

**'CONTEXTUALIZING RELIGIOUS TEXTS'  
AS A RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM  
- A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION**

**Maxim Dias,**  
Research Scholar,  
Bangalore University, Bengaluru.

**Alphonse Fernandes**  
Research Scholar,  
Mangalore University, Mangaluru.

**Abstract**

*Literalism of religious scriptures is posing a danger to world peace. Though literal interpretation of religious or holy texts may not be the sole reason for the rise and spread of religious fundamentalism, and the violence it ensues, it is indeed a significant cause of concern especially when the texts are misinterpreted by the clerics, priests and lay persons who may not have the knowledge of textual criticism or exegesis of the scriptural passages. In a world that is deeply influenced by the effects of globalization, an urgent need for religious identities have led in each of the communities to have a certain section of people believing in literal interpretations. This involves in excluding, sometimes belittling and even opposing the other communities. Keeping this assertion in the backdrop, this paper tries to visit some texts from the Bible which are problematic, if interpreted out of context. Similarly, it presents the passages that promote harmony and peaceful co-existence. It also suggests one to go beyond one's religious identities and make human rights and secular constitutions to be the guideposts for better living in the world.*

**Keywords:** *Literalism, Religion, Texts, Fundamentalism, Interpretations*

**'CONTEXTUALIZING RELIGIOUS TEXTS'  
AS A RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM  
- A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION**

- Maxim Dias

- Alphonse Fernandes

**Introduction**

**A**n Old Persian maxim goes like this: *"Religion is like a candle that can illuminate one's cottage; it can also set it on fire: the choice is one's own, what use is made of it!"* (Ahmad vi). Religion has been an overriding phenomenon in human societies encompassing several aspects of human and social life. It interacts with various aspects of the society such as culture, politics, social hierarchies, human behaviour in countless ways, very often in maintaining the status quo. There was a perception that with the growth in science and technology, religion would decline, and rationalism and scientism will supersede religion. However, Demerath says that around 1979 things began to change. Astonishingly enough, religion took on a new political importance as phrases like "liberation theology," "fundamentalism," "solidarity," and "moral majority" were shouted from the political ramparts (Demerath).

History shows us that in the last few decades, especially after the fall of World Trade Center, religious fundamentalism has been a prominent phenomenon in global politics. In every religion, there is a small minority of religious fundamentalists. Unlike the orthodox people, the religious fundamentalists are very vocal and vociferous. The majority who practice religion are either indifferent to or silent about the anti-social elements within their own religion. Therefore, the voice of religious fundamentalists is heard and it is generalized. In this context, the paper will probe into the role of religious fundamentalists in influencing the religion through the literal interpretations and misinterpretations of the religious texts from the point of view of Christian fundamentalism.

Religion, broadly speaking, is a way of life or belief based on a person's ultimate relation to the universe or God or Gods. According to Milton Yinger, religion can be defined as a "system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems of human life" (McGuire 23). The Oxford Living English dictionary defines religion as, "The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or Gods". A religion has basically three elements: creed, code, and cult (Stackhouse 44). **Creed** is faith in the revealed pattern and it is formulated at the intellectual level in human language. **Code** is the divinely sanctioned and authorized system of human laws and morals comprising the rules of active participation in society based on creed. **Cult** is the ritual of worship, or symbolic acts, whereby the community brings its mind into accord with the mind of God, either by ceremonial dances or dramatic re-enactments of the deeds of God, or by sacrificial meals held in common between God and his people.

Religion may have several purposes. Basically, it deals with relationship with the Divine being or beings; it can also be expressed through the relationship with our ancestors, with the spirits of nature, with our families and communities. One of the purposes that most of the religions or the spiritual masters have taught one is to develop higher qualities of love, mercy, generosity, kindness and so on. These qualities are a result of deep spiritual consciousness of the masters, which connects them to the divine. This connection very often leads to the better human conditions in the world. Speaking about the purpose of religion Richard Swinburne says, the purposes of the practice of a religion are to achieve the goals of salvation for oneself and others, and (if there is a God) to render due worship and obedience to God. Different religions have different understandings of salvation and God (Swinburne 189). 'Liberation' seems to be one of the prime concerns of most religions. Though mostly it is to do with life after death, it also focuses on liberation here on earth and it can be looked from the perspective of certain standard of living or from the perspective of total detachment. In simple words, the purpose of the religion is to

make the life 'lighter' and happier. However, the institutionalized religions have their own shortcomings. In the words of Sebastian Kappen,

