

Introductory Sociology
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Lecture - 18
Religion-IV: Explanation of Religion

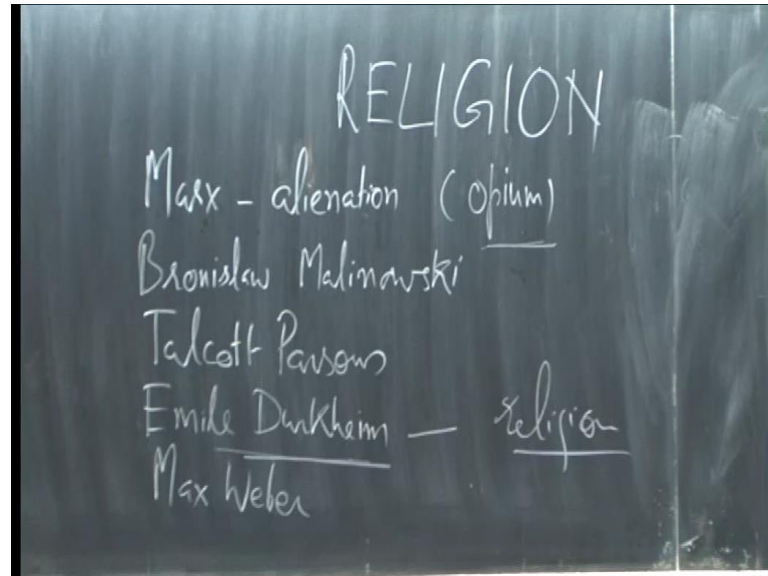
We spent some more time on religions. I said so many things in the first lecture and I know that I introduced unnecessarily large number of concepts, and you would not be clear about all of them immediately. The purpose was that when you open the book. So, if when you read see Gisbert's sociology, you should not find unfamiliar concepts. So, my job was only to make some of these concepts familiar for greater clarity on the subject, you have to read the book. And I am more interested in certain ideas about religion not so much about concepts. We can then have hundred's of concepts related to religion, some basic classification is of course needed in any academic disciplines. So, we must know that there are certain religions with god, without god one god, multiple gods, god in a in everything.

So, accordingly there are terms; atheist, theism, monotheism, polytheism, pantheism and there are terms like superstition, magic, witchcraft, sorcery. And let me tell you that there is not enough clarity about these concepts, if we among technical writers or sociologies or social scientist and many of these terms are used interchangeably. So, you can for example, you can find that people use the term magic for performing bad things also. So, in a village, you meet a woman, whose son is running high fever and ask magic. So, magic is used in common parlays, magic that time magic can also be used in negative sense, for achieving negative, but if we make a technical distinction, if we go according to in academic disciplines like sociology. We will have to have a differences in concepts, concerts you have to have very precise meaning of the term that we are using, they are definitional concepts, and therefore in academic context, we will use them accordingly.

So, magic for positive purposes witchcraft, sorcery for negative purposes. Witchcraft, when the power is inside the body of the witch and sorcery, when something externally or powers of something external is evoked. If you are interested, all the students will not be interested in all topics covered in a course, but if you are interested in such topics then we can have a more relaxed discussion on these things. And you are always welcome to

my office, if we have to cover so many things and this will probably be the last hour we have to spend on religion.

