

INITIATION CEREMONY IN PRIMITIVE TRIBES AND SOME RELIGIONS

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Abstract

Initiation ceremony is a ritual that signifies when someone reach to a certain age then, an attempt to be a member of an assembly or a group. This initiation ceremony can be occurred in any society either in a primitive or in a civilized society. Although, the implementations process of initiation ceremony may sometimes vary however the purpose of it remains same. This is the purpose make individuals to accustom to the collective educational, religious or mythic sense. In preliterate society these rituals are loaded with religious content. In primitive societies the initiation ceremony were also held when the young girls and boys reach their puberty age and also when they are seen as an adult of the society. The ceremony contains some difficult ordeals for the youngs and in order to become successful participant to gain admittance to the society these young people need to prove themselves through these difficult ordeals. In some primitive societies gaining admittance and becoming a member require that getting intercourse with his protective spirit. At the end of all these process, the candidate gains a name and full membership when if successfully complete the tasks and they become adults who now have social affiliation. These rituals can also be observed in civilized society's culture. The initiation ceremony in advanced societies' religious traditions is however different and the rituals are contain more symbolic meanings. The principal of physical suffering during initiation ceremonies in primitive society is the form of spiritual readiness in civilized societies. Hindu Upanayana, Jewish

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Bar/Bat Mitzvah and baptism rituals of Christians are typical ceremonies initiation. This study examines how the initiation ceremony that an important social ritual, takes place in the religious tradition of primitive and some civilized societies.

Keywords: Initiation, Ritual, Puberty, Primitive Tribe, Religion, History of Religion

İlkel Kabilelerde ve Bazı Dinlerde Erginleme Töreni

Öz

Erginleme töreni, belli bir yaşa gelince herhangi bir gruba veya topluma katılması için kişiye uygulanan ritüelleri ifade eder. Uygulanma yöntemleri değişse de bu tören, ilkel veya gelişmiş neredeyse her toplumda görülür. Amaç, bireylerin topluma eğitsel, dinsel veya mitsel anlamda alışmalarını sağlamaktır. Yazısız toplumlarda bu törenler, dinsel içerikle yüküldür. İlkelerde erginleme töreni, genç kız ya da erkeklerin çocukluktan kurtulup kabilenin yetişkin bireyi kabul edildiği ergenlikte gerçekleşir. Bu tür törenlerde gençler bazı zorlu testlere tabii tutulur. Topluma kabulü hak etmek için sınanmak zorunludur. Bazı ilkel kabilelerde erginleme, kişinin koruyucu ruhla ilişkiye girmek için birtakım sınanmalardan geçmesi şeklindedir. Bunu başaran genç, kabile tarafından isim olarak üyelik ve aidiyet kazanır. İleri toplumların dinsel geleneğinde erginleme törenleri ise sembolik niteliktedir. İlkelerin bedensel acı çekme biçimindeki kabul törenleri, gelişmiş toplumlarda manevi hazır oluş şeklindedir. Hinduların Upanayana, Yahudilerin Bar/Bat Mitzva ve Hristiyanların vaftiz ritüelleri tipik üyeliğe kabul törenlerini ifade eder. Çalışma önemli bir toplumsal ritüel olan erginleme töreninin ilkel ve bazı gelişmiş toplumların dinsel geleneğinde nasıl gerçekleştiğini ele almıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnisiasyon, Ritüel, Ergenlik, İlkel Kabile, Dinler Tarihi

Summary

This study targets to scrutinise that how the initiation takes place both in primitive and in civilized societies in addition, to explain how the initiation is implemented in religious traditions of civilized societies in a way with deep approach and comparising method. Initiation is an important threshold that must be passed in order for the person to live his society. Although the initiation is not so easy in almost every society, individuals expect to be accepted by the society when they reach a certain age. Because transition from childhood to

adulthood, from novice to mastery and from individuality to societal require a certain price. Society wants to know how ready someone is. That is why a person has to pass through some ordeals that differ from culture to culture and these are ordeals of physical, mental or psychosocial quality is highlighted. Passing all the process mean the person admits embracing traditional, religious, magical or mythical components of the society. That is why society does not neglect to guide its members in order to help them stay free from the difficulties during the initiation ceremony.

