
- practitioner reaching an altered state of consciousness
 - to perceive and interact with spirits
 - channel transcendental energies into this world
 - shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of benevolent and malevolent spirits, who typically enters into trance during a ritual, and practices divination and healing

Neoshamanism

- "new" forms of shamanism
- seeking visions or healing

Christian mysticism

Eastern Orthodox Christianity

- long tradition of *theoria* (intimate experience) and *hesychia* (inner stillness), in which **contemplative prayer** silences the mind to progress along the path of *theosis* (deification become a deity - a god)
- practical unity with and conformity to God, is obtained by engaging in contemplative prayer, the first stage of *theoria*
- *It was* believed that direct experience gave monks the authority to preach and give absolution of sins, without the need for formal ordination

Those adapting mysticism

- **Jewish**
- **Islamic**
- **Hindu (Yoga)**
- **Tantra**
- **Sikhism**
- **Buddhism**
- **Taoism**