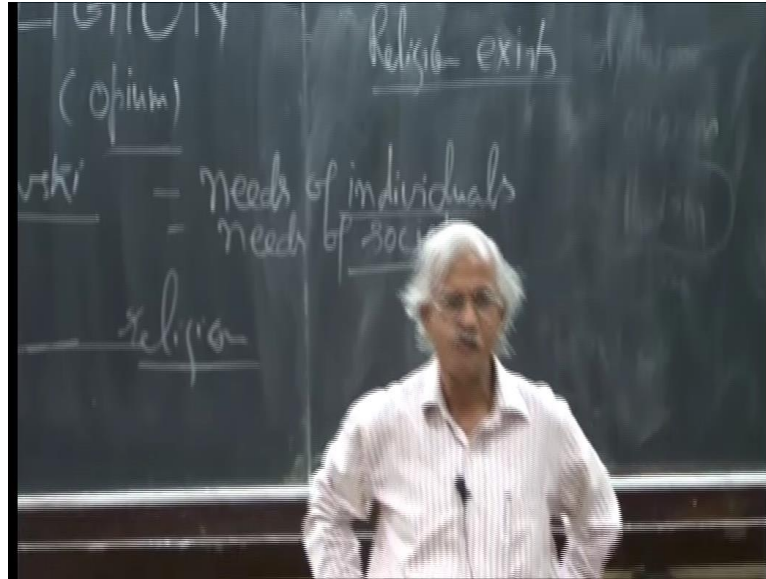
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So, let me take up some other ideas of religion also, Emil Durkheim. If I have to pick up one sociologist other than Carl Marx to say something on religion I have to pick up Emil Durkheim. One of the founding fathers of sociology, this is one reason. Another reason that he in particular wrote a lot on the forms or religion life, his writings are particularly devoted into religion and any text book of sociology discussing the issue of religion refers first to writings of Emil Durkheim, Marx will come later. I introduced Marx first, because I discuss religion after discussing the organization of work and I thought that I can make a connection between the two and Carl Marx would be an appropriate theoretician to make the connection.

Otherwise in any text book or sociology it will be either an anthropologist, Malinowski or Emil Durkheim mostly Emil Durkheim in sociology, who are referred first. Malinowski said that religion exist either because it satisfies some needs of individual. Some anthropologist gave more importance to needs of individual, some to needs of society. Individuals have certain need societies also have certain needs as we have seen in the context of negative and positive functions of, the state has some needs society has some needs individuals also have some needs.

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So, if your religion exist, and this existence of religion has to be explain, functional sociologies will say thus a religion or something very must similar to religion. You can call it cosign religion, exist everywhere, obikutas, I like the term of kingstolin very much obikutas for functional sociologist. Something which is obikutas which exist universally everywhere global genera there is no society in which religion or religion like phenomena does not exist, god may exist or god may not exist, that is a different thing a religious text may exist, a religious text may not exist. People may belief in one religious person sear, saint historical person or they may not belief in such person, but something like religion exist everywhere and sociologist will say that Marxism, leninism or monism or socialism and communism can also be seen as some kind of religion. Cosign religion, Confucianism. Confucianism the religion of china did not belief in god it believed in a kind of harmony and my, it is a debatable issue.

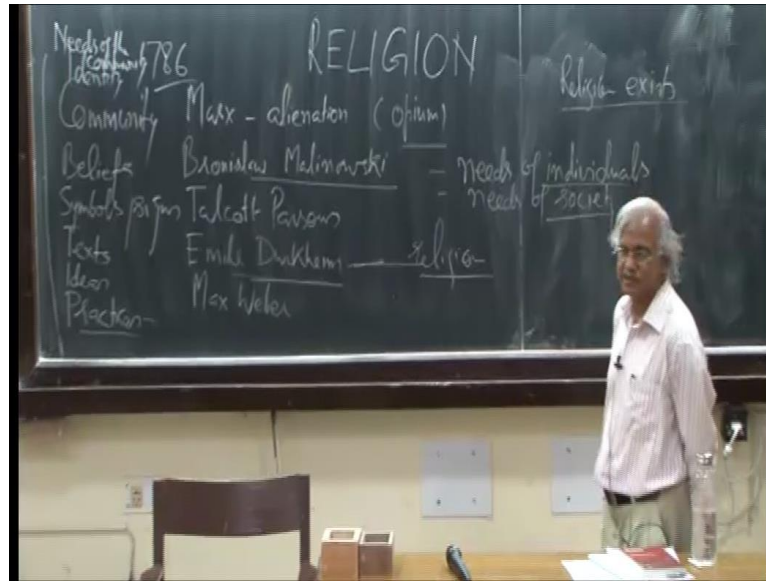
So, some of you may agree some of you may not agree, but my understanding is whatever, I have learned about religion. I have also write of course,, something of religious text and participated in religious discourses religion did attempt me. I also belief that Indian religion do not belief in god; originally, and this belief in god and goddesses is a later aberration which needs to be explain something in the frame work of cozen theory. Otherwise true or original philosophies of India are all free from the notion of god. Almost all philosophical text of India is start with the question. Is it possible for

us to end the suffering I noted down the first Sloka of Geeta the most revered of religious text of Hindus.

