

Indira Gandhi National Open University
Elective Course in Sociology: ESO-15
Society and Religion
Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA)

Maximum Marks: 100
Weightage: 30%

Programme Code: BDP
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Answer all the questions.

SECTION - I

Answer the following in about 500 words each.

Marks

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| 1. | Explain the intellectualist theories of religion. | 20 |
| 2. | What is secularism? Discuss its various elements. | 20 |

SECTION - II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

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| 3. | Compare and contrast between Bhakti and Sufism. | 12 |
| 4. | Discuss the social significance of pilgrimages. | 12 |
| 5. | Explain the concept of Protestantism in the light of economic development. | 12 |
| 6. | Examine the nexus between religion and politics of the state. | 12 |

SECTION - III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

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| 7. | Discuss the functions of shaman. | 06 |
| 8. | Define civil religion. | 06 |

IGNOU ASSIGNMENT GURU (2017-2018)

E.S.O.-15

Society and Religion

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Answer all the questions.

SECTION-I

Answer the following questions.

Q. 1. Explain the intellectualist theories of religion.

Ans. Intellectualist Theories of Religion: In the beginning, ideas about the origin and development of Religion were based on the reports of missionaries and adventures about the nature of Religion among the primitives. De Brosses (1760), advanced a theory that Religion originated from fetishism i.e. belief in Magical fetishes or objects. The Portugese sailors had reported that the coastal Negro tribes of West Africa worshipped inanimate things and animals. Comte on the basis of this theory held that in due courses *Fetishism* was replaced by *Polytheism*. This theory was superseded by the Ghost theory and the Soul theory. These latter theories are given the name Intellectualist theories of Religion. The reason is both assume that the primitives are rational being, although their efforts to explain natural phenomena are crude.

(1) The Nature-Myth School: Nature-Myth school was a German School, dealing with Indo-European Religions. According to it, ancient Gods were universally personifications of natural phenomena. Max Muller, a German linguist, propounded this theory. In his opinion grand natural objects gave people a feeling of the infinite as well as acted as symbols of the infinite. The people thought of celestial bodies, such as, moon, stars, dawn and their attributes in terms of metaphor and symbol.

With the passage of time, the symbolic representations came to have an independent identity and became separated from that which they represented. The attributes or the symbols became personified as deities. The human beings and nature stand in a relationship of awe, wonder and terror *etc.* Early human beings were unable to understand or explain the world of nature. They ended up worshipping it out of fear and awe. According to Muller, the Religion of early man can be studied by looking into linguistic Etymological meaning of the name of Gods and legends associated with them. Max Muller's contemporaries, Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor and Andrew Lang were the main critics of nature-myth theories. They criticised the Philological and Etymological approach to Religion.

(2) The Ghost Theory: Unlike Max Muller, Herbert Spencer and Edward Tylor focused their attention on Religious behaviour of the primitives. In their opinion, primitive societies offered an evidence of the earliest forms of Religion. Spencer published his views in 1882, eleven years after Tylor had published his book *Primitive Culture* in 1871.

In his book, *The Principles of Sociology*, Spencer (1876-96) discusses primitive beliefs. He shows that the primitives were rational though with a limited quantum of knowledge. They made reasonable, though weak, inferences with regard to natural phenomena. They observed sun, moon, clouds and stars come and go, and got the notion of visible and invisible conditions. Likewise, they get the idea of a person's duality from dreams. The dreams are real life-experiences by the primitives. The dream-self moves about at night while the shadow-self acts by the day. Sleep

is temporary loss of sensibilities. The death is a longer period of insensibility. This idea of duality is extended by them to animals, plants and material object.

The appearance of dead persons in dreams is the evidence of temporary after life. This leads to the conception of a supernatural being in the form of a Ghost. The idea of Ghosts grows into the idea Gods and the Ghosts of ancestors become divine beings. The 'ancestor worship is the root of every Religion'.

The prevalence of the idea of Ghosts of ancestors or other superior beings becoming divinities among the primitives in many parts of the world, shows that Spencer's theory has some plausibility.

