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## Passage No. 100

**Direction: Study the following information carefully and answer the question given below.**

Recently, in a court case, lawyers argued that the deity in a temple is a legal entity and therefore, the deity's legal rights have to be protected. The deity's legal rights and desires and wishes, are expressed through the hereditary priests who manage the temple and who have been doing so for several generations. This draws our attention to a very important but overlooked theme in Indian society where gods play significant role in establishing society.

Deities have always played an important role in social engineering and we have to think about it carefully.

In ancient tribes how did you bind people together? Everybody had a different opinion, this could have led to tensions between members over resource allocation, job allocation. One of the ways in which the tribe was kept together was by establishing an impersonal deity, to whom all are beholden and this deity's wishes were expressed through the dreams of shamans and everybody submitted to this dream.

The shamans, by staying away from the main tribal settlement, declared they had no vested interests. By submitting to this deity's dreams members remained part of the tribe. By rejecting the deity's dreams, you would be out of the tribe. Hence the deity or the God of the tribe played a key role in binding the tribe together, which is why every tribe had its own totemic god as the anchor of its identity. The deity, in effect, expressed the will of the tribe.

Modern institutions are essentially impersonal entities that are treated by law, as a person and, therefore with rights and responsibilities. In ancient times, this role of an institution was played by a tribal god or village god (grama devata) or the clan god (kula devata). The earliest idea of institution comes from the Roman Empire, where the senators owed **allegiance** not to the king or Caesar but to the city of Rome.

Later, Rome was replaced by the Church and the priestly class functioned in the name of the church. Authority came from a supernatural force. The assumption here was that supernatural and impersonal entities are fairer. However, life is never so simple as the gods cannot speak, just as an institution cannot speak. An institution expresses its will through its board of directors and its management committee, in the same way a deity expresses its will through its management committees, the priests and trustees.

In modern times, in temples like Siddhi Vinayak in Mumbai and Sai Baba Shirdi temple, there are trusts which comprise of politicians and priests, who manage the funds of these institutions. In India, many people **abhor** the idea of giving taxes to the state but they have no problem in giving large amounts of

money, even shares of their companies, to the deity because they feel they will receive karmic dividends.

Thus, these temples are flush with funds which are then managed by the committees of the temple, which in a way embodies the will of the deity in a temple. This has been happening since ancient times, only then the managing committee were just hereditary Brahmin families and the king. In Puri Odisha, the Gajapati kings are considered living embodiments of the divine.

Temple cities like Kanchipuram, Madurai, Thiruvananthapuram, were designed with the temple as the most imposing structure of stone in the centre, the royal palace was made of wood next to it. Brahmins and courtiers lived around this temple-palace complex.

Then came the markets. Then the fields. Finally the outlier space for service-providers, who were involved in cleaning the city, hence deemed 'untouchables' (Hinduism's darkest legacy).

With the help of the temple, and its impersonal deity, the Brahmins helped the king bind various clans and communities and tribes. For example, in the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the chariot of the Goddess is built part by part by various tribes. They all have to come together to build this chariot. A teamwork, a collaboration, that binds people together.

One can argue that deities in India, and their temple culture, through the priestly class functioned as an impersonal proto-institution that bound communities together and helped legitimize the kingship. It made the kingdom not the king's property but the king's responsibility. The king was merely a trustee who takes care of the deity's people.

But the quality of the deity's will like the quality of an institution's value is a function of the biases of the management committee, the male Brahmins in this case. It is time their 'divine' dreams moved out of medieval times and became more in line with the modern times.

## Questions:

### **1. Why do the Indian citizens donate large amount of funds to the temples but not to the Government of India as income tax?**

- A. Donations are exempted from income tax and that is why a lot of people donate to select organizations in order to get exemptions from payment of income tax.
- B. Income tax is like payment to government without anything in return but in case of temple donations people get blessings of the god.
- C. It is mandatory to pay income tax and that makes people think that they should not pay it at all
- D. It is very difficult to pay income tax in India since a lot of registrations need to be carried out.
- E. None of the above

**2. Which among the following is true regarding the similarities between the temple and an institution?**

- I. Both the temples and the organizations are always flush with funds and the funds need to be redirected in the productive way
- II. The temples and institutions are both living entities and they are all governed by some law or the other
- III. The will of a temple and an institution depends on the mindsets of its managing force and it is not universal

