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**THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN HISTORY, ACCORDING TO THE
PHILOSOPHICAL-HISTORICAL MODEL OF ARNOLD TOYNBEE**

(Summary)

The author presents and analyzes some of the basic ideas of the great philosopher of history A. Toynbee regarding the role of religion in history. The analysis focuses on the abstract level, the ideal in Toynbee's interpretation of religion, and then on the concrete historical, social-political being of religion. In the first aspect, Toynbee views religion not as a functional tool used by the individual against society or by society against the individual, but as an expression of the actual relationship between the human being and God: human history itself has a transcendent meaning and context; it is a layer of a more general, universal aspect of being that is defined in a transcendent perspective. Similarly, the churches in history, and the higher religions manifested through them, are transcendently defined, guided and secured. Toynbee indicates the priority of religion and Church in history as giving meaning to and setting goals for history; he deduces this priority from the priority of the spiritual over the material in the individual and in history, but also by the fact that religious doctrines contain values capable of uniting people and overcoming the cleavage and conflicts between people through faith in the uniting higher force. The article also devotes attention to the second aspect in Toynbee's interpretation of the role of religions in history, specifically in his search for the causes of the low social and cultural status of religions in modern society; moving from the normative essence of religion and humanity, the analysis goes on to their empirical historical reality. Toynbee sees one of these causes in the commitment

of Christianity during the 19th century to waning regimes within the political sphere, to monarchism and aristocracies; in rejecting liberal democracy, religion condemns itself to conservatism and isolation. In her concrete analyses, especially of Toynbee's treatment of the encounters of the West with other civilizations, the author traces the course of actual historical factors and conflicts and demonstrates that in more than a few cases Toynbee has supplemented, corrected and at times refuted his own idea about the decisive role of religion in the formation of, and contacts between, civilizations. Special attention is directed to Toynbee's approach to Western Civilization: although he does not see it as the centre and goal of the course of history, he examines a variety of problems connected with the interaction of the West with other civilizations, with the issue of the future of the West and the role of Christianity in these concrete historical cases.