

Religion

There are three principal varieties of religion: monotheism, that is, believing in one God only, polytheism, believing in more than one God, and totemism, the worship and veneration of an animal or plant as both God and an Ancestor. Totemism is common among primitive peoples and the totem is nearly something important to the community as either a food source or a dangerous predator.

All forms of religion have certain basic elements in common: (1) the creation of the sacred (a sacred item is set apart from everyday life and evokes special respect and reverence), (2) the establishment of rituals which bring believers together in a group, (3) the establishment of a system of beliefs that helps to explain the meaning and purpose of the sacred and the ritual, (4) the formation of an organization of believers to assure the continuity and effectiveness of the religious experience.

Religion appears to have a number of functions in modern societies. In times of crises, it can bring about a type of unity of religion generally supports the social order, its norms and institutions. It can also take on a prophetic function of protest against the ills of the social order. Psychologically, religion has the function of giving people answers to moral questions and also a feeling of place and importance in the universe, it answers which can be sources of bewilderment and despair.

Most people are socialized into a religion, but some are converted to a new belief. Converts are people who feel that their earlier religion has failed them.

COMPREHENSION:

- 1- What basic elements of religion seem to be universal?
- 2- What is "totemism"?
- 3- What do monotheists believe in?
- 4- Name some functions of religion?
- 5- Polytheists believe in one God only. (true/false)
- 6- All forms of religion involve the creation of the sacred. (true/false)
- 7- To assure the continuity of the religious experience believers have to form an organization. (true/false)
- 8- Religion always supports the social order, and its institutions (true/false)
- 9- Totemism is the worship and veneration of an/a.....
(a) God (b) Ancestor (c) institution (d) plant or animal
- 10- People who believe that their former religion has failed them are called
(a) monotheist (b) sacred (c) converts (d) polytheist
- 11- Totemism is the widespread among
(a) primitive peoples (b) converts (c) monotheists (d) predators
- 12- People are socialized into a religion. That is, religion is
(a) acquired (b) inherited (c) supportive (d) prophetic
13. Psychologically, religion has a function.
(a) prophetic (b) supportive (c) unitary (d) moral
14. In times of crisis, religion can bring about a type of.....
(a) unity (b) bewilderment (c) despair (d) veneration

15. Totemists venerate.....

(a) gods (b) predators (c) totems (d) rituals

16. The function of the..... is to bring believers together.

(a) beliefs (b) rituals (c) organization (d) sacred items

Translation:

- 1) Polytheism, totemism, function, worship, rituals, universe, converts, a prophetic function
- 2) Religion seems to have a number of functions in modern societies. It can bring about unity in times of crisis: support the social order and its norms, take on a prophetic function of protest against social ills and issues, and give people answers to moral questions which can be a source of bewilderment and despair.