The question is it starts with a question issue, Kishna is sad. Sanjay, Kishna is talking to Sanjay, Sanjay what did my son desire of battle? He knows that his son desires of battle. Sathyan, what did my son desire of battle and the sons of Pandu, no adjective used for Pandu's sons. Do after assembling at the holy land of Kurushetra. Kurushetra where Kurushetra prevails dharma, Kurushetra is believed to be dharma. It may be used in a geographical sense or it may be in a metaphorical sense what did they do this was the question which led to the production of a text which we call Geeta. The holy stock religious text of Hinduism in contemporary times it is not a religion it is nothing to do with god and if you read Geeta.

Actually, Geeta does not ask you to believe in god, Geeta only showed that these are the types of people these are the goals of people. These are the strategies to achieve these goals, these strategies or these goals will lead to these consequences, but you have to decide the reader has to decide what goal to follow, how and why and how the thing can be actualized in daily life and accordingly there are so many interpretations of Geeta, those who believe in gods and goddesses, like some people they are non-interpretation, Lokmanya Thilak another interpretation, Gandhiji had another interpretation, Aravind Ghosh has his own interpretation, Swami Chinmayananda has his own interpretation and those who do not belong to (()) Aryasamaj have their own interpretation of Geeta everybody has. So, become that have become possible because Geeta, I would say that Krishna of Geeta is a teacher of philosophy. A holistic philosophy of life and does not ask you to believe in him, has ordinary devotees of Lord Krishna believe. So, religions are with or without god, Confucianism no god, Buddhism no God.

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But if we define religion using the concepts of community that whatever, it means whatever religious beliefs mean, they belong to a community they are not individual it is not that in a community in a village or, in a city. In a village say 5000 people live, then religious belief of each individual is different that cannot happen. Beliefs of 500, 5000 people living in a same village, have lot of similarity and the similarity, this communal origin of belief systems is what defines a religion otherwise it becomes a magic religion is not magic, it is not individual it is common. So, there is a community, there is a common beliefs of that community, symbols signs, symbol may be ohm. Ohm is a symbol do you know what is this 786, 786 is not a small I thought that I will give an example of 786 when I talk about sacrito symbols.

They are symbol signs may be some especially texts Quran, Bible, Manusmithi, Geeta, Ramayana, idea certain common ideas practices, practices include ceremonies festivals, repetitive rituals and certain rides to be performed at certain times, at the time of birth, mostly at the time of birth, when child goes to school at the time of marriage, at the time of reproduction of birth of a baby, at the time of death. There are some practices common practices of the people identity, it sense that you belong to that religion identity and since it is a communal question since the religion is communal question. So, needs of the community perceived needs of the community are also part of the religion. Needs of the community, a religion is defined by all these things and if I define religion in terms of these things needs of community identity.

Identity of individuals belonging into that religion a sense that there is a community of believers and it has certain beliefs, there are symbols signs, some texts ideas and practices, festivals, rituals, rights. Then in that sense, even non religious philosophies, even something like Nazism or Marxism or complete unshaken belief in market mechanism or utility are Anism, can be seen as kind of religious belief or cosign religious beliefs. If you are a socialist, if you are born in brought up in the second, third, fourth decades of the last century in USSR, then you identified with soviet Russia. You believed in a community of workers community of Russia and communist of, you belief that all the workers of the world to be united and you are a part of the community of workers.

You believed that Marx is the first and the most important interpreter of history in the interest of the working classes. You see, there is no difference between 2 a person beliefs that prophet Muhammad is the last and most important messenger of god and another person beliefs that Carl Marx is the only or most important interpreter of history. Who understood, why the conditions of the working class or the condition of man are bad and how conditions are man can be improve there is no difference. So, from that point of view both the people are religious Carl Marx may say that he does not belief in religion, but Marxist are Kenneth religion as the Islamizes or the Muslims. There is no difference between that 2. Symbols, they also have symbol the communist flag one may belief Muslims may belief in 786, the number 786 is very important is of religious importance to them.