Primitive tribes do not have a certain production system and make ends meet by gathering, hunting, fishing and they also do not have any belief and lack of a certain system, sacred book, and founder. It is forbidden for the members of tribe to pass to any other religion than tribe's religion. There are some beliefs in primitive tribes like; tributing ancestors souls, having controlled natural phenomena and having a supreme creator. The ceremonies in primitive tribes are also found in some belief systems. Initiation ceremony is a well-known ritual in whether primitive or civilized and also in many other societies as well. It is hard in many societies to explain an adolescent about the life and initiation besides, hard as well to expect them to comprehend the all by their own. Because if the societies are failed to convey their life experience to the next generations, they will face with extinction. Because it is a fact that, the only way to continue their presence is to have numbers of members. As for the society it is not well enough to come to the world alone. Traditions, customs, folklore, and religious experience must also be transferred to generations. Because generations continue to live with cultural transmission. A society without history is unthinkable. Initiation in this framework is both a memory and transfer of behavioral patterns. In addition, initiation is a pedagogical education, especially in religious and mythical aspects.

The initiation ceremony is focused more on the bodily part by primitive tribes and that is the practice where body strength particularly take places. The intensity of the violent during initiation ceremonies reveals this fact. Circumcision, dental dislocation, bodily injury and habitual life practice are some challenging processes, implemented by primitive societies. It is anticipated that there were such ceremonies in the nature of primitive tribes that were inherited naturally. Because nature itself is a difficult site and the only way to be accustomed to hard and cruel natural conditions candidates needed to go through the certain transition period. That is the why the initiation ceremonies in primitive tribes were filled with challenging ordeals. Individuals who lived in difficult geographical conditions such as mountainous, woody

and desert have to take some training to challenge the nature. In this context, primitive tribes transfers all kinds of physical and spiritual education to their members through the initiation ceremonies.

Civilized societies do not have the harsh living conditions as they are in primitive tribes. Due to the settled life and improved lifestyle, members in civilized societies have relatively gentle transition ceremonies. In such societies, the number of violent ceremonies is decreased. The initiation of the individuals occurred mostly through symbolic initiation ceremonies. In these societies, instead of focusing and testing physical strength, the individuals are more equipped with educational, religious and mythical information. The symbolism-laden ceremonies which are tried to be transformed into a festival in which one will be out of childhood and become an adult. Civil societies differ in the style of rituals from primitive tribes although their purpose are the same. As a result, although the societies of primitives and the civilians societies differ about how they implement the initiation but they agree on the cause of the initiation. Study addresses initiation ceremonies in primitive tribes which are part of the admittance to society and also initiation in some religions. The individuals in both primitive and civilized society, go through a process in which they need to be socialise in. The transition stage from childhood to adulthood, apprenticeship to master or from individualism to socialising, there are some ceremonies which will take place accordingly. Though, the ceremonies differ from culture to culture, the goal is to make individuals ready for the life.

Introduction

This study addresses initiation ceremonies in primitive tribes which are part of the admittance to society and also initiation in some religions. The individuals in both primitive and civilized society, go through a process in which they need to be socialise in. The transition stage from childhood to adulthood, apprenticeship to master or from individualism to socialising, there are some ceremonies which will take place accordingly. Though, the ceremonies differ from culture to culture, the goal is to make individuals ready for the life. Therefore, this study targets to scrutinise that how the initiation takes place both in primitive and in civilized societies in addition, to explain how the initiation is implemented in religious traditions of civilized societies in a way with deep approach and comparing method.

1. Initiation Ceremony

Initiation is a gaining admittance to a community or a society for individuals. In this aspect, initiation is a name that represents a new stage of life for the individuals. After a certain period of time, individuals attempt to change the life style they live because of some strongly-established traditions, customs or rules. Therefore, there will be need of some transition ceremonies that to join and be a member of the society or to be a part of it. These ceremonies target to make individuals comprehend both worldly and religious information to make them ready for the society that they live in (Sharpe, 2000: 94; Eliade, 1975: 2).

Even though the structure of initiation differs from society to society, it is a significant traditional, mythical and religious implementation. The blessing of kings and the priests, when becoming membership in secret societies or being a mature individual of the society or promoting to become a master or a shamanist in a community are all the processes that fall within the scope of this practice. The ceremony is seen in almost every society whether primitive or civilized. These ceremonies were closely associated with God or the gods, especially during periods when there were no writings. Ergo, the initiation ceremony is a practice that symbolised with religion (Burkert, 1999: 22-23; Guenon, 2003: 201-208).

2. Initiation Ceremony in Primitive Tribes

Primitive tribes do not have a certain production system and make ends meet by gathering, hunting, fishing and they also do not have any belief and lack of a certain system, sacred book, and founder. It is forbidden for the members of tribe to pass to any other religion than tribe's religion. There are some beliefs in primitive tribes like; tributing ancestors souls, having controlled natural phenomena and having a supreme creator. Dinka, Ga, Maori and Bariba are the some examples (Adam, 2005: 51-52).

