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There are different theories of the origin of religion, such as, Naturalistic theory, Anthropological theory, Psychological theory, Socio political theory, Marxist theory, Feminist theory.

NATURALISTIC THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION:- The pioneer of naturalistic theory of the origin of religion is Ernst Haeckel, a scientist turned philosopher. He expressed his conviction that the discoveries of nineteenth century science bring the solution of the enigmas which have perplexed mankind through the centuries. He calls his system “monism” in opposition to all dualisms which differentiates God and nature, soul and body, spirit and matter. There is only a single substance and it manifests itself both as matter and energy or body and spirit. This monism is founded on the demonstrable results of science and it solves the riddles of existence. It gives negative answers to the traditional problems of God, freedom and immortality. The ideas of God, freedom and immortality are based on a mistaken dualism. There can be no God apart from the universe. An invisible God who thinks, speaks, and acts is an impossible conception. In the monistic

deterministic cosmos there is no room for the immortality of the soul or the freedom of the will.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF RELIGION:-

The naturalistic interpretation of religion gained support from the developing science of anthropology. The ideas of Edward Burnett Tylor inspired other thinkers like James George Frazer and Salomon Reinach to formulate the anthropological theory of the origin of religion. Tylor makes two assumptions. (1) human culture – including knowledge, art, religion, customs and the like – has its laws which can be studied scientifically. Like in nature, in culture too we can find the uniform action of uniform causes. (2) The various grades of culture found in the human race can be exhibited as stages in a process of development or evolution. Another idea to which he draws our attention is the phenomenon of ‘survival’. His main contribution was his theory of “Animism” i.e. the belief in spiritual beings. Confronted with the phenomena such as death, sleep, dreams etc., primitive man accounted for them in terms of a spirit separable from the body. He believed in other spirits throughout all nature, some of these spirits having the rank of powerful deities. The higher religions have developed out of the matrix of primitive animism. The superiority of the higher religions consists in their moral ideas, which are almost entirely lacking in primitive religion and these moral ideas have turned out to be the abiding fruit of animism. Thus human progress has taken place through the gradual secularizing of elements which were originally all enveloped in the sphere of animistic beliefs. This process has taken place not only in the transformation of taboos into moral rules but also in the

development of science out of magic. Religion was the very life of nascent societies, and out of it has come our civilizations. He visualizes further progress in the direction of education and the extension of the rational outlook.