*"Religions, like rivers, are purest at their sources. They begin with noble ideas. As they grow, they become obstacles in the humanizing of society. When religion loses its original fervour, it gives birth to obscurest beliefs and practices. It becomes more and more dogmatic and destroys the freedom of thought and expression of the believers. It becomes callous and insensitive to the needs of the people, and even becomes an instrument of conflict. Though religion gives meaning, hope, and strength to do good, it has developed structures to legitimate oppression, and to perpetuate violence" (S. Kappen).*

Religious fundamentalism is one of the examples of this distortion of religion. The uncertainty of the afterlife or divine world creates the fear of the future. This fear is often misused. Therefore, there is a need to constantly re-look, re-construct and re-interpret religion to find out its relevance for social good.

From the point of view of the theme of this paper, monotheistic religions need a special mention due to the political power associated in monotheism. The problem in this concept is that the supreme power and supreme authority resides with one person, consequently, there is one book, one view point, one theology, one leader etc. Least importance is given to variety of individual experiences and creative expressions of faith. As a result, there is a fundamentalist approach leading to religious extremism. It comes as result of insisting on one method of expression of faith. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss violence associated with monotheism. Monotheism may have different variations however for understanding of violent intolerance Abrahamic religions are taken, that is Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All these religions have written scriptures. Very often these scriptures clearly speak of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' making their religion as sectarian, schismatic and aggressive. For few centuries Christianity used inquisition as a means to promote official teaching and destroy any other way of worshipping God. Moreover, in common understanding, scriptures are considered as 'Word of God' and because God

cannot err a lot of importance is given to literal interpretation of the leading to intolerance to diversity.

Clergy in any religion play very important role. The clergy become the custodians of the revelation or the truth. Moreover, the authority of interpretation of the revelation also belongs to the clergy. This aspect of interpretation can be liberating or subjugating in many ways. The degree and extent of the organization of the clergy varies in different religions, but the essential factor of the authority of the religion is vested with the clergy. In fact, the clergy become the face of any religion in its very function through the acts of rituals which are performed by the clergy. The role of clergy is very significant in organized religion and exercise greater authority and power. Yet times clergy also encourage literal interpretations or would not make an effort to give liberative interpretation paying a way to fundamentalism.

### **Feeling of Belonging to a Religion**

An anonymous saying goes like this: *"Five minutes after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect and you spend the rest of your life defending something you didn't choose!"* Belonging to a Religion means a community is a group of people who by birth, conversion, or the performance of any religious rite are regarded as belonging to the same religion or religious creed, and it includes a caste or sub- caste. One can belong either by birth or through appropriation, if that religion allows one to do so<sup>i</sup>. It has two functions, one of identity and the other of separation. Very often this identity is related to emotional issues such as religion, ethnicity, language etc. Some identities are promoted as true by excluding the other. This phenomenon of exclusion and inclusion brings discord and polarization and to protect it, identity may take the form of radicalization. Therefore, the concept of "Otherness" is a central idea in both philosophical and sociological discussion of identity, which in this context constructs the majority and minority identities in our societies. This concept includes some and excludes the others. Often its dealings with the 'other' take a violent shape. To justify exclusion, injustice and violence in dealings with the 'other', identity politics resorts to or creates myths about the



inherently inferior 'nature' of the 'other' and the 'naturalness' of the 'self'. These myths are often based on stereotypes that are the basis of would-be perceptions of threat with respect to the 'other', which in turn justifies the exceptional way the 'other' has to be dealt with (Dusche 83).

In this context, it is important to make a distinction between, Religion as Faith and Religion as an Ideology. The general process of a religion is that it emerges from the faith experience of a person or a faith community and subsequently remains in the realm of spirituality and spiritual experiences. However, as the community grows it becomes vulnerable to diversity and various other kinds of threats. To protect the religion from various kinds of threats, dogmas, doctrines, structures, institutions, rituals, myths, idea of salvation or liberation etc. come into existence. Consequently, it may remain in the realm of spirituality and faith or may move on to an ideology taking into consideration its own evolution, context, internal and external pressures etc. It is in this context we discuss religious fundamentalism.