The initiation ceremony is an ordinary ritual in primitive tribes. The ceremony takes place when the young boys and girls become adults and come at their puberty age. These ceremonies, in which the participants are usually children between the ages of 6-10 or 8-12, that is an important part of social, religious, mythical and magical life in addition, children at this age are brought to ceremony area by magicians, shamans or elderly men. Later on the children are reminded of some rules such as the content of the ceremony and

the ordeals that must pass. Within the scope of the ceremony, it takes days and sometimes months of challenging practices like; fasting, learning about sexual experiences, passing courage ordeals and even torturing are just a few of the practices that children have. Furthermore, as a sign of the transition to a new stage, having dances by wearing masks, making tattoos on their body, breaking teeth, circumcision and also getting a new name are other practices that children do during the ceremony. After getting done all the process the candidate who attended to the ceremony are entitled to be a part of the community as an adult however, girls can gain admittance to community easily when compared with men besides, sharpen teets, stained in black, circumcised and ear piercing are some of the practice that the girls in primitive society have. The young people need to prove themselves in order to be a full member. For instance when youngs to gain admittance to be a full member in primitive North American Indians, they are obliged to get intercourse with protective spirit and the youngs who successfully pass this test will gain a new name and then they go through the rituals (Sharpe, 2000: 94; Ornek, 1971: 75-76; Campbell, 1995: 319).

Pain is an indispensable part of initiation ceremonies, circumcision, taking the teeth out, burning their wound and being hit by stick are some of the pain that youngs face with. The individual who knows how to suffer these pains is aware that his previous physical appearances will disappear. The sense of getting ready for the new stage of life will give strength to those individuals and which make the pain welcome. Native Bariba tribe in Nigeria for example, they find quite courageous enduring when an individual being branded with iron stick. People in this native tribe hide their suffering and it is considered as a shame when the individual show his suffering during circumcision. In addition, young male constantly looks his uncle's eyes to shows that he is not afraid of the pain whilst the initiation ceremony takes place. Likewise in female circumcision, songs are sung and dancing performed during the ceremony so that to make them not to yell. Girls want to show that they are as strong as men and pain-tolerant. Showing that suffering from the pain is a shame for both boys and girls considered worse than death during initiation ceremony in Bariba culture. Therefore, suffering in such cultures is a sanctity and the physical pain, take the individual to maturity also to strengthen the feeling of social belonging. The community helps individuals to prepare for being an adult by telling them in a pain way during initiation ceremony. The fact that suffering in primitive tribes is an indication as a virtue is an important support for the individual in this sense (Breton, 2005: 197-198).

Ache tribes, a primitive tribe in Indonesia, applies some severe painful techniques to adolescents when they accept them as a full member to the their tribe. During the transition to adolescence, the young man required to have tattoo in his back and whilst the process for that taking place on their back, the pain drive them to the severe conditions that almost tears his back. The person who draw the tattoo starts digging up with stone on individuals back, to assess the place to predict right place for tattoo on the back. The tattoo maker performs this work by applying all his strength and draws ten horizontal and vertical lines and while the work taking place on their back, the youngs never show their suffering because they know that would be an indication of big shame and in some case the pain drive them till get fainted from so, this is the way to prove yourself to the community as a courageous adult. The youngs are well aware that all the processes are transition period and they have to prove the capability they have is to deal with the all the pain and they admit that all the requirements are need to be completed to gain the admittance to be the part of the community. The ceremony is a kind of method for youngs to learn from it, therefore, it can be expressed that the initiation is a pedagogical education which make the young boys to step into adultery (Breton, 2005: 197-199).

Aht Indians living in Vancouver Island, in Canada apply some tough requirements when they accept girls as tribal members. The time when the girls come their puberty age, they are wrapped into a wicker mat and kept in the corridor of the house where does not see the sunlight and the girls are not allowed to eat but drink in the place where is reminiscent of a cage. The girl, in this case the longer she stays in that condition, the more respect she will earn from both her family and the society. Nevertheless, there will be severe a condemnation from both society and from her family in case, fire or sunlight is seen by the girl and this situation causes reputation loss. On the other hand, same as Aht Indians, Alaskan Eskimos Koniag hide young girls in a dark isolated hut until their puberty age and this time considered as six months. Guyanese Indians however, put the girls in the hut and then leave ants on them, the idea is not to be violence towards them, but to let them being prufied before being a member of the society. Although Koniag, Aht and Guyana Indians find all these procedures as challenging, they endure when these ordeals applied to them to avoid being excluded from the society. In fact, young people who suffer from pain, violence and psychological tension during the test however, in order to not being contrary to the traditions and customs of the society they see the rituals are the key to entering youth (Frazer, 2004: 214-216).