So, Hindus I see that some students on their copies in there exams write or make ohm or can make 786 and if you are if a student is Marxist, Marxist then he can make sign of sigil and hammer, hammer and because Marxist symbol is hammer and sigil. So, no if I am in objective person I am neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Marxist for me there is no difference. I will treat all of the all of them samely for me, all of them are only expressing articulating expressing certain belief system and making certain symbols which phenomena logically, speaking have the same meaning to that. Somebody who is making a symbol of hammer and sigil or somebody who is writing 786 or somebody who is writing ohm or somebody who is writing is only expressing similar type of feeling, thinking belief from phenomena logical perspective. It the same feeling, ideas, same securities, securities, in securities same confidence, lack of confidence, same

organization, disorganization, which they are expressing it is and from that point of view Marxism or communism is also religious. Texts; Texts may be Quranic texts may be capital are does not make a difference, there is some Texts, for Hindus it can be Ramcharitmanes for Muslims it can be Quran and for Marxist it may be the capital or the communist manifesto or for devoted Gandhians would take to Gandhian philosophy in a religious sense.

The book Hinduism concept the same purpose there is a text there are certain ideas and they are certain practices practices may be different, but there are common practices. So, all of them are religious, looked at from this perspective sociologist like Emile Durkheim say that everybody is a religious. As long as there is society, as long as there is community, as long as there, as long as individuals consciousness it determined by the collective consciousness. Consciousness is collective our thought system beliefs ideas philosophies are collective and as long as collective consciousness affects our consciousness, we are all some kind of religious people. Religious ideas may be different, but we are all some kind of religious people.

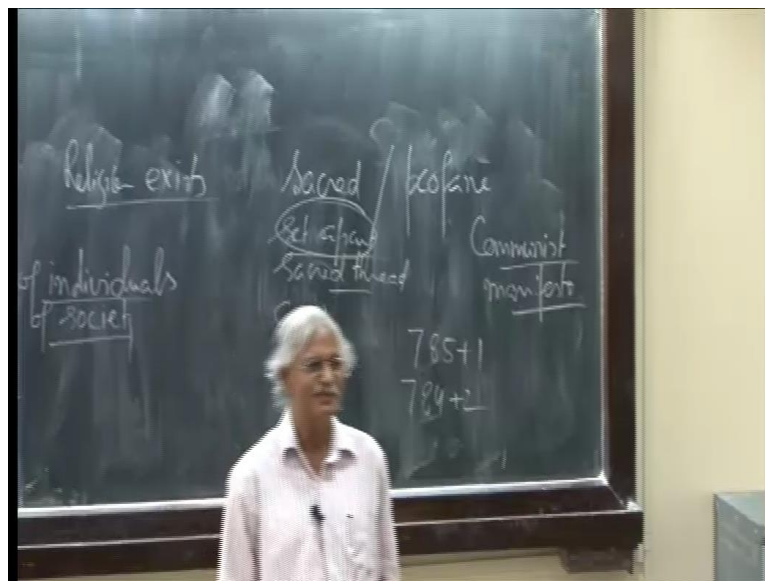
So, a bonafide worker or a young socialist of thirties of soviet Russia or utilitarian or a liberal of intellectual, a capitalist an apologist of capitalism or a Gandhian or a Jainist (()) they are all religious people. If somebody believes that whatever, doctor Ambedkar says is right and that is the only right if it conflicts with anything else then only doctor Ambedkar is to be believed then he is also a kind of a religious person. There is no difference between that person and Islamic man do we believe that is Muslims are the most devoted kind of persons, most organized, most devoted, but somebody believe that what doctor Ambedkar says can only we write and if it conflict with writings or ideas of anyone else. Then doctor Ambedkar only is to be excepted, he is also a religious person. So, looked at from this perspective, all of us are religious because all of us are part of society and our individual consciousness, it determined by collective consciousness. This also mean, that if all the people of a community or society believe in the same ideas. When society is clear we also clear.

