secularism

Secularism is the concept that government or other entities should exist separately from [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) and/or religious beliefs.

In one sense, secularism may assert the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, and the right to freedom from governmental imposition of religion upon the people within a state that is neutral on matters of belief. (See also [Separation of church and state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state) and [Laïcité](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La%C3%AFcit%C3%A9" \o "Laïcité).) In another sense, it refers to the view that human activities and decisions, especially [political](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political) ones, should be based on evidence and fact unbiased by religious influence.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism#cite_note-0) (See also [public reason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_reason).)

Secularism draws its intellectual roots from Greek and Roman philosophers such as [Marcus Aurelius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcus_Aurelius) and [Epicurus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicurus), [medieval Muslim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Golden_Age) [polymaths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polymath" \o "Polymath)such as [Ibn Rushd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Rushd" \o "Ibn Rushd), [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) thinkers like [Denis Diderot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis_Diderot), [Voltaire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voltaire), [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke), [James Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison), [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson), and [Thomas Paine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Paine), and modern [freethinkers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freethought), [agnostics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnosticism) and [atheists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism) such as [Bertrand Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell) and [Robert Ingersoll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Ingersoll).

The purposes and arguments in support of secularism vary widely. In European [laicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laicism), it has been argued that secularism is a movement toward[modernization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization), and away from traditional religious values (also known as "[secularisation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularisation" \o "Secularisation)"). This type of secularism, on a social or philosophical level, has often occurred while maintaining an official [state church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_church) or other state support of religion. In the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), some argue that [state secularism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism#State_secularism) has served to a greater extent to protect religion from governmental interference, while secularism on a social level is less prevalent.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism#cite_note-1)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism#cite_note-2) Within countries as well, differing political movements support secularism for varying reasons

secular society is one which:

1. Refuses to commit itself as a whole to any one view of the nature of the universe and the role of man in it.
2. Is not homogenous, but is pluralistic.
3. Is tolerant. It widens the sphere of private decision-making.
4. While every society must have some common aims, which implies there must be agreed on methods of problem-solving, and a common framework of law; in a secular society these are as limited as possible.
5. Problem solving is approached rationally, through examination of the facts. While the secular society does not set any overall aim, it helps its members realize their aims.
6. Is a society without any official images. Nor is there a common ideal type of behavior with universal application.

Secular ethics:-

Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three:

(1) The improvement of this life by material means.

(2) That science is the available Providence of man.

(3) That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good.