The Mandan, one of the native primitive American tribe that is harshly prepared for the initiation ceremony. The candidate is enforced three days and three nights of sleeplessness and fasting for four days before this ceremony. Then the candidate makes drained appearance and comes in front of the person who runs the ceremony, where is not even a tribute to suffer anymore after that some skewers are passed over to this person's back, shoulders, chest, hips, and knees. Then someone else raises his skin with a knife and salts it. The purpose is to make the candidate suffer more. Another attendant skewers again at the point where the salt is being raised. A rope that is extended from the top of the candidate is attached to the skewers thus, these ropes are pulled upwards to give the candidate more pain. During all these painful implementations which continues for minutes, the candidate tries to withstand with. Because he knows that these painful process will ripen himself and become a dignified member of society. This violent ritual in Mandan tribe is a challenging educational practice. This ceremony, which has a certain difficult stage for the person, is aimed at strengthening the candidate physically. A strong body in this tribe means an achievement that deserving the respect of society (Breton, 2005: 197-202).

A tribe is called Shushwaps living in Canada, believes that one must go through an initiation ceremony to be a shaman. For this reason, Shushwaps take youngs through a series of ordeals so that they can mature to run to become shaman candidates. According to this tradition, a candidate in order to gain admittance to be able to touch the woman he is required live into the mountains during adolescence to learn how to deal with some difficulties. The person makes a hut on mountain where he intended to get sweat and spend nights there. The candidate dances in the night whilst his body get purified by vapour and returns to the village back in the morning. This process continues until the candidate see a dream in which the animal that he has desired was caught by him as a protective spirit. This challenging experience that takes days, sometimes takes years. But when the animal is seen in the dream the candidate feels like drunk and now, the candidate who sees the dream and passes the tough test is thus accepted as a member among the shamans through the protective spirit. Moreover, according to Shushwaps's belief the person who succeeded to be a master shaman is no longer get harmed from any arrows or bullets. Even if he get injured, the wound does not bleed outwardly, inwardly instead. Blood fills into his stomach but the person can heal himself immediately by spiting it out. The similar initiation ceremony can be observed among in some African natives as well. The ritual here is someone who represented

by an animal then circumcised. The master will prove himself by circumcising the novices. In a sense, a person who accepted as a member is considered to have killed an animal by doing circumcision. This ceremony allows the candidate to join the community as a mature individual. This practice, both in Canada and in Africa, to make the shaman both as physical and spiritual master. Living in the hut where the individual get sweat with vapour for a long time or being circumcised are all physical test for them. Mystical dimensions, such as capturing the animal spirit are the spiritual side of this ritual. As a holistic approach, the initiation ceremony in essence, is both sophisticated and religious practice for being a shaman. Through these, people see themselves as a fundamental member of society. In this aspect, the framework of initiation is an important conformity or adaptation process (Eliade 1999: 127-18; 2001: 135).

One of Australian native is called Kurnai people, has a ritual in which children are prepared to leave their mums. The purpose of this initiation ceremony is to give a sense of being an adult to girls and boys. Because it's known that very hard for children the time when they leave their mother and children are prepared for this ritual psychologically first. Kurnais performs this ceremony in straightforward concept. During the ceremony, the mothers sit behind the candidates. The adults men who are considered as masters of this implementation, make a gap line between mothers and their children and meanwhile, the mother and the candidates try to reach each other by extending their hands. The movement of extending hands each other represents the strength of separation. Later, the candidates open their hands several times to the sky and pray to God. If their prays are accepted by God of heaven then the initiation get completed. Afterwards, candidates are taken to a sacred sanctuary where no one can able to see them. The candidates then lay there on their backs and put their hands crosswise on their chest. They can not hear and see anything outside while they are in this situation. Thereafter, the candidates fall asleep together by singing songs The next day they become an adult member of the tribe. After these ordeals, the Kurnais tribe accepts the candidates as a master member of their tribe. This ritual is crucial for Kurnais in the sense that young men and girls gain self-confidence and become independent individuals. The separation, which started first physically when the children leave their mums and ending with a spiritual separation thus, the ceremony finalised in a proper way (Eliade 1975: 7).

Kikuyu people, one of the inhabitants of Kenya, is an ethnic tribe that find very important for the initiation ceremony. They have an initiation ritual

for men and women and is called “irua”. In these ceremonies men and women have an intensive process which results in circumcision. In these practices women and men get circumcised in separate places but in same season. Those who will do the circumcision are chosen among those who are experienced in this work. It is a frequent practice to sacrifice goats after each stage passed in the ritual. The chief who administers the ceremony, share his knowledge with candidates and aiming to prepare them to be a member of the community. Family, marriage and sexuality matters are important parts of the ritual besides, during the ceremony night men and girls dance and sing crazily. The initiation ceremony ends when the male and female genitalia are cut off. However, certain kind of ceremonies continue to be taken place until the wound heals. Thus Kikuyus let young people learn more by helping them at every step of the initiation. The fact that Kikuyus gives young people some theoretical knowledge as well as physical practices shows that they have advanced initiation traditions compared with other local tribes. For many indigenous tribes, physical violence is more prevalent. But there are also much more advanced information which can be seen in more civilized societies, such as family life, sexuality and social rules etc. shared also with tribe members (Cox 2005: 7805).

