

The Concept of Religious Monotheism: The Personification and Symbolization of God in the Scriptures of Monotheistic Religions

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Abstract

This study aims to see how symbols or personifications can bridge profane things from God into human reality. Religious symbols as the embodiment of God have the highest sacred value because they are built by the structures of religious teachings originating from the texts of the scriptures. This research is limited to three religions because they have the same theological concept, namely monotheism and the approach used is qualitative based on library research-related sources, especially as primary data, are the holy books of each religion, namely the Vedas, Tipitaka, and Al-Qur'an. As an analytical tool to help compare the symbolization of God in the scriptures, the semiotic theory is used to analyze the symbols of each religion. The results of this study found that the theological concept of monotheism in symbols of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam has similarities and there are differences in Islam that do not symbolize God in the form of symbols or forms. In this case, the difference is due to the pattern of belief, worship, and communal structure patterns in the teachings of the holy books of each religion.

Keywords: *Symbol, Monotheism, Islam, Hindu, Budha*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana simbol atau personifikasi dapat menjembatani hal-hal yang profan dari Tuhan ke dalam realitas manusia. Simbol-simbol agama sebagai perwujudan Tuhan memiliki nilai sakralitas yang tertinggi karena terbangun oleh struktur-struktur ajaran agama yang berasal dari teks kitab suci. Penelitian ini dibatasi pada tiga agama karena memiliki konsep teologis yang sama yaitu monoteisme dan pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan berbasis library research dengan sumber yang terkait terutama sebagai data primer adalah kitab suci masing-masing agama yaitu Veda, Tipitaka dan Al-Qur'an. Sebagai alat analisis bantu membandingkan simbolisasi Tuhan dalam kitab suci, teori semiotik digunakan untuk menganalisis simbol dari masing-masing agama. Hasil penelitian ini ditemukan, konsep teologis monoteisme dalam simbol agama Hindu, Budha dan Islam memiliki persamaan dan terdapat perbedaan pada agama

Islam yang tidak menyimbolkan Tuhan ke dalam bentuk simbol atau bentuk. Pada hal perbedaan tersebut disebabkan karena faktor pola struktur keyakinan, peribadahan, dan komunal dalam ajaran kitab suci dari masing-masing agama.

Kata kunci: *Simbol, Monoteisme, Islam, Hindu, Budha*

Introduction

The symbolization of God is referred to as an attempt to personify an object as the embodiment of God in the world. This symbolism becomes important to reflect the transcendent existence of their ontology (God) because it is a different dimension from human nature (Eliade, 1987). Even though they cannot reach the world where God exists, in the end humans try to personalize the existence of the unseen God with inanimate and living objects around their reality. What they do actually wants to show an expression of God's closeness in a different dimension to their world (Armstrong, 1993). Symbols are connecting formulations that provide signs or symbols and are used to represent something. Something that is said to symbolize will form a certain form to show it represents it as a form of God (Satiri, Saputra, & Abdullah, 2022).

In Indonesia, every religion has certain characteristics, both in terms of beliefs and the symbols used as expressions of love for God. Some symbols of heritage that are currently quite well-known are the Kaaba for Muslims, Bethlehem for Christians, and so on. Religious symbols have an important position for every religion as an intermediary to be able to feel the presence of God. It is natural for a human being to have a high sense of trust in his God, but it does not rule out the possibility that there are still those who are looking for something that is suitable to be a great place and even to be considered God. Religion has two dimensions, one dimension of which is man and his God. The good relationship between humans and the Creator is something that should have been created. But in dealing with God among humans, there are several groups who interpret it as intermediaries (Wibowo, 2008).

Human understanding of God includes various types of religions such as monotheism, pantheism, polytheism, monism and henotheism. Monotheism comes from the Greek words *monos* meaning single, alone, the only one, there is no other and *theos* meaning divine. The understanding of Monotheism shows that what is worshiped is only one, singular and not numbered. In contrast to polytheism which is the opposite of monotheism, in polytheism a system of understanding adheres to belief in God by worshiping many Gods (Nurhanisah Monday, Mustafa Kamal Amat Misra, & Nazneen Ismail, 2021).

