

members of a totem clan call themselves by the name of their totem, and commonly believe themselves to be actually descended from it. Thus the Turtle clan of the Iroquois are descended from a fat turtle which, burdened by the weight of its shell in walking, contrived by great exertions to throw it off, and thereafter gradually developed into a man, etc.

Believing himself to be descended from, and therefore akin to his totem, the savage naturally treats it with respect. The origin of totemism can only be conjectured. The accepted explanation is that the institution arose under animistic conceptions of existence. In the struggle for life man sought allies. The supposedly superior quality of some animals or plants made them seem desirable in that relationship and the pact was made.

In later stages the notion of kinship and then of descent entered as explanations of the fact once imagined as real. Meanwhile the living or dead animal was treated as was the living or dead human; in Egypt corpses of both were mummified, in Greece they were buried or burned. But from sacredness to godship was but a stage, the individual became deity—so with the cat, bull, crocodile, etc., in Egypt, and in Greece the horse, mouse, snake, ram, and even the lobster.

But thought grew more anthropomorphic, and the animal head was placed on a human body as in Greece and Egypt. Next the animal came to represent deity, and finally was simply sacred to him. The relationship of totemism to religion is thus in part revealed, though there are other connections. That out of this came in part zoolatry, idolatry, and even polytheism is demonstrable.

In Australia totemism is almost universal. In North America it prevails principally among the Indians on the northwest coast as far south as the United States frontier; it has quite a large following in parts of South America; in Africa it prevails in Senegambia, among the Bakalhi on the equator and elsewhere; there are numerous totem worshipers in Bengal and it is very popular in parts of Siberia.

With regard to ancient nations totemism may be regarded as certain for the Egyptians, and highly probable for the Semites, Greeks and Latins. Professor Sayce finds totemism among the ancient Babylonians, but he has not been able to produce conclusive evidence.