***Vocabulary***

*Introduction to Religious Studies*

Fall 2020

# *Sacred Quest*: Intro, 1-4

allegory

a story, usually fictitional, that makes an instructive point. Every character and incident in the story stands for or represents a reality outside the story itself.

canon

originally, “measuring reed”; the list of authoritative scriptures in a particular tradition.

cosmology

cosmology ways of thinking that attempt to relate the various aspects of the universe.

cyclical time

cyclical views of time; emphasizes the eternal repetition of time, as in samsara or, in some traditions, in the repetition of the change of seasons.

exegesis

the process of drawing out or interpreting the meaning of texts.

hierophany

hierophany the appearance of the sacred in human experience. Hinduism the predominant religious tradition in India.

immanence

describes those notions of the sacred that stress its inherence in the world.

kami

sacred beings and powers in **Shinto**

linear time

linear views of time; depiction of time as having a beginning, middle, and end.

logos

Greek, “word”; signifying absolute reason or mind; according to **Christian** doctrine, the **Christ** is the **incarnation** of the logos.

midrash

is biblical exegesis by ancient Judaic authorities, using a mode of interpretation prominent in the Talmud. The word itself means “textual interpretation”, “study”

moksha

release or liberation from the world, especially in **Hinduism**

mystical

mystical aspects of religious traditions that focus on the appearance of the sacred to persons achieving a certain “enlightened” state of mind.

myth

a narrative that focuses on sacred reality and its relationship to humanity

non-verbal religious language

religious language that uses painting, sculpture, architecture and other means to convey the **sacred**

oral culture

transmission of sacred stories involving myth and various stories transmitted without writing

parable

a story, usually fictional, in which the thrust of the story is to make a particular point, but in which (by comparison with **allegory**) the characters do *not* “stand” for realities outside the story itself.

prophet

prophet religious specialist associated with prophetic traditions. prophetic aspects of religious traditions that focus on the appearance of the sacred through words; see revelation,

Sabbath

from the Hebrew *shabbat* (seventh day); the day set apart for rest and remembrance of the sacred in **Judaism**

sacrament

sacramental elements of religious traditions that focus on the appearance of the sacred through the medium of material reality. sacrifice from Latin sacrum facere, that is, “to make holy”; for example, by dedicating something to the sacred.

sacred as “really real”

(p. 27) Eliade described “sacred” as “distinct” but also the most **real**, providing absolute and objective authority to an otherwise relative and subjective existence

scriptures

“writings,” especially those writings that are considered authoritative or sacred by a particular religious community

shaman

a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits, especially among some peoples of northern Asia and North America.

shekhinah

the glory of the divine presence, conventionally represented as light or interpreted symbolically (in Kabbalism as a divine feminine aspect

stupa

burial mound for a holy person; a sacred site in Buddhism

tradition

from Latin *tradere*, to “hand down”; the collection of **symbols**, **rituals**, **scriptures**, and **customs** associated with a particular group transcendence :: transcendent that which “goes beyond” or “stands over,” as in religious traditions that present a notion of the sacred as transcending ordinary experience.