### **What is Religious Fundamentalism?**

The Oxford Reference Dictionary explains it thus: Strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs; a religious movement which developed among various Protestant bodies in the USA after the First World War, based on strict adherence to certain tenets (e.g. the literal inerrancy of Scripture) held to be fundamental to the Christian faith. For Scott Bidstrup fundamentalist religion, any religion, that when confronted with a conflict between love, compassion and caring, and conformity to doctrine, will almost invariably choose the latter regardless of the effect it has on its followers or on the society of which it is a part (Kambulow 591). Therefore, fundamentalism believes in one truth; one authority; one right way to be. Here the reading of the texts also is done from a fundamentalist perspective and it can be called as literalism and opposing the liberalism.

The concept, 'religious fundamentalism' has been widely employed since the 1970s, especially by the mass media, to describe and account for numerous, apparently diverse, religious and political developments around the globe (J. Haynes 159). Whereas the word

'religious fundamentalist' was first applied to Christian conservatives who believed in the inerrancy of the bible.

## **Christianity and Fundamentalism**

As mentioned above, fundamentalism is found in all the religions. For the sake of this paper, we take one of the monotheistic religions for in discussion on fundamentalism. Christianity is one of the major religions of the world has a history of more than 2000 years. Its holy book is bible and it has always revered it as a Word of God. Alongside spreading the gospel, the church has also involved in social engagement and empowerment. Though it has insisted for a long time that salvation is only through the church, that affirmation is no longer insisted and is against the teaching of the Second Vatican Council<sup>ii</sup> and later development of practice and doctrines of the church (Amaldoss 3). The mainstream churches have encouraged scientific way of interpreting the scriptures by using historical-critical method, literary analysis, approaches based on tradition, approaches that use the human sciences, contextual approaches etc. However, these changes have not percolated to the grass-root level both among the clergy<sup>iii</sup> as well as among lay people. Often the believers are comfortable taking words from the scriptures literally. Some are of the opinion that their religious text of choice to be completely free of error, human invention or fantasy (i.e., inerrant). Therefore, there are a lot of them propagate especially among some protestant sects, the Pentecostal groups being one of them, interpret the Bible literally and consider that their form of Christianity is the only way to salvation and such people can be considered as fundamentalists (Amaldoss 2). Fundamentalism is often spoken of as one of the problems that we are facing in India and in the world. The term 'fundamentalism' had its origin in United States of America among the Christian circles. There were five main propositions dealing with, the Inerrancy of the scriptures, the virgin birth and divinity of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement of the death of Jesus on the cross, the resurrection of Jesus and the truth of his miracles of scriptures (Dann 6).

Following are some of the passages which are dangerous if we take them literally. Some selectively quote them either by ignorance or for some advantage.

In Creation story, (Genesis 1:28 and 9:16-17) speak of dominion over and subordination of women to men. Similarly, God's Violent anger and consequent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), God supporting the Israelites by sending 12 great plagues in Egypt to diminish the power of Egyptians (Exodus 7:17-11:10) and more so God's wrath was seen when he Moses ordered people loyal to him asked to kill those who were worshipping a golden calf (Exodus 32:21-24). They do so by the thousands. One more very often quoted passage is Prophet Samuel exhorting king Saul to Kill Amalekites: "This is what the Lord Almighty says... 'Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'" (1 Samuel 15:3).

Similarly, there are few passages even in the New Testament such as Paul's advice about whether women are allowed to teach men in church: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." (1 Timothy 2:12) and this endorsement of female subservience in (Ephesians 5:22), "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord"; and similar advice for slaves (1 Peter 2:18): "Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the cruel."

No doubt in history, some such passages were used justify a lot of injustice. Some of the dangers of literally interpreting the text could be seen in the history of the Church which had given support for crusades, burning of the 'witches' and heretics, inquisition, imposition of the Christian faith in the colonial era, etc. (Amaldoss 3). These Biblical texts have been used by many violent Jewish and Christian groups. Crusaders used them against Muslims and Jews. Nazis used them against Jews. Recently Serbian Christians used them against Bosnian Muslims. Zionists are using them regularly against Palestinians (Jenkins). Such interpretations are done even today by some fundamentalists strongly believing the inerrancy of the bible and acting without contextualizing and without the proper interpretation of the texts. They segregate people on the basis of religion condemn idol and nature worship, other ways of relating God and insist upon traditional ways. According to Dawkins fundamentalist religion is hell-bent on ruining the scientific education of



countless thousands of innocent, well-meaning, eager young minds (Clayton 84). As fundamentalists try to establish themselves within the greater society, they often clash with people who feel that religious and moral ideals should be confined to the home and church. Fundamentalists are often in disagreement with people whose spiritual beliefs may be more liberal and accepting of change (Marcovits 28).

