

RELIGION

MODULE1

MEANING

- **Religion** is a social-[cultural system](#) of designated [behaviors](#) and practices, [morals](#), [worldviews](#), [texts](#), [sanctified places](#), [prophecies](#), [ethics](#), or [organizations](#), that relates humanity to [supernatural](#), [transcendental](#), and [spiritual](#) elements.^[1] However, there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion.^{[2][3]}
- Different religions may or may not contain various elements ranging from the [divine](#),^[4] [sacred things](#),^[5] [faith](#),^[6] a supernatural being or supernatural beings^[7] or "some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life".^[8] Religious practices may include [rituals](#), [sermons](#), commemoration or veneration (of [deities](#) and/or [saints](#)), [sacrifices](#), [festivals](#), [feasts](#), [trances](#), [initiations](#), [funerary services](#), [matrimonial services](#), [meditation](#), [prayer](#), [music](#), [art](#), [dance](#), [public service](#), or other aspects of human [culture](#). Religions have [sacred histories](#) and [narratives](#), which may be preserved in sacred scriptures, and [symbols](#) and [holy places](#), that aim mostly to give a [meaning to life](#). Religions may contain symbolic stories, which are sometimes said by followers to be true, that have the side purpose of explaining the [origin of life](#), the [universe](#), and other things. Traditionally, faith, in addition to reason, has been considered a source of [religious beliefs](#).^[9]

COMPONENTS

- **Components or Basic elements of Religion:**
- (1) **Belief** in Supernatural Power:
- (2) Man's adjustment to Supernatural Powers:
- (3) Acts defined as Sinful:
- (4) Method of Salvation:
- (5) **Belief** in some sacred things:
- (6) Procedure of Worship:
- (7) Place of Worship

FUNCTIONS

- **Functions of Religion:**
- As one of the basic social institutions, religion performs several important functions.:
- 1. It helps man to deal with his fear of the supernatural powers. It helps individuals to overcome pain, fear and anxiety.
- 2. It is a means used by man to adjust to his belief in the existence of supernatural powers.

FUNCTIONS

- 3. It gives people explanations regarding the road to salvation or release from the cycle of births and rebirths.
- 4. It is a potent and powerful means of controlling social behaviour. The fear of punishment from supernatural powers for violating religious rule is an effective means of controlling the behaviour of individuals within society. Each religion has its own code regarding acceptable and unacceptable modes of behaviour, which is binding on all the individuals who belong to, or follow a particular religion.
- 5. It provides emotional and psychological comfort by assuring people that there is a meaning in life, and there is a purpose even in suffering. It is a great source of comfort and solace in times of crises.
- 6. It unites people and brings social solidarity

FUNCTIONS

- 7. It provides answers to certain basic questions in life—what is the purpose of life, why do people suffer, why do people die, what happens after death, and so on.
- 8. It provides guidelines regarding everyday life, societal behaviour, behaviour towards others, and so on.
- 9. It helps people to adapt to changing situations, environment and customs. It helps individuals to adapt to all kinds of social change, including change in marital status, death in the family, and change in family structure due to death, divorce or separation.
- 10. It provides individuals with a sense of identity

BASIC ELEMENTS

- **Every religion is made up of certain elements. These elements are as follows:**
- A belief is a conviction. Religious beliefs refer to the belief in the existence of supernatural powers, which take the shape of divine beings, who are not part of this world, and are not governed by the ordinary rules of nature.
- Different societies and different religions have different sets of religious beliefs. These vary not only from society to society, but within societies, variations can be seen from region to region, state to state and between different communities and groups.

ELEMENTS

- **Rituals:**
- Every religion is associated with a set of practices, rites and rituals, which are ceremonies or repetitive practices. Religious rituals are prescribed acts that are not only sacred in themselves, but also symbolize the sacred (Broom, Selznick and Darroch, p. 392). Ritualization of religious behaviour makes it sacred. A ritual may emerge simply as a means of coordinating activities, but once it is given religious connotations, it becomes sacred.
- **Symbols:**
- Every religion uses certain symbols, with which it is usually associated. The cross denotes Christianity, the Muslim symbol is the crescent moon and star, the Jews have the Star of David and so on.

ELEMENTS

- **Organization:**
- Most modern societies have organized religious groups, which are used to affirm religious beliefs and sentiments, to recruit and train specialists in theory, rituals and doctrine, and to organize meetings and gatherings and the relations between religious groups and the masses.
- **Emotions:**
- All religions evoke strong emotions in the believers or followers. Generally, religious emotions are associated with all things that are sacred and close to the hearts of the believers.