

## **Intertwining The Sacred and The Secular: The Indian Approach to Creating a New Humanity**

Sacred & secular: these are terms that through the centuries used to form a pair. The very idea of the sacred presupposes the presence of the Divine or the existence of God. He alone is sacred. India moves a step forward and finds sacredness in every thing in the phenomenal world because God pervades the whole of the universe. This is the clue to India's understanding of the vedantic oneness or in other words the existence of One which pervades everything; hence all is inherently sacred. In Indian epistemology *yoga* & *bhoga* are used as synonyms for the sacred and the secular i.e. spirituality and worldly happiness. In fact, it is about life and, as such, it discusses the four acquisitions of life *dharma*: virtue, *artha*: wealth, *Kama*: desire and *moksha*: liberation. These are delineated in such a way as to lead one ultimately to the attainment of Vedantic Oneness – the absolute reality or the *paramarthic satta* merging with the phenomenal reality or the *prakriti*. Fulfillment of desire and amassing of wealth are always regulated by following a path of dharma, or virtuous life, or a code of conduct. The first three goals take care of the material prosperity of a man and *moksha*, liberation takes care of the higher self within the man. Human beings have both a secular order as well as a higher order and in Indian epistemology they are not incompatible to each other but complementary notions which help in man's journey to the realization of self-knowledge of one's oneness with the Divine or Sacred.

In the West, in general, sacred and secular are looked at as opposite to each other. Their mutual antagonism produces the “oscillation of secularization and sacralization” that marks our times<sup>1</sup>. However, any attempts to contrast the Western and the Indian views always arise from a hidden intention, which is to prove the superiority of one’s own philosophical tradition. Such efforts are usually spurious. Indian and Western philosophies are simply not the same sorts of enterprise. Each has its own standards of logical and rational assessment. However, comparative philosophy reveals that both traditions supply viable alternative answers to certain questions, just as thinkers belonging to one tradition may very well learn from those belonging to the other how not to make certain mistakes and how to avoid certain conceptual muddles and how to ask certain questions more perspicuously. Comparative philosophy in a certain sense is unavoidable for one who writes about Indian philosophy in English and it creates a space for a common discourse in which they can each participate – a conversation of (hu)mankind with itself rather than a conversation of the West or of the East by themselves.

Secularism is seen as an ideology with varying connotations and fortunes that seem to go with different cultural settings. The historical process of secularization created separate domains of the sacred and the secular in Western society and also in modern Indian society, confining the former to the privacy of human lives. In due course, this historical process was turned into a thesis of historical inevitability that is, a precondition of modernity everywhere. It has now necessarily come under critical review, which does not mean that it has been totally rejected. At least one thing is clear - that secularism is incapable of countering religious fundamentalism

and fanaticism; at the same time religious neutrality or equidistance is difficult to maintain since secularism fails to recognize the immense importance of religion in the lives of the people of South Asia. In India secularism either means, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'good will towards all religions' (*sarvadharmā sadhbhava*), or in a narrower formulation, it is a negative or defensive policy of religious neutrality (*dharma nirpekshata*) or as the Constitution of India declares, *panthanirpeksha* i.e. denominationally neutral; in other words it breathes the ideal of freedom of religion. At his swearing-in ceremony as the forty-third President of the USA, George W. Bush went beyond the usual invocations of God and contained elements of Christian faith and in a pluralist vein mentioned other religions too: "Church and charity, synagogue and mosque, lend our communities their humanity, and they will have an honoured place in our plans and in our laws". This is a position far removed from secular humanism and is virtually the same as the *sarvadharmā samabhava* (equal respect for all religions) of Indian secularism. Today, the line that formally divided the religious from the secular is increasingly becoming blurred; everyday it becomes more difficult for anyone to speak sensibly of their mutual exclusiveness.

