

# **RELIGION**

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## **Introduction:**

Like marriage, family and kinship, religion is another important social institution. It is also one of the earliest institutions of human society. Since ancient days religion has been influencing human life and human society both primitive and modern.

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- Each and every aspect of human life and human society bears the influence of religion. It is very difficult and almost impossible to trace the exact origin of religion. Sociology of religion is the study of the beliefs, practices and organizational forms of religion using the tools and methods of the discipline of sociology.

## **Definition :**

1. Durkheim (1858–1917) defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things”
2. Karl Marx argued that religion “is the opium of the people”

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3. Max Weber argued that, “religion, seeing it as a belief in a supernatural power that is unable to be scientifically explained. In other words, whether a belief can be considered religious or not depends on the substance of what is believed. Religion requires a belief in God or gods, or other supernatural beliefs”.
4. Sigmund Freud — “Religion is a collective neurosis.

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- **Functions of Religion**

The functionalist perspective, which originates from Emile Durkheim's work on religion, highlights the social role of religion.

## Work of Religion

Durkheim argued that religion is, in a sense, the celebration and even worship of human society. Durkheim proposed that religion has three major functions in society:

1. It provides social cohesion to help maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs.
2. Social control to enforce religious-based morals and norms to help maintain conformity and control in society.
3. It offers meaning and purpose to answer any existential questions.

# Religion and Health

Certain features of religious practice may facilitate greater well-being for members. These include the following:

1. basic social contact
2. a large, non-family network of social support
3. the positive mental health one derived from optimism and volunteering,
4. coping strategies to enhance one's ability to deal with stress
5. a worldview that prevents existential questions from arising

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## **Criticism of religion:**

Some criticisms of religion have been given below :

- Religion is wrong as it is in conflict with science
- Revelations conflict internally
- Conflicting claims about the one true faith

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THANKING YOU