A special mention should be made of monotheistic religions. In monotheistic religions, though there is much more control on the abuse on the sentiments of people because by and large it needs approval of the hierarchical structures, they also can be considered as undisputed champions of historical evil, by their wars, genocides, internal witch hunts, oppression, lack of freedom of thought and lack of freedom of religion. Large denominations of monotheistic religions have eradicated smaller denominations for simply believing the wrong things. No other class of religion compares with monotheism in its tendency for intolerant violence (Crabtree). Therefore, people can be called as religious fundamentalists in the following contexts;

1. They oppose anything liberal in the society, such as sexual orientation, equality of women/ castes etc. and encourage patriarchy.
2. They take upon themselves the responsibility of saving religion and religious truths.
3. They take the religious texts literally and selectively, and fail to interpret the message of the scriptures.
4. They deny reason, modernity logic, science etc. at the cost of religion.
5. They involve in extreme measures, even to kill in the name of faith.
6. They seek go back to the fundamentals of their religious tradition.
7. They attempt to reclaim the public sphere as a space of religious and moral purity.
8. They Invoke religion and its texts to legitimize their actions.

However, the official stand of the mainstream Churches is quite liberative. It considers the Bible with its two Testaments as 'Word of God' and so as an infallible norm. Yet as literature, the Bible is subject to the norms of literary, form and redaction criticism which govern the interpretation of any literature (Neuner and Dupuis 113) and therefore, it is subject to the limitations of human authorship and transmission. Thus, there is a

popular agreement that the Bible is the inspired Word of God in words of humans, who can make mistakes due to the influence of culture and context. Secondly one must keep in mind that bible is not a single book but a collection of books and written over centuries. It has different literary style such as theological Novel, theological History, theological Poetry, folk Literature, full blown literature etc. Therefore, the official stand of the church when one speaks of inerrancy of the Bible is that there are no errors regarding the salvific (soteriological) message. In its theological and anthropological thrusts, it does not deceive the one who believes in it, but offers a reliable and trustworthy guide for our spiritual pilgrimage.

In the process of interpreting the one must also understand the interplay between Mythicisation of History and Historicisation of Myths<sup>iv</sup>. Myth according to the Oxford Dictionary is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. Myth-making is one of the ways of preserving the culture and tradition and especially the supernatural or divinely related experiences. These transcendental realities are often articulated in terms of myths. Myth represents reality in an analogues way and makes a person to understand the religious truth in a simple way. However, to understand the real meaning of myth one must interpret it in proper hermeneutical way. Therefore, a lot of problems in religion lie in mythicisation of history and historicisation of myth. These processes not only take place in scientific historical writings but also through the process of stories, poems, play etc. Therefore, myth taken as history or reality is very dangerous for the social harmony.

Therefore, it must be understood that myth making is a process of preserving truth or explain the unexplainable things. Most of the passages that are mentioned above historicisation of the myth. There may be some historical elements in them but they cannot be historical fact as such. For example, the scholarly efforts to justify genocide and other moral atrocities in the Bible create a number of serious theological, hermeneutical, and moral problems. However, Van Wees believes that these passages were largely fictional (Wees 242). Moreover, writing of the scripture took place centuries later and very often to

have a moral lesson or social control. One can quote dozens of verses from the Bible which seem very violent, if taken out from their historical context. It is important that we study the religious texts in their proper context. When these texts are not read in their proper textual and historical contexts they are manipulated and distorted.

The fundamentalist interpretation of the sacred scripture arises from a non-critical reading of it. It is a method of closed approach as it does not take into consideration the principles of hermeneutics. In the fundamentalist interpretation, people take the sacred scripture (biblical texts) literally and without recourse to the context and circumstance of the passage and the meaning intended by the author. Therefore, people are prone to quote and sacred scripture to make their point even though it does not make any sense, for that case, in any situation. This tendency is because of people's wrong understanding that whatever is written in the Sacred Book is literally true, and contains nothing but historical truths, whereas the content of the Sacred Book is the message of salvation, the narration of the encounter of the humans with the divine.