One of the oldest religions in the world is Hinduism. This religion adheres to the ideology of monotheism in which they have the concept of divinity and the concept of humanity in which there is a relationship with fellow human beings, in this case they believe that God has many names, tasks, functions and attributes in it. It is emphasized in the Vedas that God Almighty controls the entire universe and supports the earth, heaven and everything in it. Monotheism is also discussed in the Yajurveda XX.3.X.24 and in Artharvveda X.8.1 X.2.23. Likewise in Buddhism who believe that God Hyang Adi Buddha gave Tipika when Sidhartha Gautama Buddha was experiencing a process of enlightenment (*bodhi*). In the Sutta Pitaka book, Udana V.3.3 it is explained that Hyang Adi did not incarnate much to explain his teachings, but the *bisique* (disciple of God) who explained the teachings of the Buddha. While in Islam with the book of the Qur'an it is very clear that the holy book of the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad SAW through the angel Jibil (Q.S Ash-Shu'ara: 195-196). In the Qur'an contains the theological teachings of divinity in Islam, that Allah SWT is the One God (Q.S Al-Ikhlâs: 1). So that Muslims believe in the divine belief system basically in the concept of monotheism (Mansur, n.d.).

This study aims to compare the symbols in the monotheistic concept of God in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The choice of these three religions is due to the fact that they have similarities in the concept of monotheism, but differ in the symbolism of each manifestation of God in their religion. Although in Hinduism, the concept of monotheism is symbolized and incarnated in the three supreme gods. However, in the concept of divinity basically still believes in the monotheistic system of divinity. By looking at the comparison of the symbol of God in the concept of the books of these religions, we will find similarities and differences in the concept of God in each religion which is symbolized by its adherents which originate from the holy books of their religion. In addition, the divinity symbolized in religious teachings will shape the relationship between adherents of religious teachings and their transcendent God.

Research related to the personification and symbolization of God in the Holy Scriptures of Religions is not a new research. This can be seen from the variations of research and research conducted by elevating the symbolism of God in the Scriptures of Religions as its material object. Previous research related to this theme was mapped on two research typologies according to the competency of each academic. *First*, research on the personification and symbolization of God in religion by lifting objects or other things that are made sacred as a form of God such as I Nyoman Suka Ardiyasa and I Nyoman Raka Astrini

(Ardiyasa & Astrini, 2020), IBG Yudha Triguna (Triguna, 2018), and also Adha Saputra, Iwan Saitri, and Abdullah Safei (Satiri et al., 2022). *Second*, research that discusses the belief system of God's monotheism in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam such as Hairul Anwar (Anwar, 2015), Ni Kadek Surpi (Surpi, 2020) and Nur Fadli (Nur Fadli, 2015).

Significance and *novelty* from the differences in the studies above, in the first typology of research that discusses the personification and symbolization of God in only one religion. Meanwhile, in this paper, the author compares the concept of personification and symbolization of God in three religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Then in the second typology, research that discusses the concept of monotheism in each religion but does not discuss the symbolization and personification of God in their religion. Moreover, no one has yet compared the concept of monotheism between the three religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. From these two things, the authors see that research that discusses the concept of symbolization and personification of God in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam has not examined this matter. Furthermore, by comparing the concepts of symbolization and personification that exist in these religions, similarities and differences will be found. In particular, the concepts of God's symbolism are sourced from the holy books of each religion.

Method

The analysis used in this study is by comparing (Khotimah, 2010) the concepts of the personification of God in each book, namely the Vedas (Hindu), Tipitaka (Buddhist) and Al-Qur'an (Islam). The comparison here does not intend to seek truth or error between these religions, but instead seeks the concept of a religion based on the objectivity of the data broadly. Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. With semiotic analysis can be used to find the meanings of the text in the form of symbols (*sign*) from each religion that represents the concept of divinity (Muhammad Taufik, 2021). As well as the approach used in this research is qualitative and *library research*.