Look at it in whichever way we may; religion survives in the world at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, belying the prophecies made by the death of God theologies and even postmodern theology. It is interesting to note that Raschke and Mark C. Taylor, both suggested a direct link between the death of God and postmodern deconstructive philosophy. Taylor wrote in his work, 'Erring' that from 1984 "Deconstruction is the hermeneutic of the Death of God". However, one can see an ironical reversal of the future as

charted by the champions of secularism, death of God theologians and deconstructive philosophers. Contemporary religious thought and practice have given way to a new “post secular” understanding of the post modern condition in which the return of religion has become a fact of life. God now seems alive and well, and as the New York Times proclaimed in a feature Sunday magazine article: From 1998, “religion is making a come back”<sup>2</sup>. This revival of religion came to be associated with a certain spirit of secularism that permeated, in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, almost all facets of modern and contemporary Western and Indian societies. Religion has not only survived as private faith but has also re-emerged as public religion<sup>3</sup> and also, tragically, as an ideology of domination<sup>4</sup>. This revival also belies the assumption of sociologists, philosophers and theologians alike that the more modern we become the less religious we would become. M.N.Srinivas, an internationally known sociologist of India, wrote in 1993 about our troubled times, marked by frenetic consumerism and conflicts of various kinds, through which India was then (and is now also) passing. He observed: It is in this overall context that the need for a new philosophy and social ethics becomes urgent and imperative. And that philosophy cannot be secular humanism. It has to be firmly rooted in God as creator and protector and the sustainer of human societies. The fraternity of all human beings, cutting across divisions of race and gender, follows logically from the idea of God as creator. The idea of human free will is (present) in all religions and it provides the basis for individual liberty without which there can be no true democracy<sup>5</sup>.

It is no wonder that Seligman said emphatically in 2000 that the “totalizing propensity of reason to absolutize the tension between sacred and

profane realms....into irreconcilable contradictions has been the bane of discussions of the place of religion in the modern world"<sup>6</sup>. Let me quote Robert Audi, here and now, who in his book 'Religious commitment and Secular Reason', said that a "theo-ethical equilibrium" – "a kind of integration between a religious outlook and secularly grounded moral or political" – is now coming to be considered 'achievable'<sup>7</sup>. This is a long way from the earlier certitude, whether stated in Marxian or Weberian terms, about the fateful transformation of religious into secular culture. Indeed, it has been suggested by Seligman that future historians "will look back on the period from roughly 1750 to 2050 as a brief three-hundred-year secular parenthesis in a history of humanity that has always been religious." One is reminded of Tocqueville's observation that "Unbelief is an accident and faith is the only permanent state of mankind"<sup>8</sup>.

However, the point to stress is that the return of religion has brought in both violence (religious terrorism) and peaceful social endeavours in its stride and given it salience as said by T.N. Madan<sup>9</sup> but at the same time let us be frank to state that religion is not the constitutive principle of society anywhere: the economy and the polity are its rivals even in some South Asian countries where Buddhism and Islam are state-protected religions. The author, Robert Hinde, biologist and psychologist, characterizing his approach as 'scientific', "examines why so many religions continue to persist at a time when the answers they provide to the basic questions of life are unacceptable to many in the modern world", and turns to "basic human propensities" for answers"<sup>10</sup>.

But a book written in 1959 by Martin Cyril D'Arcy entitled 'The Sense of History', with sub-heading 'Secular and Sacred' states with all sincerity that the historical situation (history and secularism is accepted as one and the same by the another (?author)) itself gives rise to the belief in God as the super-essential reality. Existence is meaningless without some such Unconditioned Being, for existence is strife, is distorted, and cannot cure itself. (Though) God, it should be noted, is not proved (yet) Tillich explicitly denies that God's existence needs proof. God is bound to appear whenever we change over from looking at life to being concerned with it" (p.151).