We believe in plural society, we are different sections of society or different classes or different regions or culture or linguistic groups believe in different things and conflicting things the beliefs of one culture conflict beliefs of another culture. India is the best example, a plural society all religions all languages, all cultures, all belief systems are

founded and there is a conflict between different beliefs. If there is no conflict, there is no problem, but since we have so many ideas and there is a conflict between these ideas. So, they will be conflict within us also then we will be from sociological perspective we are also religious people and our religion is contradiction, our ability to withstand or leave according leave in a mist of contradictions is our religion. Our religion in a plural society confusion become the religion.

So, we are all confuse not in a pathological sense, we are happy in a happy state of confusion, we are all in a happy state of confusion and that is the new form of religion and in this new form of religion then anything can happen. Sometime, we can act in a in the in a, we of a terrorist and sometime you became the most liberal person, sometime you become Dalith, sometime you become Hambakerians, sometime become a great devotee of Hanumanji. Anything because this is the society we live in. Looked at from this perspective, religion exist because it satisfies certain needs of individual, a needs of society, Emil Edurkheim says that to understand this collective nature of religion.

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You see all religions make a difference between sacred and profane, and to understand that why people are religious and what is the true nature of religion? We have to see the difference between sacred and profane. Sacred is set apart from others anything, which is set apart from others in a positive sense or in a negative sense holy and holy or specious inauspicious, that is sacred different sacred is different from others. Among Hindus,

Tulasi as a plant it different from others, you worship Tulasi; you may say some Hindus may say you see anyway Tulasi is a different type of plant, it has lots of medicinal value. But there are all plants have medicinal value, which plant does not have medicinal value. From every plant some more other kind of medicine, which can be given in treatment of some other diseases can prepares it is not the medicinal reason it that the society of Hindus treat Tulasi differently from other plants. Sacred thread some of you may be downy sacred thread or all of you I am sure that all of you have seen sacred thread, sacred thread is different from other threads.

It is not an ordinary rope or thread or maala or something ordinary made from a piece of cloth or some other cotton threads or polyester threads, sacred threads, sacred thread is different there are. So, many animals, but cow is different, cow sacred I thought that I will gave you gave you example of this, this context 786, 785 plus 1 algebraic value is same, but Muslim will not write 785 plus 1, Muslim divers will not write 785 plus 1 on their temples or Muslim students will not write 784 plus 2 on the answer books, they will write 786. 786 is different, there is no scientific connection between 786 and achievements you may write 786 and still get 0.

You may write ohm on your answer book and get 0. You may write (()) and still get 0 and you may not write anything and get 100 percent. It is not a scientific connection, but this number is different, ohm is different even languages Sanskrit is different. Sanskrit is sacred, real Brahmin priest when they conduct some Pooja are expected to say something in Sanskrit, they will recite some Slogas, mantras whether, they understand them or not whether, their pronunciation exeunt is correct that is the different thing, but they are expected to speak Sanskrit. Because Sanskrit is sacred .For Christians likewise 10 commandments will have some special significance, it is not ordinary 10 commandments. 10 commandments and ideas expressed in those especially 10 commandments are very important.

Bible is, Bible is not a ordinary book, it sacred. Similarly, in the same way, Emil Durkheim say that the communist manifesto has a book, it is not, it is not to be treated as a, as an ordinary book of sociology or history or economics. Communist manifesto sacred, for Gandhians, Hindustaraj is a circled book. For a devoted Gandhian, Hindustaraj will phenomena logically speaking, carry the same meaning, which (()) will carry for an ordinary Sikh. A normal what is written in Hindustaraj, many sikhs are