Symbolization of God in Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the world's most recognized religions and is growing rapidly in India. The name of the Hindu religion was originally called "Sanathana Dharma", which means the 'eternal truth' of 'that which has neither beginning nor end'. Hinduism actually comes from the word Persian which means people who live in the Indus valley. The holy book that contains the most important Hindu teachings is the Vedas. The Veda contains sacred and eternal knowledge that comes directly from Hyang Widhi. The revelation that was found was

received through sacred hearing with the blossoming of the paramaha rishi institution. The book is then divided into four parts or quarters *Samhita*, that is *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Apart from that there are other holy books such as *Bhagawadgita*, *Purana*, *Brahmana*, *Uphanishad*, and *History*. Hinduism also recognizes various other books such as Tantra, Jyotisha, Darsana, Salwasutra, Nitisastra, Kalpa, Chanda, and others. Most of these books belong to the Smerti book because they contain the teachings of the sciences used by humans in the world such as leadership, astronomy, state science and so on (Khotimah, 2013).

The theological system in Hinduism does not recognize a single belief system, so that the Hindu religious tradition, especially in India, does not make beliefs uniform, but makes Hinduism a place where Hindu religious beliefs unite. So that the concept of divinity in Hinduism, some adhere to monotheism and some others adhere to monism where the gods that exist are a form of the oneness of God (Rosidi & Et.al, 2017). The perception of belief in Hinduism about God is pantheistic. This understanding believes in considering everything, living or not living as divine and holy. Therefore, Hindus consider trees, sun, moon, stars, and even humans as manifestations of God (Abdul Karim, 2000). The worship of gods in the spirits of ancestors, rivers, mountains, trees and animals is thought to originate from the beliefs of the indigenous Indian tribes who worship these objects. Among the gods originating from indigenous tribal beliefs is the goddess *Time* which is terrible. In Hindu mythology, this time is the wife of Shiva and the god Ganesh. Hinduism believes in and worships gods who are considered capable of controlling nature and often make offerings or sacrifices to please the gods. They believe in a sacrificial ceremony that will make the gods happy, so the gods will grant their request (Fajri, Ismail, & Zikri, 2012).

It has been mentioned above that the concept of symbolizing God in Hinduism is likened to the shape of animals and the natural surroundings. However, in the Vedas, namely in the *Samhita Yajurveda*, it is said that the manifestation of God cannot be described by anything (*Yajuzweda* 32:3). God cannot be described by anything because he has great glory, he sustains in himself all luminous things like the sun and so on. Of the many gods worshiped in Hinduism, there are three gods who are considered the highest gods known as the trimurti gods. These three gods are embodied as God who creates, governs the universe so that everything that is created must be destroyed. These gods are called manifestations of God's form, namely, Lord Brahma (creator), Lord Vishnu (preserver), and Lord Shiva (fuser to origin) (Dharma, 2007).

Lord Brahma is depicted as having four heads and different facial expressions. He holds attributes in his four arms in the form of *tasbih*, *sruk* and *surva*, *jug* and finally *library/books*. Each attribute on each arm has the characteristics of the Brahma god. For example, the *library* symbol symbolizes that Brahma is the God of knowledge and has wisdom. He is also sometimes depicted riding seven swans which represent the seven worlds (I Wayan Maswinara, n.d.). Then Lord Vishnu, mentioned in the Book of Rigveda II hymn 1 verse 3 that Vishnu is a god who is described as having dark blue skin, four arms with one of his right hands holding a '*cakra*' which is a disk and one of his right hands holding a '*conch shell*', riding a bird purple peacock or side by side with snakes (Bryant, 2003). And the highest god is Lord Shiva who is also considered the god of storm winds in the Vedas (Fajri et al., 2012). General description of Lord Shiva he has a body all over his body with shiny ashes. Apart from having the same four arms as the other two trimurti gods with a trident, small drum, *camara* and *tasbih* he also has three eyes where one is on the forehead above the two eyes. Apart from that, it is said that his long hair flows into the Ganges river, where this river is considered sacred by Hindus in India. Besides that, there is a Cobra snake coiled around his neck *Yajnopavita* or the sacred thread used as a necklace and belt (Aziz, 2010).