(3) The Soul Theory or Animism: The word *anima*, a Latin word means Soul. Sir Edward Tylor's theory of Animism considers both the origin and "development of Religion". The Ghost theory explains the origin of Religion in the idea of Ghosts. The Animism or the Soul theory says the same thing in terms of the idea of Soul. According to Tylor, experiences of death, disease, visions and dreams lead the primitives to think about the existence of immaterial power, i.e., the Soul. Thereafter, this idea of Soul is projected on to creatures other than human and even to inanimate objects. The Soul exists independent of its physical home, the body. Tylor's definition of Religion is that Religion originated from a belief in spiritual beings.

The Soul theory of Tylor has elements of the sacred and the supernatural. Tylor's definition being general labels all faiths and beliefs as Religion.

According to Tylor these spiritual beings later develop into Gods. They possess superior powers and control destiny of human beings. This is in brief Tylor's theory of Animism. Critics hold that Tylor's own thought was projected on to the primitives' thought processes. We have no means to know if this or something else is what was actually thought by the primitives. According to Swanton (1924:358-68) Tylor has advanced unprovable causal theories. Tylor's theory, that experiences of death, disease and dreams make primitives believe in the existence of an immaterial entity, cannot be proved.

Secondly, the logical process given by Tylor by which the idea of Soul leads primitives to the idea of spirits is not understandable. As a matter of fact, the concept of Soul and the concept of spirit are quite different. Tylor could not see the difference between the two concepts.

Tylor on Magic: Tylor thinks primitive Religion to be rational and based on observations. He argues that Magic among primitives is based on observation and classification of similar elements. Failure of Magic is due to Magician's wrong inferences about a mystical link between various objects. A subjective supposition of some connection in terms of ideas is mistaken for an objective link. The primitives do not, for good reasons, see the futility of Magic. Hence when ever Magic fails, its failure is rationally explained as under:

- (i) The practitioner forgetting to perform some prescribed act, or
- (ii) His ignoring to observe some prohibition, or
- (iii) Some hostile Magic checking it in the way.

Criticism of the Theory:

(i) Andrew Lang (1844–1912): Andrew Lang (1844–1912) a pupil of Tylor, criticised Tylor's theory of Religion. Lang did not accept that the idea of Gods could have arisen as a late development from a belief in Ghosts or spirits. In his opinion many primitive peoples believed in what he called high Gods. Lang (1989:2) argued that the idea of God cannot have evolved out of reflections on dreams and "Ghosts", because the two have entirely different origins. The belief in a God was first which later became degraded as Animism.

(ii) R.R. Marett (1866–1943): R.R. Marett (1866-1943), another disciples of Tylor, criticised the animistic theory. He claimed that the primitive belief in an impersonal force preceded beliefs in spiritual beings. He called this impersonal force *mana*. He argued that belief in *mana* had both historical and theoretical priority. Marett (1915) held that a belief in *man* and *tabu* (or taboo) provided a definition of the Magico-Religious thinking.

Q. 2. What is secularism? Discuss its various elements.

Ans. The Sociological Connotation of Secularisation: Social thinkers have used the word Secularisation for indicating a process. It is by this process that the religious institutions and religious conceptions and understanding have lost control in worldly matters like economy, polity, justice, health, family, and so on. Instead, there emerged empirical and rational procedures and conceptions about the world in general.

Bryan R. Wilson writes that in Secularisation process "the various social institutions gradually become distinct from one another and increasingly free of the Matrix of religious assumptions that had earlier informed, inspired and dominated their operation". Secularisation is a process in which conceptions of the supernatural lose their sovereignty over human affairs, a pattern broadly identified as Secularism.

(3) Secularisation within Religion: One aspect of Secularisation is that Religions modify their doctrines and practices according to the changing needs of their members and in-response to changes in society. For example, in 1976, the Episcopal Church in the United States of America officially allowed women to become priests. In England it was only recently that the Church allowed women to become priests, causing much controversy. It is evident that the Church responded to the changing situation and the position of women in society.

Secularisation also influences the content of religious belief. In doing so, it leads, many times, to the development of a sect. This is how Protestantism grew against the orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism and brought down Religion to 'this world'. Secularisation in Religion is usually accompanied by increase in attention to public issues. The religious institutions are getting involved with running of modern hospitals and secular educational institutions or engaging in philanthropic activities.

(4) Secularism as a Value: Secularism was an ideological goal of the new political philosophy and movement that took place after the French Revolution. However, it was in 1851 that George Jacob Holyoake coined the term Secularism. He declared it as the only rational basis of political and social organisation. Holyoake questioned the religious basis of civil society and recommended Secularism as state ideology. In his opinion, it promotes human welfare by Material means and makes the service of others its duty.

