This paper presents findings of research on religion, development and wellbeing in Bangladesh. It begins by discussing how religion is increasingly referenced in relation to Bangladesh, and how religion figures in fields of tension in national politics. It then examines the local word for religion, dharma, which constitutes a deeply rooted cultural norm that structures lives and relationships, time and space, and sets the rubric against which particular ideologies and practices, whether of ‘religion’ or of ‘politics’ are judged. The main body of the paper explores the significance of this sense of dharma in quotidian contexts, concentrating on its articulation in community politics. The paper concludes that to draw an opposition between religion and politics is mistaken, because it removes religion from the everyday. The context of rapid economic and social transformation evident in Bangladesh produces everyday challenges for notions of order or dharma. The need to resolve these underlies the lively and contradictory relationship between religion and politics, and ensures the continuing vitality of notions of dharma in personal and public life.