Of the three gods, the symbols with the attributes they use contain philosophical values and teachings from Hinduism. Usually the statues of the three trimurti gods are objects of worship for Hindus. For example, in Bali the worship of the Shiva Linga is used as a worship for Hindus there, can give birth to positive actions and bring up symbolic meanings both religious, social and so on (Dewi, 2019).

There are also many other gods worshiped by Hinduism. Their symbols are also mostly depicted in the form of animals and nature. For example, Goddess Agni, one of the most important goddesses in the Vedas, is described as a fire goddess who turns offerings into smoke. Offerings that have been burned with fire are consumed by the gods (Fieser & Powers, 2008). Then the surrounding animals which are considered sacred by Hinduism are also used as symbols of the embodiment of God. For example, what is often discussed is the cow which is a holy and sacred animal by Hinduism. Cows are animals that are respected because they bring many benefits to humans. Lord Shiva is said to also ride a cow as a means of transportation. For Hindus, the prohibition against eating beef is not because they consider cows to be unclean animals, but because cows are animals that are respected by Hindus. Apart from cows, sacred animals described in the Vedas, for example *garuda*, dragons, geese and so on, are symbols of the embodiment of God or God (Purnawan, 2019).

The symbolization of Hinduism can also be seen in the acts of worship that are carried out. Worship (puja) is considered a sacred duty involving prayer, chanting of symbolic mantras, making offerings at home and in temples and acts of worship. *darshan* i.e. exchanging glances with the gods. The gods were often decorated with flowers as a sign of respect. Sometimes pilgrimages are made to specific sites, such as Varanasi where a ford on the Ganges is considered a symbol of crossing from one world to another (Dennis-Bryan, 2008).

Symbolization of God in Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama as the main figure of Buddhism who was born in the 6th century in North India. Siddhartha was born to the Mountain Sakya tribe in the Himalayas named Lumbini (Nepal) in the early Magadha period (546-324 BC). When Siddhartha was in the womb, many miracles began to appear, where his mother's 10th month of pregnancy felt fast. When the queen asked to take a tour of the Lumbini garden, she gave birth to Siddhartha while on the way home in a standing position leaning on a branch of a sal tree and the queen did not feel the slightest pain. It was at the time of his birth that a miracle appeared, where Siddhartha could take 7 steps where every step a lotus flower appeared (Ismail, 2016).

Buddhas appeared because the world is full of people who cannot give up suffering. *Try it out* it is he who is propagated into a world full of injustice and of false standards and a world full of vain struggles with insatiable desires and insecurities. Buddha is here to provide a solution to these difficulties by giving His great love (Kyokai, 2020).

Based on Bhikku Cittagutto's opinion, there are two general factors that led to the development of Buddhism, namely internal factors and external factors. *First*, knowing the personality and behavior of the Buddha and his enthusiasm to spread the teachings he discovered. *Second*, noble values *Dhamma* (Buddhist teachings) that can be accepted by society. *Third*, the spread of the dhamma by the disciples of the Buddha. While the external factors are, *First*, protection and support of the king. *Second*, there is the support of the *billionaire* (setthi) at that time. *Third*, the condition and maturity of society, especially in the spiritual realm, to accept Buddhist teachings (Arimbawa & Anggriawan, 2020).

In the Pitaka books, it is said that Buddhism is a teaching that characterizes a person as God. This aims to get life that does not return to its origin, namely God, but to enter heaven (nirvana), extinction, an atmosphere without will, without feeling, without desire, without awareness where people are no longer burning with lust. Thus, there are some religious

experts who do not make Buddhism a religion because religion is a philosophy, a product of the human mind that wants to create peace by making systematic things cause and effect (Hadiwijono, 2010).