(5) Secularism as a Progressive Ideology: Secularism as a progressive ideology was an essential qualification for a liberal, democratic state of the post French Revolution. These connotations are applied even to a modern democratic state now. A modern state makes no distinction between groups, classes etc. within society, irrespective of religious affiliation. The political philosophy on the part of the state required that the state shall neither impose any Religion on people nor would prohibit practice of Religion by a section of the people.

In this way, with Secularism as an ideological goal, the proponents of this ideology criticise religious orthodoxy as the basis for social organisation and advocate civil values.

The development of Secularism as an ideology was partly consequent to the process of Secularisation in Europe. In many modern states it has been adopted as a state policy.

SECTION - II

Answer the following questions.

Q. 3. Compare and contrast between Bhakti and Sufism.

Ans. Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparison: Much of what the Sufis taught was very similar to the Bhakti teaching of concentrating upon God and the significance of sacred music and song. This interaction between the two led to the creation of a medieval mysticism which disclaimed particularly caste practices and atrocities. The first Sufi teacher who came to India was, Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, who arrived in Delhi in 1193 and settled in Pushkar in Ajmer. He had both Hindu and Muslim followers. The 'Urs' at his dargah in Ajmer, is treated as a major pilgrimage centre. As mentioned, these Sufis, were Islamic mystics who sought the path of salvation through an ardent and passionate love for God. The teachings of the Sufis influenced the followers as well as saints of the Bhakti tradition. They came to combine in themselves, Sufi and Bhakti teachings. Kabir and Guru Nanak.

(1) Growth of Medieval Mysticism: An important role in the growth of medieval mysticism was played by Ramananda (1370-1440). Ramananda did as under:

- (i) Challenged caste divisions,
- (ii) Questioned traditional ceremonies
- (iii) Accepted the Hindu philosophy of divisions, and

Accepted the Hindu philosophy of Jnana or knowledge, meditation or Yoga and devotion or Bhakti.

He had many disciples of which twelve were the more important and came from low castes e.g. Kabir. He combined in him, elements of both the Sufi and Bhakti traditions, claiming that both Allah and Rama were the same thing.

(2) Sufi-Bhakti Interaction: This interaction of the Sufi and Bhakti traditions gave to the lives of Kabir and Nanak a peculiar flavour. Kabir was linked to the Sufis, not just in terms of the mystical nature of his renderings but also on the level or organization of thought.

Scholars compare Bhakti notion of Viraha to the Sufi notion of *ishq* which is expressed not through Viraha but *dard*. It leads to an experience that is called *atish* which is similar to the experience of *agni* or burning of one's soul in Viraha.

The ideas in Kabir's dohas about love, separation and suffering are found revealed in the lyrics of Sufi poetry as well. Both, Kabir's Nirguna Bhakti and the Sufi tradition, also speak of the idea of how without Lord and devotee, there can be no devotion. In the context of hagiographic writing about the Bhakti saints Sufi influence is seen.

(3) Bhakti-Sufi Teachings: The relationship between the Sufi and Bhakti saints was reciprocal. The Sufis too were influenced by the Bhakti tradition. The Sufi tradition also produced its saints such as the Shah Karim and Shah Inayat from the 17th century in whose teachings little distinction was made between the divine as Allah or Rama or Hari, similar to what Kabir sought to say, and revealing the influence of the Bhakti tradition.

Bhakti and Sufism reveal a major similarity in the nature of devotion and openness to all sections of society which made both, relatively more egalitarian. The influence of Sufi thought on the lives of Kabir and Nanak is clear. Guru Nanak on many of his journeys is believed to have been wearing Sufi robes. There are major similarities between Kabir's or the Bhakti traditions notions of Viraha and *agni* and the Sufi ideas of *ishq*, *dard* and *atish*. Both Kabir and Nanak were concerned with the inequities represented by caste society and Hindu orthodoxy in general and spoke up against it.

Q. 4. Discuss the social significance of pilgrimages.

Ans. The Social Significance of Pilgrimages: Turner holds that pilgrimage is a social process. He emphasises the *communitas* in pilgrimages and their liminal character. He has shown how pilgrimage is related to different aspects of social life, namely, social and cultural integration, educational, economic, political and other kinds of activities.