Ultimate concern is sacred and in that state of 'existential commitment' God as 'the power of being' is revealed, as 'pre-supposed' in all such encountering. In other words, religion far from being opposed to the secular, finds its fulfillment in the secular world. Hence when Caputo, one of the world's chief theorists of postmodern religion, equates modernity with secularization and postmodern with desecularization wherein the death of God is transfigured into "death of the death of God" and in this way revival of sacred/religion becomes possible, we feel reassured. Then we feel further reassured when another scholar of the same standing, Vattimo, says "Real religiosity relies on secularization". Vattimo does not accept the linking of the post modern with a process of desecularization because he thinks secularization is the destiny of the Christian West; we remain bound within that tradition and the post modern return of religion lives as the response to it.<sup>11</sup>

In the Indian context the term 'secularization' is nowadays generally used to refer to, in the words of Peter Berger, 'the process by which sectors

of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols'<sup>12</sup>. In contrast with the West which is logo-centric and exclusive, India is symbolic and inclusive and believes in the multilevel meaningfulness of life. As a result, Indian secularism in official terminology means 'good will towards all religion' and therefore a secular state like India has remained engaged from the very beginning with the religious life of its citizens in disparate ways. On the one hand following public interest, it acquires both Muslim and Hindu religious institutions or estates and their management: on the other hand,, in the name of maintaining 'public order, morality and health' it spends hugely to manage Hindu Kumbh *melas* where millions of devotees come to participate, or subsidizes in a big way the travel of Haz pilgrims to Saudi Arabia by sea or air. Madan says that the practice of the Indian state in relation to the religious life of the people has not been exactly what would be expected from a secular state if the French or the American state were to be regarded as the model, or if Gandhi's conception of the secular state had been adhered to. Gandhi emphatically denied any role whatsoever to the state in the religious affairs of the people. Moreover, he argued, that if a community depends, 'partly or wholly on state aid' for 'the existence of its religion', then 'it does not have any religion worth the name!<sup>13</sup>

What we see, therefore, is an ambivalent reflective history of secularism in modern India. But how did the Indian philosophers and cultural historians seek to address the whole issue of the sacred and the secular through the ages?

In Hinduism everything that we hear, touch, smell or taste is divine because everything comes from God and everything is also God. Since everything is God, or sacred, the secular and the sacred are one and the same thing. Thus says the Rigveda: "Purusha or the Supreme consciousness or God indeed is all this, what has been and what will be (10, 90,1)" This is further explained in the Isopanishad which says, "Every object in this phenomenal world is supported and pervaded by the Supreme One (1)".

When our spirituality is nurtured and vibrant, we have this experience of identity. We are identified with the Divine as well as with all people and Mother Earth. Spirituality involves a reverent attitude towards all things because it awakens us to a divine presence in all things. The Svetasvatara Upanishad says: "Thou art woman, Thou art man; Thou art youth and Thou art the maiden. Thou art the old man who totters with a staff. Thou art everywhere and in everything (11.3)".

This philosophical issue suggests a certain tension between two realms. At one level the mundane world or the secular is transcended by the sacred whereas the sacred acts like a Creator God and the world as His creation. It also suggests a conceptual connection of oneness between the mundane experience and the transcendental experience. Now this paradoxical situation of distinction and unity, creating a tension through the realization of the sacred in this worldly environment, can be resolved by a school of Vedanta philosophy which admits the truth of what is known as the principle of *bhedabheda*. It may generally be taken to indicate a belief that *bheda* or 'distinction; and *abheda* or 'unity' can co-exist and be in intimate relation with each other. Substance and attribute, universal and particular,



whole and parts may seem to be different from, or even opposed to, each other, but really there is no incompatibility between them, for they can be reconciled in a unity which pervades the difference and is its very being. This view is sometimes described also as *parinama-Vada* or 'theory of development' implying that reality, conceived as *bhinna-bhinna* (distinction and unity) is not static but continually changing and that it yet maintains its identity throughout<sup>14</sup>.