Buddhists also have symbols that serve as their beliefs. For example Buddha Rupang which gives the meaning of inner peace for a Buddhist. The Buddha statue (Buddha statue) is not a statue that Buddhists have to worship, but the Buddha statue is a symbol of inner peace (Khairiah, 2018). Buddha statues were made long after Buddha died, about hundreds of years after his death. Buddha statues have distinctive characteristics and are easy to distinguish from other statues. Although the statue is depicted as being in human form, the image of the Buddha is not actually that way. This picture is not a picture of Siddhartha outwardly. The statue is a picture of Siddhartha spiritually, which must be able to truly show who the Buddha is for Buddhists (Wibowo, 2008).

The Buddha is one who has awakened from delusion and is in the midst of the true light. The Buddha also has other names, for example *god*, sublime meaning, *tatagatha*, which means perfect. The next example is incense which is a symbol of the good name of Buddhist adherents. The fragrance from the incense that is carried by the wind will spread to places and directions opposite to the direction of the wind. Likewise, good human behavior will be known by many people, but this also applies to bad deeds that will be known by others. Then next is the Swastika. The shape is symbolized as a coat of arms which is shaped like a cross, but has an axis with the ends of the axis forming a fracture so that it is similar to the letters S and Z which are perpendicular to each other. This shape symbolizes the continuum of life. The swastika symbolizes beauty, happiness and long life (Khairiah, 2018).

At the beginning of the development of Buddhism, the presence of Buddha was shown in art by objects related to his life's journey. For example, it is often symbolized by a Bodhi tree, a footprint, or an alms bowl. Other symbols such as *Rdha Dharma* signify Buddha and his teachings. As well as other examples, adherents of Buddhism (monks) follow the Buddhist style of dress with red-orange robes, heads shaved completely, which indicates Buddhist teachings reject worldly desires (Dennis-Bryan, 2008).

Symbolization of God in Islam

Religion according to A.Susanto is a belief that can be categorized as powerful in humans, a substance that has everything and dominates and dominates the entire contents of Nature (Susanto, 2011). In the Islamic religion itself, there is only one God, Allah swt, who is

the one who created all creatures to bow down to him. As written in the Book Al Quranul Karim in surah Al Ikhlas Verse 1:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

"Say, O (Muhammad), he is the One and Only God"

According to Tafsir Al Misbah written by Quraish Shihab, the sentence هو refers to something that is Unseen or invisible or visible, He explains that Allah is like a light which when humans see it it will be bright (M. Quraish Shihab, 2005). It can be said that the Qur'an calls on Muslims to always worship Allah SWT, namely the One God, the word احد is taken from the word وحدة which is one or unity like the word واحد in Arabic which means one. The word أحد can function as a name and it can also be an attribute for something. If it is located as an attribute, then it is only used for Allah SWT alone. Then in the next verse:

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

"Not beget and not begotten"

Quraish Shihab explained in his commentary that in this verse Allah did not create a child nor was he born from a father or mother, there is no one equal to him and nothing is like him. The verse above also refutes the belief that some people have about God by stating that God is the one and only God, that is, it is not a natural thing to have the nature of God and nor has God ever had children. In addition, Allah SWT cannot be begotten who is not born from a father or mother. Islam makes the Ka'bah symbolically the destination of its Qibla direction, because the Ka'bah has a strategic location and has a historical story (Mutmainnah, 2017).

Explained in the Qur'an, chapter Al-Baqoroh verse 144 which reads:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Indeed we (often) see your face turned towards the sky, then indeed we will turn you to the Qiblah that you like. Turn your face towards the Masjidil Haram. And wherever you are, turn your face towards him. And indeed the people (Jews and Christians) who are given the Bible to know (Torah and Injil) do know that turning to the Masjidil Haram is the truth from their Lord and that God never neglects what they do."

So it is clear that the call of the Islamic religion to worship towards the Qibla towards the Kaaba is something that has been recommended in the Qur'an. Even the Koran itself, the holy book of Islam, explains that followers of the Torah and the Bible also know that they should face the Kaaba when worshipping. However, they turned away from reality.

And this verse is continuous with the previous verse, namely surah Al-Baqarah verse 143 which mentions the word *poor people*. In this verse it is emphasized that Muslims are made as middle, moderate and exemplary people (Tanjung, 2018). So that our existence as Muslims is in a middle position in accordance with the position of the Kaaba which is in the middle.