Turner's Thesis: Victor W. Turner holds that pilgrimage has the classic three-stage form of a rite of passage:

- (i) Separation,
- (ii) The liminal stage *i.e.* the journey itself, the sojourn at the shrine, and the contact with the sacred, and
- (iii) Reaggregation *i.e.* the home-coming.

In this context, Turner asks us to consider two modalities of social experience as under:

(i) Of structure, and (ii) Of *communitas*.

(i) Structure: In structure people are (a) differentiated by social role and (b) position and linked in an often hierarchical political system.

(ii) Communitas: On the other hand, *communitas* presents itself in an undifferentiated community of equals who may recognize each other in an immediate and total way. *Communitas* "is almost everywhere held to be sacred or 'holy'. The reason may be that it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency". *Communitas* emerges where social structure is not and reaffirms the bonds of essential unity upon which the social order ultimately rests.

The intervening period and flow of activities between departure from home for the pilgrimage centre and return therefrom to the familiar world is marked out by "liminality, the optimal setting of *communitas* relations, and *communitas*, a spontaneously generated relationship between levelled and equal, total and individuated human beings".

Liminality and *communitas* constitute anti-structure. Anti-structure is the source and origin of the all structures and their critique. It gives suggestion to new possibilities. In the pilgrimage situation the ethos of *communitas* becomes visible in the social bond which develops among pilgrims and which welds them into a group. Relations among members of the group of pilgrims cut across the social divisions. Pilgrims are relieved for a time from the nets of social structure wherefrom they journey to the pilgrimage centre. It allows temporary release. Therefore, pilgrimage is designated as a form of anti-structure compared to the highly ordered and structured sedentary life of the place of residence.

(2) Pilgrimage and Socio-cultural Integration: One can observe the contribution of pilgrimages to social and cultural integration of a people at three levels as under:

- (i) First, pilgrimage promotes national or regional integration cutting across group boundaries.
- (ii) Pilgrimage has a impact on the group of the pilgrims in maintaining and strengthening the values and ideals held by the group.
- (iii) In many cases Pilgrimage serves to reinforce the existing patterns of social relations within the area from which the pilgrimage draws pilgrims.

India abounds in diversities of race, region, language, sect, caste etc. The pilgrimages have been a very important vehicle of the idea of essential unity of the Indian people. M.N. Srinivas (1962 : 105) writes, "The concept of unity of India is essentially a religious one". Famous centres of pilgrimage lie in every part of the country. In the long time back

when the means of communication and transport were very poor, pilgrims occasionally walked hundreds of miles across the areas full of fierce animals and dacoits and faced disease and privation. The grand pilgrimage was *pradakshina* or clockwise circumambulation of the territory of India. In a sacred centre like Banaras many kinds of people and many local and regional elements of culture are juxtaposed and ordered in a small place.

(3) Pilgrimage and Education: Pilgrimage has been one of the important sources of education, information and cultural awareness for the pilgrims. The Hindu pilgrimage affords, for instance, an opportunity to the people living in distant villages to know India as a whole and also her varying manners, life styles and customs. Karve noted three characteristics of education present in the pilgrimage:

- (i) The preservation of traditional knowledge,
- (ii) Its cultivation,
- (iii) Its transmission to the next generation.

This education was also many-sided. It included Religion and philosophy and three arts of music, dancing, and drama.

(4) Pilgrimage and the Arts: Dance and music, architecture, sculpture, and painting receive encouragement and transmission through pilgrimage. Many of the temples in Hindu and Jain *tirthas* are famous for their artistic beauty and admirable design. Temples in India represent both poetry and philosophy in brick and stone. The temple worship contributed to the great development and subsequent refinement of sculpture and painting, and music and dancing.

(5) Pilgrimages, Material Culture and Economy: Pilgrimages have a role in the spread of Material culture through the exchange of ideas and goods among the pilgrims along the routes of pilgrimage. Besides, deity requirements of temporary shelter, food, articles for worship, several forms of entertainment, recreation also appear as a side-business activity.

For example, the Pushkar *tirtha* in Rajasthan is famous for both its sacred character and its fair, where brisk business in animal trade is transacted between buyers and sellers from a wide area.