### **How can one Fight Fundamentalism based on Literalism?**

Like any scientific research has methodology, one should adopt proper hermeneutics to understand religion. A Systematic Hermeneutical interpretation will help in understanding the religion in its true spirit. Two things a person must take care while dealing with religion, first investigating the original inspiration and context of the birth of religion or the scriptural statements and secondly, how such an experience gives meaning to the present context in the present location. However, it should be noted that literalism of the religious scriptures are not merely restricted to the religions of the book. Other religions too can be equally fundamental by claiming the authenticity of the myths. Religious fundamentalism leading to extremism is a result of lack of such techniques in religions. The majority in a religion may be practicing a religion but they are either indifferent to or silent about the anti-social elements in a religion. Even if they are active, their resistance is too slow, too little and too polite. Therefore, the voice of fundamentalists is heard and it is generalized.

One must agree that fundamentalism is a form of spectacular ignorance of the basic tenets of a religion. Therefore, first and foremost, fundamentalism ought to be fought with education. Here education means, rational-critical thinking and social analysis. Therefore, there should be critical thinking. It is a fact that not all knowledge can be positively analyzed with evidence and facts as it is done in the laboratory, but at the same time people must be taught the importance of gathering the evidence and then proceeding to the conclusion. For a proper understanding and interpretation of ancient Scriptures one has to master the original languages, with their corresponding thought patterns and world views. Therefore, when one interprets the Bible, one has to keep the following things in mind: Faith in the sacred scripture as the Word of God, Common Sense (the ability to discover harmony in things that agree and disagree), Knowledge of Biblical language, culture, history and geographical background, etc.

Secondly, it is important that before one speaks for a religion, one does a thorough study of the religion with scientific textual criticism. Religion is more than fear, guilt and shame. Religion is also tolerance, love and compassion.

Thirdly, one must understand that necessities of figurative expressions, analogies, myths etc. used in explaining the religious truths are an attempt to explain reality and should not be taken literally.

Finally, utmost importance should be given to practical expression of religion in upholding human rights and fundamental rights.

## **Critique and Conclusion**

Religion exists in a social context, is shaped by that social context, and in turn, often influences it. The main goals of most of the religions were to liberate the people from the bondage of suffering and sin. Quite a lot of religions have condemned injustice, oppression, and poverty in society. But over the years, interpretations, and the interpretations of the interpretations, have played a selfish game of serving the interests of those who interpret, viz. the priestly class. However, the source itself plays a great role in justifying the oppression as it is found in the caste system of Hindu society.

Thus, sometimes, rather than becoming a bridge to God, religion becomes a barrier to God; rather than freeing people from their burdens, religion itself becomes the burden; rather than teaching people to know God, it obsesses itself knowing about God; rather than becoming a support in need, it becomes a vehicle of carrying guilt, failure, and rejection; and finally, rather than bringing unity to humanity, religion becomes cause of disunity with variety of hardcore dogmas, doctrines, rituals and fundamentalist approach to all these. As F. Scott Fitzgerald put it, "The mark of maturity is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in the mind at the same time and still be at peace." (Fitzgerald). Therefore, when religious people debate, defend and demand their way of believing is the "right" way or the "only" way, they are revealing their immaturity and inability to see things from a broader perspective. It also reveals how small one's God is.

Rudolf Otto rightly described religious phenomenon as, "*Mysterium tremendum et fascinans*" that is, a mystery before which man both trembles and is fascinated, is both repelled and attracted. It is indeed a fascinating thing. No one can exhaustively say what religion is in mathematical precision. It is a search, an impossible search, to grasp absolute infinite truth. Therefore, humans incessantly are in search of truth. Fundamentalists impede such search for the truth because they speak in absolute certainty about an area of existence that is humanly impossible to grasp. True religion is a relentless search for and acceptance of truth about yourself and the universe in which you find yourself, regardless of the discomfort that truth may cause (Toit 250).

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> There are some religions, which would not allow any outsiders as part of their religion, like for example Zoroastrianism which is based on ethnicity. Similarly, when one converts to Hinduism, one converts to a particular caste rather than a religion.

<sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Council is 21st Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church (1962–65), called with an intention of spiritual renewal for the church.