Initiation, in West Africa, usually takes place in two ways. It has been called *epispastic* and the practice is implemented in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana, the practice start when a person is assumed as a sacrificed individual and who is being allowed to communicate with God. The ceremony is held for both men and women. Candidates in the ceremony are passed through some ordeals to determine that they are physically strong enough. The children especially are tested for how well they can see, hear and smell. From the birth of the child until the age of adolescence, the practice is applied for them. Because according to the belief there, the way of having spiritual communication is to become physically strong in addition, the candidates are also given spiritual education and training too. The second stage of initiation is called *allotactic* in this stage of the ceremony, the candidate should be able to find God on their own and no help is given to candidates in the course of the ceremony. This prolonged practice take many years and aiming candidates to comprehend that form of body they are in is transient but the spirit is infinite. In this ritual, candidates meet with the reality of reincarnation. The candidate who attained this information is ready to become a member of the community. Unlike others indigenous communities in Africa, the remarkable feature of West African indigenous community is to get direct communication with God. It is an interesting norm that finding sanctity is way to define the religious culture.

The focus of the people here is not the body but the spirit. Finding the God and contacting him is a high-level necessity. In these societies, the emphasis on God shows that the belief in accepting a supreme power is dominant within the society (Kyalo 2013: 45; Zahan 1987: 9721).

Bambara is also the name of the belief of the inhabitants Mali in Africa. Bambara has sophisticated tribal believer, that has a philosophy of intertwining agricultural culture and divine elements. According to this belief a candidate can get membership in case when go through the certain religious rituals. These are N'domo, Komo, Nama, Kono, Tyiwara and Kore. A Bambara man has to go through these six religious education processes. The main objective in Bambara culture is to give mental, moral and religious awareness to the candidates. For example, the first ritual of the initiation is called N'domo, which ends up with circumcision, gives some religious knowledges to the candidates about the origins of human being, and destiny. In the second initiation ceremony is called Komo, makes candidates learn about social self-altruism and some other practices whilst the masked dancing taking place. And, while the Nama ritual is focusing on such themes like; masculinity and femininity; body and soul; good-deed and evil, in Kono the candidates learns religious philosophy which is focused on the dualism of body and thought. The person learns both agricultural skill and the divine figures associated with it in the Tyiwara ritual. As a last initiation, in Kore the candidate is prepared to understand reincarnation and preparation that targeting to become a member of the society. In this ritual, moreover, the candidate becomes a member of society by realizing that the human soul is immortal, but the body is transient. The person now understand that the only way to deliverance of his soul is to always reincarnate back in his society. Repeated every seven years, these initiation ceremonies make the person ready for religious society. It is evident that these ceremonies of the Bambaras are both bodily and spiritually purified and make them a member of society. Therefore, this initiation is representing both a religious and an educational process (Landsford 2004: 6; Zahan 1987: 776-778).

The initiation ceremony in primitive tribes is carried out either physically or spiritually. The same case which can be seen at almost all tribes and aiming to accelerate the person's integration process to the society. The ritual which is made in primitive tribes is also seen in civilized societies which has a certain belief system, sacred text and founder of religion, in order to understand this subject. It is important for understanding the subject how advanced societies perform this ritual.

3. Initiation Ceremony in Some Religions

The ceremonies in primitive tribes are also found in some belief systems. The initiation is an important milestone for boys and girls who desired to be part of the society. The person feels himself as part of the society with this ceremony. Hinduism which is emerged in the Indian subcontinent, is a belief system that considers the initiation ceremony as an important event. According to Hinduism the Brahmins *atman*; the clerics who ascertain the secret knowledge of the spirit. He must also take the sacred cord which is also called *nobility string* from master Brahmins. The initiation ceremony is called *diksha* or *upanayana* by Hindus. The male Brahmin candidates in particular are whispered a prayer from Gayatri to his ear after he has received his nobility string. Gayatri is the most important part of Rig Veda which is called Savitra by Hindus. The candidate does never take the nobility string out of his head in any way besides, he tries to protect every single thread of the string from spiritual dirt. Later, the candidate finalizes the ritual by making some prostrating movements. Hindu men are taken into the caste by finishing the process however, there is no such ceremony for women but when they get married to a Brahmin they will be entitled to get in the caste. This shows that Hinduism, a patriarchal religious system, that indicates precedence of male. There are two other upper classes, like Brahmin and are called Kshatriya and Vaisya. The candidates also take responsibility of nobility string. This thread is assumed that they are members of the caste. The fourth degree of caste, called the Sudra and the candidates are not entitled to have the nobility string and these are usually the working class. Moreover, in Hinduism, the upper castes such as Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya are called *double born* because these ceremonies are targeting to accept candidates as an adult (Clothey 2006: 63; Bonnefoy 2000: 389-390; Ceow 2002: 65-66).