(6) Socio-political Aspect of Pilgrimage: The close association in a common purpose, namely, the purpose of pilgrimage, of the numbers of people from different tribes, communities and localities affords the basis for the development of political unity and stability of political authority.

Q. 5. Explain the concept of Protestantism in the light of economic development.

Ans. Protestantism: Protestantism separated the world and God. The world was accepted as real – an area for worldly achievement. Charitable social work and management of large charitable institutions was added to the Church's activity. Gradually 'monks became assimilated into clerics and clerics to monks'. Together, they made up the Church- rather its two classes,

- (i) Men of Religion *i.e.* the clergy, and
- (ii) The men living in the world *i.e.* the laity.

Ecclesia has combined the elective and appointed offices. It grows and expands as a self-contained unitary-federal structure. Its head, the Pope is elected by a small college of appointed officials. The remaining hierarchy of officials is appointed. Only the office of the priest is religious in the true sense of the term. All others are managerial.

The Ecclesia works as under:

- (i) It trains and recruits its personnel through its theological educational institutions.
- (ii) It organises research institutions, study centres, seminars and workshops.
- (iii) It publishes journals and maintains printing presses and publishing houses.
- (iv) It establishes and controls schools and colleges for secular education combined with preaching.

Q. 6. Examine the nexus between religion and politics of the state.

Ans. Religion and Politics

(1) Meaning of Religion: Man has ever been trying to understand the meaning of life, his place in the world and whether there is supernatural force that controls events and looks for. His guidelines for his action. The beliefs and practices that emerge to deal with such questions take various forms. Some believe in an invisible force, some may regard trees and animals as holy. The beliefs and practices dealing with the ultimate question are a source of consolation in the face of uncertainty, a basis of social order. These systems comprised of a shared set of beliefs and practices is called Religion. In this way, Religion can be defined as 'stable and shared set of beliefs, symbols and Rituals that focus on the sacred'. The Religion is shared. Hence, a personal belief system of an individual or an individual's

philosophy of life cannot be considered a Religion. The reason is it is not shared. Religion focuses essentially on the sacred. According to Emile Durkheim, the sacred is the ideal and the supernatural is that which are set apart from daily life. The sacred as a superhuman force can reside in natural or artificial objects in animals or in people.

(2) Social Significance of Religion: According to the Sociologists, Religion is as one institution in a complex web of institutions that form a society. One of the major consequences of Religion is to strengthen ties among believers. According to some critics, Religion often becomes more important as a source of social identity than as a source of belief and practices that deal with the sacred. There are many people who participate in Religion, more to find a place in society rather than due to their convictions. Consequently, one often finds that Churches, temples, mosques and synagogues often become social centres. Religion serves also as a rallying point the groups mobile themselves towards a cause around it.

Violent conflicts may take place due to presence of different Religions in the same society. Persecution of Religious groups throughout history is well known. Religious wars wrecked both East and West. Christians clashed with Muslims and Catholics with Protestants and so on. In India millions became refugees in the Partition conflict between Muslims and Hindus.

For years Jews and Arabs have fought bloody battles in the Middle East. Religion is very often a vehicle of expression, a form of identity, around which a group gathers either to muster more power for itself or any such similar cause.

(3) Meaning of Politics: Scholars defined politics and political process in different ways at different times. Two aspects of the understanding of the term politics are as under:

(i) The Conflict Integrative Approach: One definition refers to two opposing forces of conflict and integration that determine the nature of politics. These are many types of layers of conflicts in Human societies. Politics is concerned with such conflicts. Conflicts are inevitable, yet they are never the ends, or the ideals, to be achieved in society. The cherished ideal of all societies remains as under:

- (i) Resolution of conflicts, and
- (ii) Cooperation and integration of society.

Every analysis of conflicts ends up providing solutions to resolve them. Movement towards an integrated or united society is inevitable. The position of conflicts is as under:

- (i) Some conflicts are reduced,
- (ii) Some conflicts are persist,
- (iii) Some conflicts are regulated, and
- (iv) Some new conflicts emerge as situations change.

While diverse social and cultural processes contribute towards achieving the objectives of a harmonious society, political process has an important role to play. In this way, integration and conflict, are the two apparently opposite forces that constitute the process of politics.