<sup>3</sup> Though in some mainstream Churches, the clergy (priests or pastors) are trained with an academic rigor, many small denominations do not have formal training, where scientific analysis of the religious texts is taught.



<sup>4</sup> Mythicisation of history is a process where the real historical events or persons are mythicized. Historicization of myth is a process, in which mythical beings are given historical significance. Dates and places are narrated in such a historical accuracy, one can hardly doubt that it was a myth. There are efforts to fix the dates for the events of the epics to historicize the same, like for example the efforts of the director of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), Professor Y.S. Rao, to find out the date of the Mahabharata war fought between Pandavas and Kauravas at Kurushetra).

## Works Cited:

Ahmad, Irfan. *Islamism and Democracy in India; The Transformation of Jammāt-e-Islāmī*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. Print.

Amaldoss, Michael. *the Challenge of Fundamentalism*. Chennai: IDCR Publications, 2009. Print.

Beyers. *Religion, civil society and conflict: What is it that religion does for and to society?* 2011. AOSIS. 12 January 2017.

<<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/949/1754>>.

Bose, Anuja. "Hindutva and the Politicization of Religious Identity in India." *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development* (2009).

Clammer, John. *Socially Engaged Religions*. Bangalore: Books for Change, 2011.

Clayton, Philip. "Challenges in the 21st Century: Religion and Science ." Christffersen, Lisbet and others. *Religion in 21st Century, Challenges and Transformations*. Routledge, 2016. 81-97. Print.

Crabtree, Vexen. *Fundamentalism and Literalism in World Religions*. 2012.

<<http://www.humanreligions.info/fundamentalism.html>>.

Dann, Elijah. "An Introduction to the Christian Fundamentalism ." Dann, Elijah. *Leaving Fundamentalism* . Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008. 1-24. Print.

Demerath, N J. "Religion, Politics, and the State: Cross-Cultural Observations of a Comparative Sociologist." *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 4.3 (2006): 31-38. Website.

*Difference Between Fundamentalist and Extremist*. n.d.

<<http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-fundamentalist-and-extremist/>>.

Dusche, Michael. *Identity Politics in India and Europe*. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2010. Print.

Encyclopedia, Encarta. "Religion." *Religion*. Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia, n.d. 03 July 2015.

<<http://www.wsh-leszno.pl/wsh/nsjo/religion2.pdf>>.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott,. *F. Scott Fitzgerald Quotes*. n.d.

<<https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/fscottfit100572.html>>.

Freeden, Michael. "Ideology." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. n.d. 15 June 2016.

<<https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/ideology/v-1>>.

Gango, Gabor. " Hannah Arendt and the Problem of Public Religion." Losonczi, Peter and Akash Singh. *From Political Theory to Political Theology: Religious Challenges and the Prospects of Democracy*. London: Continuum , 2010. 47-60.

Goyal, Raju. *Secularism in Modern Indian Political Thought 1885 to 1915*. Chandigarh, Panjab: A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science, Panjab Univeristy., 1985.

Haksar, P N. "Fundamentalism and Secularism." *Mainstream* 24 November 2012.

Haralombos, M.,. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Haynes, Jeff. *Religion, Politics and International Relations*. London: Routledge, 2011.

Haynes, Jeffrey. "Religious Fundamentalism and Conflict." Marsden, Lee. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Religion and Conflict Resolutio*. London: Routledge, 2012.

Herbert, David. *Religion and Higher Society: Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Jenkins, Philip. *Dark Passages*. 08 March 2009. website. 28 August 2017. <[http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2009/03/08/dark\\_passages/](http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2009/03/08/dark_passages/)>.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Is Religion the problem?* . 01 March 2004.

<<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4n92c45q#page-1>>.

Kambulow, Walter. *The Best of Kambulow*. Ontario: Victory Ministries, 2003. Google books.

Kappen, Sebastian. *Marxian Atheism*. Bangalore, 1983.

Kappen, Sebastian,. *Jesus and Freedom*. New York: Orbis Books, 1977. Print .

Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and State Policies Toward Religion: United States, France and Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Larrain, Jorge. *The Concept of Ideology*. Hutchinson: Routledge , 1979.

Marcovits, Hall. *Religious Fundamentalism ; Compact Research-Current Issues*. San Diego: ReferencePoint Press, 2011.

Marx, Karl. *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

McGuire, Meredith. *Religion: The Social Context*. California: Wardsworth Publishing Company, 1986. Print.

