

It is appropriate to begin with some religious functions before discussing social, psychological, and expressive functions. Four important religious functions are (1) **hierophanic** (to reveal something holy or sacred); (2) **numinous** (to elicit and reinforce a sense of awe and finitude with respect to the divine); (3) **ritualistic** (to give a narrative explaining and justifying ritual actions); and (4) **cosmological** (to render a picture of the order of the universe). If you think again about the *Enuma elish* and the story of Moses, I think you can readily see how these two myths function religiously in all of these ways. The ritualistic function may not be obvious to you now, but in the next chapter we shall examine two rituals, the Akitu festival and Passover, that are closely linked to these stories.