A transcendent growth process, found in all human beings, involves knowing oneself and moving beyond one's duality and exclusivity and egocentricity, to inclusivity, unity and oneness with the Supreme Self<sup>15</sup>.... Commandment of the Upanishad is: 'Know Thy Self'. This is an invitation to analyze yourself by yourself and when one does this one discovers by one's own efforts the divinity. The Divine may be found macrocosmically in the whole universe - as this world is a manifestation of the Divine - and it is also revealed microcosmically in the self (*atman*). The purpose of Self is to realize this\*. Infinite expressing Himself in the finite is a miraculous revelation and mysterious expression and a thing of wonder and joy. The Self and the Unknown Infinite or Sacred are fused into a single unified field and one ultimately realizes one's oneness with God, the all inclusive Being. Thus says the Brahma Bindu Upanisad :

(\*Suggestion onLy! Not quite clear what you are getting at in this sentence)

"I am the undivided pure and peaceful Brahman"

(21, HTU 8.128)

The transcendent spiritual reality is the Supreme Value in Vedanta. But its supremacy does not suggest denial of other values in life. The

Brahman of the Upanishads is not a lion's den like Spinoza's Absolute which devours all other modes of the world. It is in fact the supporter and sustainer of all modes of worldly existence. The Upanishads regard Brahman as the source of creation and its sustainer also. It is not the dark night in which all modes of the world lose their identity and existence. It is the divine light which illumines them all and reveals and refracts their various hues like colours of the spectrum. The transvaluation of secular and worldly values by integration with the supreme spiritual value and the exaltation of these values thereby is the cardinal functional principal of the Upanishad<sup>16</sup>.

This theory of advaita (non duality), the oneness of Vedanta, says Paul Deussen, is 'the greatest support to morality'. It fixes the standard of right and wrong and explains the instinct imbedded in us in the form of the categorical imperative or the preference for the good over the bad".<sup>17</sup>

This statement of Paul Deussen suggests a certain tension in another field and brings forth the old and worn out issue of theodicy. Hinduism resolves this issue in two ways: It is generally believed that in the case of Vedantic oneness between the secular and the sacred, the prevalence of evil does not seem to exist. In Mahayana Buddhism or Advaita Vedanta the phenomenal world along with its evil is described as a 'transcendental' illusion. Vedanta says that the whole world is an illusion along with its evil and hence the problem of evil is resolved. In Mahayana Buddhism evil, suffering, unhappiness are not taken as final or ultimate. The goal in this system is to reach beyond good and evil, to the unitary ultimate reality<sup>18</sup>. Ultimately God alone is sacred, so there can be no wholeness without God because God alone is whole. God is both creator and creativity – Lord Shiva

– the Nataraja is the dancer. If He is not there then neither is the dance of creation nor the creation. But, if creator and creativity or the phenomenal world stay together, if God exists together with pain, misery, unhappiness, our mundane existence or even Satan, then there is a problem. Because it is a dual existence and it will be impossible to rise above this duality. So the Indian philosophy of Vedanta does not say existence is dual. It says that the world as seen by us is dual, but that existence itself is non-dual. If we say it is either positive or negative it will create all the difficulties of duality. There are only two ways of expressing the non-dual. Either we say both positive and negative – *Purna* (whole) and *shunya* (void) simultaneously, or say neither positive nor negative. This means that either there is only the void (*shunya*) or that the Divine is all encompassing whole (*purna*). This will then mean that all is Divine.

It is true that the problem of evil did not dominate the field of Indian philosophy of religion, although the problem existed and moreover as Matilal says the uncritical and unexamined assumption that in Samkara's philosophy the world along with its evils is simply an illusion, leads to misconception and false ideas about Indian philosophy in particular<sup>19</sup>. One of the answers is good and evil both belong to the phenomenal reality behind which there is the Ultimate Reality, and this Ultimate Reality is beyond good and evil. This is the doctrine, Matilal, says that finally paved the way for mysticism.