A. Only I      B. Only II      C. Both I and III      D. Both II and III      E. None of the above

**3. Which among the following can be termed true regarding the opinion of the author about the role of deity in the social fabric of the country?**

- A. The author is not that amused by the idea since deities cannot express any will and the human beings are mainly responsible for everything.
- B. The author is ecstatic about the idea of having a deity based society so that the people can obey some force outside the realm of human race.
- C. The author is cautious about the contribution of deity in the social structure of the country and is of the opinion that the human beings should be considerate enough in managing the culture.
- D. The author is of the opinion that Indians are very foolish since they donate everything to the deity who is actually managed by other human beings.
- E. Other than those given in options

**4. Which among the following is most similar in meaning to the word **Allegiance** as used in the passage?**

A. Belief      B. Credibility      C. Loyalty      D. Commitment      E. Concession

**5. Which among the following is opposite in meaning to the word **abhor** as used in the passage?**

A. Fancy      B. Regard      C. Prefer      D. Adjourn      E. None of the above

**6. Which among the following is the positive contribution of the temple towards the ancient tribes?**

- A. The tribes used to get funds from people from outside the clan and they could use it for daily living.
- B. The tribes became famous because of any famous temple since in most of the cases cities came up with the temple being the central attraction.
- C. The tribes used to fight among themselves but with the temple everybody used to come together and worship the deity.
- D. The tribes were warring entities but the institution of temple brought everybody together and also kept them together.
- E. The tribes used to be influenced by the properties of the deity and they could do wonders afterwards

**Correct Answers:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
B	E	C	C	C	D

**Explanations:**

- 1.** Refer to “In India, many people abhor the idea of giving taxes to the state but they have no problem in giving large amounts of money, even shares of their companies, to the deity because they feel they will receive karmic dividends.”

It is clearly mentioned that the Indian citizens give large amounts of donation in order to get the blessings of the God as they believe that it will help them in the life after death.

It makes Option B the right choice among the given options.

- 2.** It is mentioned in the passage that most of the temples are always flush with funds because of the donations from people but nothing of that sort has been mentioned in case of the institutions in general.

Statement I is not correct.

Statement II talks about some kind of law. Temples are not governed by laws but they are run by the management committees or trustees. Therefore, it is also not a similarity since institutions need to be run on the basis of clearly laid-down laws of the government. Hence it is also not correct

Refer to, “But the quality of the deity’s will like the quality of an institution’s value is a function of the biases of the management committee, the male Brahmins in this case.”

It is clear that the biases of the management committee come into action while deciding the will of deity in a temple. So, only Statement III is correct

This makes Option E the right choice among the given options.

3. According to the passage, the author has described the role played by deities in binding tribes together and also the role of deities in social engineering in the country. It is like a supernatural force that can bring people together. However, it should also be referred that he wants the priests to come out of the medieval mind set and embrace modern divine dreams.

It clearly implies that the author is recognizing the contribution made by deities in social engineering but at the same time some changes are also required in whole issue.

This makes Option C the right choice among the given options.

4. The word has been used in the sense that the Roman Senators owed their loyalty to the City of Rome and not the King of Rome.

Among the given words, '*belief*' means *trust*, *credibility* means *trustworthiness*, *Commitment* means *the state or quality of being dedicated to any cause* whereas *concession* refers to *discount*.

This makes Option C the right choice among the given options.

5. The given word *abhor* has been used in the sense that people in India are not very fond of paying taxes to the government but they have no problem donating large chunks of money to the temples.

Among the given words, only *prefer* can imply that *something is liked*

This makes Option C the right choice among the given options.

6. Refer to "Hence the deity or the God of the tribe played a key role in binding the tribe together, which is why every tribe had its own totemic god as the anchor of its identity. The deity, in effect, expressed the will of the tribe."

It is clear that the deity was instrumental in binding the tribes together since in some cases a number of tribes was also required to come together to perform something and without all of them coming together, it would be impossible to complete something. Temples and deity have a very significant role in binding the tribes together.

This makes Option D the right choice among the given options.



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