Buddhism was born in response to Hinduism in the same continent and which also finds initiation as an important event. The initiation takes place over a four-stage ritual and called *abhisheka*. The first stage is *tantra* ritual, which is made by the lower classes to being clairvoyant and this is called *Flask* initiation. Here some points of the body are opened with various exercises. Second ritual is a secret initiation in which the person gains composure through focusing on white and red coloured items and there is mental focus at this stage. Candidate concentrates on red and white coloured items by looking deeply, in order to focus his mind at a certain point. The third is the ritual of understanding the insight of knowledge or to possess deep understanding.

At this stage person focus his mind on melting items like ice and on white coloured items. The fourth is the yoga technique, which is called *akshara* and occurred in the form of nonstop spelling the consonant letters. As a sign of participating in Buddhist society, people must pass through these four stages. Candidates who have successfully completed these stages earn social affiliation (Wayman 1987: 1218-1219; Watanabe 2005: 631-633).

In the 6th century B.C. as like Buddhism, Jainism also emerged as a reaction to Hinduism and is another belief system that attaches importance to initiation ceremonies as well. There are some rituals in the sense of initiation ceremony for candidates who want to join the life of the monastery, while there are no ceremonies for becoming a member of this religion. The Jainist priests who opts for monastic life, has to complete four months trial first. In addition, the candidate have to cut off his ties with his family also leave his personal belongings behind him then wear his priestly clothes and shave his hair off. He has got only four essentials items with him and these are a piece of cloth to cover up genital place, a broom, handkerchiefs, and a money pouch. Daily and annual life for these candidates are planned in detail. A Jainist priest has to pay attention to some details in order not to violate the *ahimsa* rule, which means the principle of non-violence. In this context some rules are have to be obeyed by the candidates, these are the things that they take care of the creatures as well as filtering their water in order not to be harmed by and also sweeping their pathway ahead of them. In Jainism, the priest candidate reaches the ultimate enlightenment (Kevalin) when pass through all this stage. The ceremonies in Jainism mostly to test physical strength of the candidates. Nevertheless, as like primitive tribal beliefs, this belief system also contains rituals in which the candidates are obliged to force their body strength as well. One of the principle of Jainism is “harmlessness against living creatures“ and that is a main concept in the initiation ceremonies in Jainism. In addition, the primary objective that the candidates has to achive is to force their body to reach the enlightenment. After these steps, the Jainist becomes an eminent individual in his society (Ray 2006: 200-202; Yitik 2005: 108-109).

Sikhism is also a belief which spreaded from Punjab in India by Guru Nanak in the sixteenth century, and the *khalsa* is the initiation ceremony in Sikhism. This is also called amrit or amrit sanskar. One of the most important details in this ceremony is the presentation of the sacred drink called *amrit*. Amrit, is a special mixture of sugar and water which is prepared in a large container with a two-sided sword. The prepared drinks are then served in tem-

ples called Gurdvara this is the place where the initiation ritual was held. The candidate at the initiation ceremony, drinks five-times for this drink. The drink is also sprayed on the person's face and hair. Aftermath, a food named Parshad is distributed. The ritual practice for food and beverage in Sikhism is similar to Christians bread and wine service. This ceremony in Sikhism was led by six experienced men and the candidate who wanted to be a part of the community, performs some activities such as washing his hair, wearing a headscarf, wearing clean clothes and kakkas under the supervision of the so-called Amritdhari. In addition, some passages from Guru Grand, the sacred book of Sikhs are read during the ceremony. After the process was done the candidate becomes a member of the Sikh community. The initiation *amrit* ceremony for the Sikh member is performed openly both for men and women and they both also belong to “unique five symbols of sikh”. The initiation represents an important stage for Sikhs and social acceptance therefore take place based on both the symbols and actions. The person has the sense of social approval by performing this ritual in front of the public (Gunduz 2007: 381; 1998: 218-219; Kaur Singh 2005: 3337).