Samkara further explains it with the help of Brahma Sutra: i) creation is not *ex nihilo* (Bs 2.1.35). If creation is *ex nihilo* and if the creator is omnipotent, as it is generally said in the Judeo-Christian tradition, then no satisfactory reconciliation can take place. The author of Brahmasutra clearly

repudiates the two antecedent conditions. *Ex nihilo* presupposes a beginning, but here it is said creation is *anadi* i.e. no beginning. Samkara explains: *anaditve bijankuranyayenopapatter na kaschid doso bhavati* – ‘If beginninglessness is accepted since it follows the process of seed-and-sprout regularity, no fault will arise.’ (the common belief in Judaism, Christianity and Islam contradicts the ‘beginninglessness’ of the Hindus). Secondly, Brahma Sutra (2.1.34) emphasizes that creation is *sapeksa* i.e. relative, the creator is not independent. He does not have free choice and hence He can’t be blamed as He is by Nagarjuna (150BC-250AD), (Twelve-Door Treatise) when he said: ‘If God is the maker of all things why did He not create all happy or all unhappy? Why did He make some happy and others unhappy<sup>20</sup>?’ This is the *vaishamyā argument*, that is, the lack of equality, the injustice consisting of the lack of equal distribution of happiness and unhappiness, (Matilal, p423) or as described in the Mahapurana, a Jaina text of 9<sup>th</sup> Cen. AD: “And God commits great sin in slaying the children whom He Himself created. If you say that He slays only to destroy evil beings, why did He create such beings in the first place?”<sup>21</sup> This is *the naighrnya* argument (BS2.1.34), that is, the cruelty of the omnipotent creator. David Hume’s oft-quoted lines have the same resonance :

Is He (God) willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil?<sup>22</sup>

The oldest - and perhaps the best resolution of the theodicy question in the Judeo-Christian tradition is to be found in the Book of Job in the Old testament where, in reply to the problem posed by the persistence of evil as

against a Creator God's omnipotence and benevolence, it was said: (Zophar said): 'Wilt thou seek to fathom the inscrutable Godhead<sup>23</sup>?' Hinting at this question H.A. Wolfson once said: Does anybody know of a better solution, and is not resignation out of faith better than resignation out of despair?<sup>24</sup>

Let me go back to Samkara again. Samkara adds another dimension to the causality of God: *parjanya-vat* i.e. 'like rainfall' (comm... on 2.1.34). Rainfall is the common cause of the production of rice, barley and so on. Rainfall does not show any favour or disfavour to the various seeds that are sown. God is likewise the common cause of 'creation'. The varieties and inequalities of the creatures are due to God's dependence upon special factors in each case, the particular nature of the creature, which is usually determined by the accumulated *Karma* of the creature itself<sup>25</sup>. This sapekshatva 'dependence' thesis which BS 2.1.34 underlines and which Samkara amplifies as God's dependence upon the *karma* of the creatures, seriously delimits or restricts God's omnipotence, and so will not be shared by any of the Biblical religions, Judaism, Christianity or Islam. However, as says Matilal, there seems to be a way out even without our conceding the 'beginninglessness' hypothesis. If there was a beginning and the beginning was a happy one, but free creatures were created, and through the exercise of free will they brought about inequalities upon themselves, then the alleged absurdity vanishes (p.424). It is generally said about *Karma* doctrine that

- (i) the *Karma* doctrine, however, was an early substitute for fatalism and recognized human beings as free agents<sup>26</sup>;

- (ii) it is an attempt to answer the question of moral responsibility in man. The man's own 'character' is his own destiny. It is a doctrine of 'Self responsibility';
- (iii) it is, thus, opposed to the theory of Fate, and determinism and accepts human beings as free agents and
- (iv) according to Vedanta God is dependent upon man's *Karma* for his creative activity and hence it is human beings who are responsible for the existence of sin and evil and it is they, having free will, who can make the world free of evil and sin, *papa*. Being acutely aware of the sufferings and imperfections of the world, the Indian philosophers believed that all these must be ascribed to the acts of the individuals themselves, and not to an all-wise, all-good God.

In sum, Samkara's solution is that God creates everything depending necessarily upon the *dharma* and *adharma* (the residual forces of *Karma*) of the living beings. In other words, creation is guided by the principle of *Karma*, while God is the creator of everything only in the same sense that rain is the creator of all vegetation. Matilal concludes that the argument is that we can 'solve' the problem of evil and the inequalities of individual happiness and unhappiness in a theistic system only if we assume the *Karma* hypothesis.