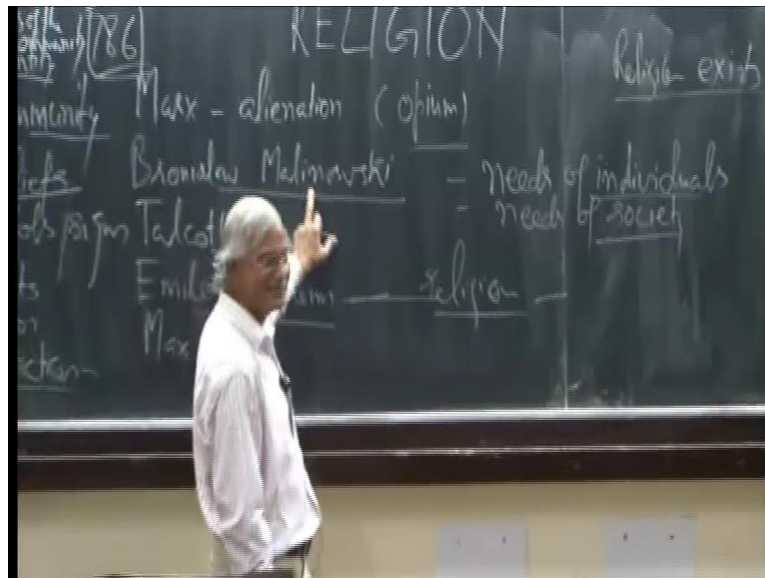
do not know, what is (()) many Hindus do not know what is written in Ramcharit manas there are debates and conflicts they do know what is written in manusmithi and Geeta. But it is sacred say if somebody say something that Hittism believe in Hinduswaraj because Gandhi said this thing which is irrelevant today. Then the Gandhiats will start fighting they may not have seen the book, but they will start fighting or they will say cannoned you are the wrong interpretation or without reading Hindu Swaraj they will try to different it. The point is that in each community in each collectivity certain things are kept apart food. In food also there may be and sacred may be a one type or another good or bad negative positive or specious inauspicious.

So, pig is also sacred, cow is sacred, sacred does not mean good or bad, it can be anything, but it is set apart that is more important, it is set apart it is different from other things. Cow is sacred for Hindus, all the it is to be protective, cow is like mother, pig is sacred for Muslims because pig cannot be eaten it is; it is in the negative sense, the pig cannot be eaten. You cannot to mention, even to mention name of pig is bad, unislamic there are things set apart and as long as there is a distinction between sacred and profane, there is religion. The sense of religion lies in collective division of things, ideas, symbol signs, totems, plants, animals which we worship together in collectivity, may be family, large family, cost, community nation. As long as I remember in western up there is a cost of Rajputs I had a Rajput friend from I was interest even when I not a sociologist, I used to take interest in social issues of this kind and from whom I learn that is each community in western up, Tortoise was a sacred thing. So, Rajput women, when they went to the field and if they ever saw a Tortoise, they must immediately cover their face because tortoise for them was to be treated like father in law.

Tortoise, if we do not belong to that culture or that community, we may laugh at it, but if we belong to that community, then it sacred for us, and we will take an offense if others laugh at our beliefs or ideas that, then I realize later on when read Emil Edurkheim then I realize what is the meaning of totem. If this totem for Raj put women of western up then Tortoise was a totem, it may be animal, it may be plant, it may be any artifact, which has some kind of sacred importance. The whole collectivity, keeps it apart from others, Sanskrit we do not Hindus Sanskrit has special significance. It is the language of gods sacred thread is different, cow is different, Tulasi is different.

When I am in non religious mood and people tell me Devi he, hanuman he, Sivaji he, a doctor Ambedkar and depending on to which community you belief. You say it is that, many times I was told. I did not belong, I was not in that religious mood in which those people work, I saw them all from outside, but outside image is not important. Very jokingly, there are totem, there are sacred things, all communities; all communities, all religious, non religious, all community they divide things into sacred profane and Bronislaw Malinowski say that there are needs of individuals and society, same thing said that Talcott parson, that all of us all human beings we realize our limitations. We want to have. So, many things in life we want to achieve the ultimate the perfect, but we are not able to achieve, we know our limitations, we are aware of external forces.

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So, there are certain needs of individuals, emotional need, cognitive needs, emotional needs, meanings part of communism meaning. Why does one have to die early? You see an infant dying, why does, what has the infant done wrong, because of his he could not survive for 6 months. Why there injustice in society? Why there so much of problem in the world? Epidemics play Kaalajar, tuber closes. Why cruelty? Why life at all? What is my relationship with the universe? They are questions, they are emotional issues when I am in a problem, I want to know why me only. If there is chicken pox, we know, as a medical doctor, we can very or as a students or teachers or administrator, we can have one view of chicken pox, but when I get chicken pox, then somebody has to answer my question, why me? Why was I selected for chicken pox? Why am I separate?