Mehta, Uday. *Modern Godmen in India; a sociological Appraisal* . Bombay : Popular Prakashan, 1993.

Miller, Donald E. "Civil Society and Religion." Edwards, Michael. *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society* . New York: Oxford University Press , 2011. 257-269.

Mondal, Anshuman A. "Limits of Secularism and the Construction of Composite National Identities in India." Morey, Peter and Alex Tickell. *Alternative Indias Writing, Nation and Communalism*. Amstradam, NY: Editions Rodopi, 2005. 1-24.

Morey, Peter and Alex Tickell. *Alternative Indias Writing, Nation and Communalism*. Ed. Peter and Alex Tickell Morey. Amsterdam - New York: Editions Rodopi, 2005.

Neuner, Josef and Jacques Dupuis. "Tradition and Scripture." Dupuis, Jacques. *The Christian Faith; in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* . New York: Alba House, 2001. 95-135. print.

Padgaonkar, Dileep. "Udder Complexity." Group, Delhi Historians'. *Communalisation of Education: The History Textbook Contraversy*. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nerhru University, 2001.

Prashad, Vijay. *There's a Major Right-Wing Education Project in India Underway: Warning Signs over Schools controlled by Narendra Modi's BJP party in India*. 31 May 2016.

<<http://www.alternet.org/world/danger-right-wing-schools-india>>.

Puniyani, Ram. "Religion: Opium or the Masses or..." Ram, Puniyani. *Religion, Power and Violence: Expression of the Politics in Contemporary Times*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005. 27-43.

—. *RSS Genesis & Political Agenda*. 14 07 2014. 10 12 2015.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0g5lJuLsIg>>.

Rectenwald, Michael. *Nineteenth-Century British Secularism; Histories of Sacred and Secular, 1700-2000*. New York: Palgrave Ma, 2016.

Routledge, Clay. *Is religion good for your halth?* 31 August 2009.

<<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/more-mortal/200908/is-religion-good-your-health>>.

Smart, Ninian. "The Religious Experience of Mankind." Jhingran, Saral. *Secularism in India; a Reappraisal*. New Delhi: Har Anand Publications, 1995.

Smith, Donald Eugene. *India as a Secuar State*. London: Princeton Legacy Library, 1967.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *Islam in Modern History*. New American Library, 1959.

Stackhouse, Max L. *God and Globalization*. New York: Continuum, 2007. Print.

Swidler, Leonard and Paul Mojzes. *The Study of Religion in an Age of Global Dialogue*. USA: Temple University Press, 2000.

Swinburne, Richard. *Faith and Reason*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2005. Print.

Teltumbde. "Hindutva Agenda and Dalits." Puniyani, Ram. *Religion, Power and Vilolence; Expression of Politics in Contemporary Times*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005. 208-224.

Thapar, Romila. *Culture and what it tells about the Past*. 5 November 2015.  
<<https://sabrangindia.in/article/culture-and-what-it-tells-us-about-our-past>>.

—. *What Secularism is and where It Needs to be Headed*. 26 October 2015.  
<<https://sabrangindia.in/article/what-secularism-and-where-it-needs-be-headed>>.

*The Purpose of Religion*. n.d. 27 March 2017.

<<http://www.wahegurunet.com/the-purpose-of-religion>>.

Tickell, Alex. "The Discovery of Aryavarta Hindu Nationalism and Early Indian Fiction in English ." Morey, Peter and Alex Tickell. *Alternative Indias; Writing, Nation and Communalism* . Amsterdam, NY: Editions Rodopi, 2005. 25-52.

Toit, Morne du. *Blind Faith; Quest for the truth about Christianity*. Lulu.com, 2008.

Veer, Peter van der. "The Politics of Devotion to Rama." Lorenzen, Davi N. *Bhakti Religion in North India; community Identity and Political Action*. New York: State Univeristy of New York Press, 1995. 288-305.

Wees, Hans Van. "Genocide in teh Ancient World." Bloxham, Donald and Dirk A Moses. *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* . New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 239-258. Print.

*What is Religious Extremism?* n.d.

<<https://religiosextremism.wordpress.com/2011/03/11/what-is-religious-extremism/>>.

Woodhead, Linda and Heelas Paul. *Religion in Modern Times: An Interpretive Anthology*. London: Blackwell, 2000.

Higher Education &  
Research Society