The whole issue of the secular and the sacred is viewed in three different ways in the textual tradition of India :

- 1) Ananda Coomarswamy, by basing his discussions on Shatapatha Brahmana(4.1.4.2-6), reveals the existence of a crucial distinction between 'spiritual authority', or Sacerdotium (*Brahman*) and 'temporal

power', or Regnum (*kshatra*) which were later unified at the initiative of Varuna, the Regnum, for Varuna 'could not subsist, apart from Mitra the Sacerdotium'. But here the relationship is hierarchical as said, 'I assign to you the precedence; quickened by thee I shall do deeds!' The point to stress is that 'The Regnum is not its own principle, but controlled by another - the Eternal Law, the Truth (*dharma, satyam*)' 'than which there is nothing higher'<sup>27</sup>. It is interesting, in this respect, to note the observation of Georges Dumzil. He says : 'In India, in the very earliest times, *raj* (or *rajan*) and *Brahman* existed in a true symbiosis in which the latter protected the former against the magico-religious risks inherent in the exercise of the royal function, while the former maintained the latter in a place equal to or above his own'<sup>28</sup>.

- 2) The second view is that the secular and the sacred are complementary to each other. In the devotional poetry of India mundane meets the spiritual to celebrate life. The devotional poetry is a kind of mean between the sacred and the mundane, the metaphysical and physical and thereby it refuses either world absolute priority and suggests that both have certain values. This poetry gives you the experience of the limitless infinite in the finite. It is nearness; it is moving in the same region and realizing one's transcendental self within the limitation of one's worldly existence<sup>29</sup>. In this medieval Vaishnava poetry God descends on this earth as a human being to share with us our suffering and turmoil, our happiness and prosperity. Here Man and God, secular and sacred are complementary to each other. The final sense is one of coming together. Becoming and being are dialectically united and one becomes that which one loves. In the small circle of

love, one experiences the expanse of the divine. Jan Gonda while observing about this symbiosis, draws repeated attention to 'the unmistakable existence of a belief (in Vedic texts) in a complementary relation between both components the divine and the secular and the tendency to view and represent ideas, figures or divine powers as complementary and co-operative<sup>30</sup>.' Kautilya's Arthashastra (300 BC) further fortifies the complementariness between the sacred and the secular by stating "Material well-being alone is supreme" He further says that spiritual good and sensual pleasures depend upon material well-being. The categories in terms of which the argument is constructed are not *Brahman* and *Kshatra* but *dharma* (spiritual virtue), *artha* (material well-being) and *Kama* (sensual pleasures). However in the post Kautilya literature, "there is a tendency to reinstate the priority of *dharma*<sup>31</sup>.

- 3) The third view and the most dominating view is the Vedantic view of oneness between *Brahman*, the unchanging reality or the sacred, and the changing world of external appearances or the secular. When all distinctions between the internal (In Vedantic philosophy *Brahman* and the Self or *atman* are one and the same) and external vanish, the distinction between the Self and the non-Self vanishes and one experiences Pure Being as Pure consciousness. This was a new religiousness of the Upanishads which could be understood by realizing the intertwining of the sacred with the secular and as a result the creation of a new humanity in which both consciousness and sensuous live together becomes a reality. Any split between these two brings a split in the self. We are both together, we are neither just spirituality



nor just consciousness – nor are we just matter. We are a tremendous harmony between matter and consciousness. Mahabharata (BC 400-400 AD), the great epic about kingship, has this to say on the subject: 'He who wishes to achieve *Kama* (desires) and *artha* (wealth) must first concentrate on *dharma* (virtue sacred), for *Kama* and *artha* are never separate from *dharma*' (V.124.37). Hence any separation between materialism or the exteriority and religion or interiority can spell disaster for humanity. This is more a vindication of the secular than religion because religion from the very beginning enjoyed a higher status than the mundane world and hence any symbiosis between the two vindicates the secular and establishes the fact that the sacred as a living presence is discernible in all things whether animate or apparently inanimate. The strong observation made by a theologian of culture Gabriel Vahanian is that any bifurcation between the secular and the sacred in the present time can lead to dangerous consequences while, both as a pair augment the benefit of the continuity of a notion of world wide acceptability.<sup>32</sup> Vahanian further says that secular actually was only the antonym of "religious", not its Manichaeian opposite, or its negation: they formed a pair, never to be cleaved one from the other. Together they belonged to one and the same world view and belonged with one another. No sooner are they split from one another than each seems to come apart at the seams. "Secular" becomes a shibboleth for a new fangled ideology of liberation from the past<sup>33</sup>.