Is there a way, that I do not suffer, is there any possibility of end of suffering? If there dacoit in my house, we otherwise, we know that there are dacoits there are crimes, but why dacoit in my house? What have I done wrong? Is there a way in which, I do not face the suffering of dacoit. Jaundice doctors jaundice, typhoid, doctor will tell you, by it will take some time, I will give you medicine, right antibiotic medicine, take care, eat this, eat do not eat that, but it will take 10, 15 days and the person suffers emotionally, psychologically, he is under tram ender sisters. Why me can something else, we done is it not possible at all that I recover in 2 days time. So, there are emotional issues. At the, at that time somebody will come and say I know one pooja, who can make you recover from jaundice in just 2 minutes time. He will come, do certain Pooja, and you can see that, if you put your Hands in water, the whole jaundice will go out of your body in the water. You can see that the whole water become yellow and jaundice has gone. You feel very happy and you will be recovered of jaundice in 2 minutes time. I will templated to god, this is the source of religion.

So, when there are moments of stress is enjoities meaning, 1 day, I gave you the example that when you buy a car your are in a greater religious mood because there is more enjoity, more cost, more an sanctities involved in car. So, bronislawmalinowski found among fisher men that who went for fishing in deep sea water, they had more elaborate rituals and they were in greater religious mood as compared to those, who were fishing at the sea shore. You are in a more religious mood when you buy a T shirt from your mess, then you do not take your Takruti shirt to Hamaji temple. It is so cheap, there are no great stakes involved in that, but may be when you come to IIT Kanpur. When you q are admitted to IIT Kanpur and you left your home.

Then your parents involved in some kind of Pooja, depending on your religious beliefs, traditional facts of your village community, your family, they did some Pooja, may be some them could not do Pooja immediately, but when you had come after 15 days or 1 month they must have done some pooja because there are more uncertainties associated with 4 years of life at IIT Kanpur. What bronislawmalinowski abject in the case of fisherman, we observe everyday here, there was no Sathya Narayanike pooja or there was no desire to go to Syridi sai temple, or to Ajmer serif, or to have Dharsanas of some church in Goa or in Kerela (()), but when you came to IIT Kanpur, then there was pooja..

This is what Bronislaw Malinowski said, when there are more uncertainties, insecurities, enjoinities. When to have some confidence, some to belief that things will be better organized, simple, stress free, or when somebody dies. Death is a big disruption for social life. When people will assemble if somebody's son dies, then the neighbors will come, young men from the neighborhood will come and come solon say all of them will forget, next moment they will forget. If that though will come to them and ask for some money, they will not give. But at that moment, at least they will go, if at least if falls it may be falls, but a sense of continuity and non disruption that society has not will disrupted. Society has for sociologist everything is social society has not been disrupted.

There is solidarity integration and a belief that not much at least artificially, putting a belief that no great damage has been done to social organization (()). You have to arrange for your daughter's marriage, you have to repair your house, you have to take care of your cows, you have these other responsibilities, you focus on this and we are there any way. We are no different from your son, there are also jokes in this, nobody comes. If somebody's wife dies, then the women from the neighborhood do not come and say do not worry, we are like your wives, but that is a joke, that becomes a joke.

Actually, jokes also have a social content that becomes a joke, but behind this idea is that there is no social disruption. So, Talcott Parsons and Bronislaw Malinowski they focus on this if sands of continuity essence of meaning. This also means that in the, in any society in which there are more uncertainties there will be more belief in religion. So, my religion is one topic on which we can spend hours, but I would like to stop here. But at the end, I will say that although we belief that in scientific case, we will have a more circular society and religiosity will decline.

What we find that reverse of this is happening that in the scientific case religious and superstition beliefs our own rise. The reason is to be found, in antigen complexity of social life, uncertainties meaningless situation, unpredictability, uncertainty, loss of meaning in life, loss of great ideas. When these thing happen unimproval society then we tendencies in religion or religious to revive and that is why religion is seems to be revival. It has no substance, but the fact that society is passing through a transitional face and there are uncertainties and enjoinities and science has developed a critic of its own, is the reason why non science is becoming popular. In the next class, we will spent time in education.