Social institutions have importance from the point of view of both conflict and integration. They are linked with politics and political process. The social institutions, ideas and issues associated with them, often form the basis for an identity of individuals. They are led to conflicting situations. Simultaneously, social institutions bring about unity and integration with the institutions, as well as between them. These opposing forces operate within this complex interaction that constitute the process the politics.

(ii) Distributive Approach: The another aspect of the understanding of politics is the Distributive Approach. It is associated with the writing of Harold D. Laswell. There is a great deal of unevenness in the distribution of power and resources in society. All communities, and individuals do not have equal access to resources, goods and distribution of positions. Some individuals are deprived of these powers and access to goods and resources.

Political power is to allocate power and authority. In view of this close relationship between power and resources Laswell (1936) observed that politics is 'who gets what, when and how'.

When a group or a community feels that it is deprived of access to resources and positions in society, the group may challenge legitimacy of the state or the political regime which is vested with authority. This sense of relative deprivation has often caused group/community mobilisation, as well as political violence.

SECTION-III

Answer the following questions.

Q. 7. Discuss the functions of shaman.

Ans. The Functions and Role of a Shaman: The shamanism is a native Religion. The word shaman is of North-East Asian origin and comes from the Tungusic word *saman* meaning one who is “excited, moved or raised”. Shaman is usually seen as a medicine-man who employs exorcism and sorcery as his tools. He derives his powers from association with the supernatural. The belief is that he is assisted by a medium or a spirit to attain his ends.

Shamans belonging to different tribes would use different means to achieve their ends. Certain common factors are as follows:

- (a) Either the office is hereditary or one’s personality allows one to be chosen to the office;
- (b) The shaman may have a peculiar mental state or even a physical shortcoming and, therefore, may be considered neurotic or epileptic;
- (c) The above mentioned abnormal qualities are central to his role;
- (d) He may have some training and austerities under the tutorship of an older shaman. A Shaman may develop a peculiar disposition; may go into a trance or enter into an excited condition to cure the illness or get rid of a spirit.

A shaman combines the functions of priest, prophet and Magician, all in one. He performs priestly functions and uses sacrifice as a central act in the process of healing and divination. He also performs Rituals of sacrifice and appeasement to the Gods or spirits.

Due to fear of the shaman and his powers, he acquires a charismatic personality and qualities of leadership similar to a prophet. He may have unusual jewellery and clothing, hair long and matted, paint his body with colour or ash and carry either musical instruments or bones. Due to his eccentric appearance and qualities he is often given the name of a neurotic and a trickster.

Q. 8. Define civil religion.

Ans. The Concept of Civil Religion: Civil Religion has been defined as “the religious or quasi-religious regard for certain civic values and traditions found recurrently in the history of the political states”.

The special festivals, Rituals, creeds and dogmas which honour great personages and events of the past express regard for the civic values and traditions of the political state. The persons, like freedom fighters and social and political reformers and eminent Presidents like Abraham Lincoln etc., have played a major role in the socio-political history of their society.

For example, the celebration of our Independence Day, 15th August when our Prime Minister unfurls the National Flag every year on the historical Red Fort in Delhi and Republic Day Parade celebrated on the 26th January every year, are marked by a semi-religious fervour. It serves to heighten the sense of national and political identity of the Indian citizens. It reminds us of the sacrifice made by our leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and several others who fought for our Independence.

We can find this kind of semi-religious fervour in celebrating political events and birth days of great persons in all societies at all times. It is religious in the sense in which the Emile Durkheim has defined Religion. Durkheim opines that a Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices that are related to sacred things. The sacred things are the things that are set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. The cities and nations are just as susceptible to the nomenclature, *i.e.*, naming of the sacred as are the social bodies called church.

Carlton J.H. Hayes’ in his Book *Essays on Nationalism* (1926) writes that the mainspring of frequency and the force of human movements have ever been of religious emotion. In his opinion, human history reveals that human beings have always been distinguished by what is called a “religious sense”. They are moved by a mysterious faith in some power outside of themselves, a faith always accompanied by feelings of reverence and usually expressed by external acts and ceremonials.

The concept of civil Religion is to be understood in this context of the sense of Religion, the feeling of patriotism or nationalism, of belonging to a distinct socio-political group. Civil Religion is the Religion of an advanced modern society with higher technology. According to Nisbet, civil Religion has been a highly visible aspect of the modern national state in the West.

In the contemporary period, one can see the most distinct form of civil Religion in the American society. ■■