In Hinduism the secular is an inbuilt entity of *Dharma* as explained by Nirad C Chaudhuri, an acute commentator on the course and significance of

contemporary events of India, whose views about Hinduism are endorsed by many modern Hindu intellectuals. He writes: 'In India secularism of even the highest European type is not needed, for Hinduism as a religion is itself secular and it has sanctified worldliness by infusing it with moral and spiritual qualities. To take away secularism from the Hindus is to make them immoral and culturally debased<sup>34</sup>.

The separation of the secular and the sacred has a history in the West which began with the emergence of Enlightenment. Enlightenment thought extolled reason and science as the best means of improving society and of ending political despotism and the tyranny of 'blind faith and superstition.' There is no reason for anybody to belittle this complex intellectual enterprise, which is the basis of the current conceptions of modernity and which was adopted by India during the colonial time, because of a false perception that Westernization is Modernization. This became a big deterrent to the understanding of our realities and our modernity.

There is no doubt that post-structuralist theory developed an important critique of the coercive aspects of Enlightenment thought but did not critically comment on its presumption that sacred is superstitions and regressive and that secular is progressive. Lata Mani asserts that the failure to rethink the categories of the sacred and the secular and to reconfigure their relationship has meant that post structuralist theory has remained an antithetical critique unable to propose a new synthesis<sup>35</sup>. There is urgency now for such a synthesis particularly because of the world wide terror created by fundamentalists in the name of religion. We all know that true religion can never teach violence and create terror, but without taking a course in the

true meaning of religion the post structuralists and post colonial critics followed the discourses of liberal humanism that had earlier been subject to critique. Liberal humanism, with its emphasis on the privatization of religions, faced the challenge of reconsidering the role of religion in public life. And as it appears that religions are here to stay one of the cherished dreams of the Enlightenment must be abandoned. At this juncture it is essential to bring together sacred and secular epistemology in comprehending the world around us which according to Prof. Taylor has turned into a world marked by an existential search for identity and meaning rather than by any commitment to specific religious visions or communities. Man's identity is precious and when man realizes his identity, it stimulates his desire to grow greater. This growth of greatness for an individual can only become real by establishing wide relationships with a large number of other individuals. The Nobel Prize winner Indian poet Tagore says, 'it is for the sake of our humanity, for the full growth of our soul, that we must turn our mind towards the ideal of the spiritual unity of man'<sup>36</sup>. Tagore says man as one is without meaning because there is no unity in One. The One with many is the real one, or entity. The Unity gives man the message of truth. It is in this sense that a unity is said to underlie the seeming diversity of the universe and therefore the issues of immanent and transcendent values and aspirations for the worldly and religious orders are to be viewed within this unitary framework where immanent and transcendent are dialectically united and one becomes that which one loves. It can be argued that the separation of the religious and the secular runs counter to the organic nature of Indian society. Properly understood, the unitive principle can impel us to challenge the mirage of otherness that threatens to undermine our commonality and shared destiny.

Let me say, in sum, that there are not two worlds, one of matter and another of the sacred. We must not give up the visible world as if it came from the evil one. It is our duty to change it into the Kingdom of heaven for only then one can realize the oneness of the sacred and the secular. Both the secular and the sacred indicate a 'liberal humanism' and in times to come, could serve as legitimate adjectives for post-religious mankind – but then to become anachronistic in a still distant future, when their values would have become a spontaneous characteristic of man, without the need to specify or name them. ?

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