Islam is a religion that avoids human representation in art. However, objects such as the star and crescent have become symbols of faith. Usually the symbols of the moon and stars are found on the dome ornaments of places of worship for Muslims, namely mosques. In addition, because artistic representations (eg statues) are avoided, Muslims in the way of praising Allah SWT use beautiful calligraphy paintings which are usually found in ornaments in Islamic countries.

Comparative Analysis of Monotheism Concept Symbolization in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam

According to Mircea Eliade, religious symbols have played an important role in the magical-religious experience of mankind. Although, the symbol is capable of carrying out the process of hierophany and sometimes it is the hierophany itself which expresses a sacred or cosmological reality that cannot be expressed by other manifestations. Especially the human view can be defined as 'symbol man' (*homosymbolicus*) and all of its activities involve symbolism, the fact that religion has a symbolic character cannot be denied. This is certainly true if we realize that every religious act and every cult aims at a meta-empirical reality. For example, if a tree is used as an object of offering, it does not mean that it is a respected tree, but as a hierophanization or manifestation that originates from the scriptures (Allen, 1978).

Symbols are characteristic of religion in the form of phenomena with various models and forms. Symbols as a spiritual structured system, there are three structures that give birth to various symbols, namely the belief structure, the worship structure in various ways, and the communal structure (*ummah*) which appears in the form of an organization or association. These structures are formed on the basis of needs covering adaptation, goals, integration and maintaining patterns of religious teachings (Wahab, 2011).

There are similarities and differences in the structure of religious symbols between Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. In fact, these three religions both adhere to the theological monotheism system. However, there are differences in Hinduism and Buddhism, which personify the embodiment of God in a form. For example, Hinduism believes in one God (Sang Hyang Widhi) where the embodiment of God incarnates into the three highest gods in Hinduism (trimurti). Likewise in Buddhism, which believes in only one God (The Adi Buddha), the difference is that God in Buddhism gave Buddhist teachings to Shidarta Gautama who left worldly desires to reach enlightenment or Buddha.

The embodiment of the incarnation of God, especially in Hinduism and Buddhism, shows visible similarities. Moreover, the embodiment of God's incarnation is symbolized by adherents of religious beliefs with artistic representations in the form of statues depicting the nature of God and the wisdom of his teachings. Apart from that, many representations of animals and nature are also depicted as objects of transcendental offerings from God.

This clearly differs significantly from the concept of monotheism and the personification of God in Islam. Apart from not symbolizing the form of God in a certain representation, the transmission of God's teachings (Allah Swt) was conveyed by the Prophet/Rasul who carried the message of Islamic treatises through the angel Gabriel. Symbols in Islam forbid the manifestation of God (Allah Swt) in the form of form, so that symbols of divinity in Islam are represented in the Kaaba, mosques and ornate calligraphy arts.

Conclusion

Symbols or personifications are used as tools or manifestations to bridge the profane dimension in religion that is not accessible to humans. Especially in the theological concept of divinity in religion, these symbols are often found, for example statues, depictions of animals or nature as expressions of adherents of religious teachings that show closeness to God or God. In Hinduism, for example, even though they worship many gods (polytheism), Hinduism still recognizes the oneness of God, namely Hyang Widhi. But that one God, was incarnated into three gods whom they considered the supreme god in Hinduism. These three gods are symbolized and personified in many forms, objects, animals and even nature. Likewise in Buddhism, which recognizes the concept of monotheism in Buddhism by believing in Hyang Adi Buddha. Symbolization and Personification in Buddhism are shown by various forms of Buddha statues which symbolize something in Buddhism.

Although sometimes some concepts of God are the same between several religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, there are differences in the form of monotheism symbolism in Islamic teachings which do not personify the form of God. This is clearly explained in the Qur'an that God in Islam, namely Allah, is the One and Only Substance and does not begotten, let alone begotten who resembles a creature. The difference in the concept of symbolization and personification can be caused depending on how the patterns of belief, worship and communal structure of each teaching in the holy book of the religion.

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