Zoroastrianism which was born in Iranian geography is a system of belief that also had initiation ceremony. In this religious tradition the initiation is termed as Navjote, Sudreh Pushi and Kosti/Kushti. There were certain people in Zoroastrianism called *mobed* who expressed that how religious life was to be performed. In this belief, being a clergyman was handed down from father to son. The followers of this religion need to pass through the initiation ceremony to express their oath and become loyal to Ahura Mazda which is a belligerent and had war with Angra Mainyu. This practice also known as transition to adolescence, should be done under supervision of *mobed*. Both male and female candidates participate in this ceremony in the fire-temple, known as *Dar-ı Mihr*. The candidates are worn an inner shirt then a 72-stringed Kosti/Kusti named belt is tied three times and this is the belt that is representing 72 parts of the book of Yesna. By having ceremony done, the candidate declares that he will live in the direction of the three moral principles of Zoroastrianism and these moral principles consisting of good thought, adopting speech of good word and good behaviour. The candidate who make his first step to become an adult, continues to wear the shirt by praying verbally and this is a kind of protection for Zoroastrian against evil “Angra Mainyu”. The initiation in Zoroastrianism has religious content which has a distinctive purpose of being close to *Ahuramazda* by following its practice in order to become a good person. That is the reason why the initiation ceremony spreaded into long

period in Zoroastrianism (Choksy 2005: 9998; Hartz 2009: 107; Alıcı 2005: 261-262).

Judaism, on the other hand, is one of the first Semitic religion that emerged in the 13th or 15th century B.C. and which is also an extant religion. It is an important turning point in the life of the Jews in this religious tradition to be obliged to religious orders. The ceremonies of *Bar Mitzva* (Son of religious law) or *Bat Mitzva* (Daughter of religious law) in Judaism are made for the person who reached to a certain age. According to Judaism, a male who arrived age of thirteen, become a Bar Mitzva and this is the mean that he is now able to fulfill his religious responsibilities as an adult. Aftermath, the Bar Mitzva man becomes a *minyan* by attending the congregational prayer and in this case he has to fast in *Yom Kippur* and fulfill all other religious and moral orders. In addition, the boy who arrived in his thirteen, shortly after is called to read the Torah in Shabbat and formally becomes a Bar Mitzva. The man who has proved himself by reading the passages from Tora and Neviim in front of the attendee can now able analyze both the passages he reads and lead a Jewish rite. After the Bar Mitzva ceremonies there are some celebrations take place as well as giving feast and dance with music (Adam 2015: 109; Kaplan 2007: 164-165).

Until modern times in Judaism, reaching religious adulthood was practice only for male. However, after the second half of the twentieth century, Jewish girls have begun to be accepted as Bat Mitzva in their own communities. Traditionally, Judaism has taken an exclusive attitude towards women in rituals but the women in the liberal unity of Jewish have come to the forefront as men and have even started leadership in some rituals. Even Orthodox Jews who are strict about women's participation in worship, have a moderate approach to Bat Mitzva. Accordingly, even if the girls can not read the Tora in front of the community, they can show their own qualifications in other ways. Since the girls in Judaism, get matured physically and academically before boys, they are considered Bat Mitzva at their twelfth birthday, the Bat or Bar Mitzva is the way in which one can become a religious member of the community. By performing these religious ceremonies the Jews bring up their children as a responsible person both towards society and the position they hold. Therefore, this practice represents an important phase for the Jews and men and girls take secure their social identities through this ceremony (Firestone 2004: 169-170).

Christianity which had emerged in the Palestinian territory as a continuation of Judaism, is the second semitic belief that also attaches importance of

the initiation ceremonies as well. This initiation; corresponds to the concepts of confirmation that signify baptism and the fortification of baptism. Baptism is an important obligation that a Christian must fulfill in order to achieve salvation and gain the faith. The baptized person declares that he is a sincere servant of the God, in other words he also declare believing in the God. Baptism for the Christian children is equivalent to being insured by the God and baptism is also an important step in Christian religious pedagogical education. Baptism is a common implementation in Christianity for Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. Christians are agreement, despite some nuances each other, about these three sects of Christianity are united in baptism. Both in the East and West, baptism in Christianity were performed in a similar way. Accordingly, the general practice in baptism, the person is to immerse three times into water in the name of the Trinity after that being applied with blessing oil. The candidates whose hands are put on the top one another and get forehead marked passes through the bread wine ritual all together. This religious ceremony continues to be held in the churches today with some differences between sects. What is important here is the necessity of baptism for the individual to join the Christian community. The person who is baptized, feels the pain that Jesus suffered when he crucified thus empathize with what he had gone through. The only way to achive salvation as a Christian individual, the person needs to go through this ritual. Those who participate in this practice see themselves as a member of Christian society (Devine 1899: 146-151, Burkitt 1899: 46-54).

