

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 8TH



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Class : 8th
Subject : Civics
Chapter : 2

Chapter Name : Understanding Secularism

Q1 Re-read the introduction to this chapter. Why do you think retaliation is not the proper response to this problem? What would happen if different groups followed this path?

Answer. Missing

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Q2 Government schools often have students from different religious backgrounds. Re-read the three objectives of a secular State and write two sentences on why it is important that government schools do not promote any one religion?

Answer. Missing

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Q3 Can you think of a recent incident, from any part of India, in which the secular ideals of the Constitution were violated and persons were persecuted and killed because of their religious backgrounds?

Answer. Missing

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Q1 List the different types of religious practice that you find in your neighborhood. This could be different forms of prayer, worship of different gods, sacred sites, different kinds of religious music and singing etc. Does this indicate freedom of religious practice?

Answer. The different types of religious practices found in my neighbourhood strongly indicate freedom of religious practice. The various forms of prayer, worship of different gods, sacred sites and different kinds of religious music found in my locality are of Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and the Baha'is. The Christians sing hymns, the Hindus bhajans, while the Muslims offers namaaz five times a day. The Bahai's believe in world unity and peace.

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Q2 Will the government intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to

practise infanticide? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer. The government in any democratic nation would intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to practice infanticide because this tradition goes against the Fundamental Right to Life. It involves the killing of an innocent and is, hence, unacceptable. The government, in this case, interferes by coercion. However, sometimes, the government may also intervene via support. For example, Sikhs in Delhi are excused from wearing helmets on two-wheelers because their religion demands them to wear a turban-a sacred tradition for them.

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Q3 Complete the following table:

Objective Why is this important? Example of a violation of this objective

One religious

Community does not
dominate another.

The State does not enforce
any particular religion nor take
away the religious freedom of
individuals.

That some members do not
dominate other members of
the same religious community.

Answer. (a) This is important to protect the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Religion. Example of violation: the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6th December, 1992 by Hindu nationalists.

(b) This is important to uphold the ideals of a democratic nation which allows its citizens freedom to choose whichever religion they wish to follow. Example: France, in February 2004, banned headscarves and turbans in public places, thereby hurting the sentiments of Muslim and Sikh minorities.

(c) This is necessary to uphold individual freedom in the light of pressure from a group or religious community that one belongs to. For example, the Christian community is divided into Protestants and Catholics; Irish Catholics are looked down upon and troubled by the officials of the Church of England who are pre-dominantly Protestants.

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Q4 Look up the annual calendar of holidays of your school. How many of them pertain to different religions? What does this indicate?

Answer. Many holidays on a school's annual calendar pertain to different religions. This indicates that India is a secular country where religious freedom is granted to its citizens and all religions

are equally respected.

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Q5 Find out some examples of different views within the same religion.

Answer. Many religions are further segregated into groups and communities that hold differing ideological opinions. One of these is the rift between the Shias and Sunnis – both followers of Islam. The division between Shias and Sunnis dates back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and to the question of who was to take over the leadership after the Prophet. Sunni Muslims agree with the position taken by many of the Prophet's companions, that the new leader should be elected from among those capable for the job. This is what was done, and the Prophet Muhammad's close friend and advisor, Abu Bakr, became the first Caliph of the Islamic nation. The word "Sunni" in Arabic comes from a word meaning "one who follows the traditions of the Prophet."

On the other hand, some Muslims share the belief that leadership should have stayed within the Prophet's own family, among those specifically appointed by him, or among Imams appointed by God Himself.

The Shia Muslims believe that following the Prophet Muhammad's death, leadership should have passed directly to his cousin/son-in-law, Ali. Throughout history, Shia Muslims have not recognized the authority of elected Muslim leaders, choosing instead to follow a line of Imams which they believe have been appointed by the Prophet Muhammad or God Himself. The word "Shia" in Arabic means a group or supportive party of people. The commonly-known term is shortened from the historical "Shia-t-Ali," or "the Party of Ali." They are also known as followers of "Ahl-al-Bayt" or "People of the Household" (of the Prophet).

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Q6 The Indian State both keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion. This idea can be quite confusing. Discuss this once again in class using examples from the chapter as well as those that you might have come up with.

Answer. The Indian State keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion. This idea is quite confusing. It allows Sikh citizens to wear turbans and thereby be exempt from the use of helmets but it also disallows government schools from celebrating any particular religious festival. Annual holidays are given with regard to all religions and not any specific ones.

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Q7 This poster alongside highlights the need for 'Peace'. It says, "Peace is a never-ending process... It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests." Write in your own words what you think the above sentences are trying to convey? How does it relate to the need for religious tolerance?

This chapter had three drawings on religious tolerance made by students of your age. Design your own poster on religious tolerance for your peers.



Answer. The given quote from Oscar Arias Sanchez highlights the need for peace as a mutual process that “requires us to work and live together”. As Gersonides states, peace cannot be achieved by force or fear but by shared consent. The sentences in the poster are trying to convey how peace is not an outcome of a definitive stance, but rather it is a process where similarities and differences conglomerate to form a whole. Attainment of peace does not entail turning a blind eye to racial, religious or economic differences, but rather accepting these as they are but not allowing these differences to mould our thoughts towards ill-will or hatred for those who are different from us in their religious undertakings.

This relates to the need for religious tolerance in its ideal for peace as tolerant and not arbitrary.

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