Confirmation is another religious ritual in addition to the baptism in Christianity and that stands for strengthening the baptism. This concept means strengthening the faith of a Christian and reaching the consciousness and responsibility of being a Christian. Confirmation is implemented on those who have already been baptized. With this practice, people declare in the church that they are Christian who are able to protect their faith. Baptism refers to salvation and confirmation is being witnessing what God has done for Christians through Jesus Christ. The person who has been confirmed and passed this process, believes that he is filled with the soul of God and gained consciousness of being a good person. A Christian adult whose faith is strengthened with confirmation feels like a newborn by having this ceremony in front of his community and together with the priest. Because this religious ceremony is as much of a social obligation as it is personal. The person whom performed this sacrament and perceive that is a sign of a Christianity has proved himself that he is an adult in religious aspect (Challoner 1843: 44-49; Pelikan 1987: 1670).

While baptism expresses an obligation for all Christian community, there is however no any such expressions for confirmation. Confirmation is a ritual which represents admission to adulthood and it is particularly important for Catholics and Orthodox as it is seen as a rite by Christ. Catholic and Orthodox communities feel obliged to perform this religious ceremony with children in the age when they are seen as a youth in addition to baptism and eucharist sacraments. Protestants and Anglicans ignore confirmation because they think that gift of the Holy Spirit is given by baptizing. In general, the confirmation ceremony begins by reading the Bible in the direction of the bishop. Then some of the chant are read from Holy Book which is also accompanied by the baptized mother and father. At the end of the prayer and chanting the bishop finishes the ceremony by reciting the principles of faith in the Christianity and individuals who were confirmed, read the principle of faith in the religion by heart. Through confirmation, the confirmed person feels his faith reinforced and refreshing as well. Thus Christians strengthens the process which started with baptism and end with confirmation. These two practices are kind of identity of the religious that prove that people are members of the Christian community (Meslin 1987: 781-782; Erbas 1998: 187-189).

Conclusion

Initiation is an important threshold that must be passed in order for the person to live his society. Although the initiation is not so easy in almost every society, individuals expect to be accepted by the society when they reach a certain age. Because transition from childhood to adulthood, from novice to mastery and from individuality to societal require a certain price. Society wants to know how ready someone is. That is why a person has to pass through some ordeals that differ from culture to culture and these are ordeals of physical, mental or psychosocial quality is highlighted. Passing all the process mean the person admits embracing traditional, religious, magical or mythical components of the society. That is why society does not neglect to guide its members in order to help them stay free from the difficulties during the initiation ceremony.

Initiation ceremony is a well-known ritual in whether primitive or civilized and also in many other societies as well. It is hard in many societies to explain an adolescent about the life and initiation besides, hard as well to expect them to comprehend the all by their own. Because if the societies are failed to convey their life experience to the next generations, they will face

with extinction. Because it is a fact that, the only way to continue their presence is to have numbers of members. As for the society it is not well enough to come to the world alone. Traditions, customs, folklore, and religious experience must also be transferred to generations. Because generations continue to live with cultural transmission. A society without history is unthinkable. Initiation in this framework is both a memory and transfer of behavioral patterns. In addition, initiation is a pedagogical education, especially in religious and mythical aspects.

The initiation ceremony is focused more on the bodily part by primitive tribes and that is the practice where body strength particularly take places. The intensity of the violent during initiation ceremonies reveals this fact. Circumcision, dental dislocation, bodily injury and habitual life practice are some challenging processes, implemented by primitive societies. It is anticipated that there were such ceremonies in the nature of primitive tribes that were inherited naturally. Because nature itself is a difficult site and the only way to be accustomed to hard and cruel natural conditions candidates needed to go through the certain transition period. That is the why the initiation ceremonies in primitive tribes were filled with challenging ordeals. Individuals who lived in difficult geographical conditions such as mountainous, woody and desert have to take some training to challenge the nature. In this context, primitive tribes transfers all kinds of physical and spiritual education to their members through the initiation ceremonies.

Civilized societies do not have the harsh living conditions as they are in primitive tribes. Due to the settled life and improved lifestyle, members in civilized societies have relatively gentle transition ceremonies. In such societies, the number of violent ceremonies is decreased. The initiation of the individuals occurred mostly through symbolic initiation ceremonies. In these societies, instead of focusing and testing physical strength, the individuals are more equipped with educational, religious and mythical information. The symbolism-laden ceremonies which are tried to be transformed into a festival in which one will be out of childhood and become an adult. Civil societies differ in the style of rituals from primitive tribes although their purpose are the same. As a result, although the societies of primitives and the civilians societies differ about how they implement the initiation but they agree on the cause of the initiation.

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