

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Madhuri Santanam SONDHI, *Intercivilizational Dialogue on Peace, The Indian Council for Philosophical Research, 2008. ISBN 978-81-89963-03-3*

This work will interest political philosophers concerned with the place of religion in politics. It also speaks to comparative religion and the philosophy of religion. Two philosophers are compared, one an international celebrity, the other a neglected Indian. The Zionist Buber and the Hindu Mallik are shown to agree on the need for religious dialogue with Islam, though for somewhat different reasons.

The author's philosophical training at Edinburgh University could not have been expected to prepare her for this task. There she studied Plato and Aristotle, from Descartes to Kant, and from Bradley to Ayer. But that training in European thought did, nevertheless, enable her to approach and understand the work of a fellow Indian, educated at Oxford, where she also studied. This was someone of her own race, religion, and nation who was trying to bring European and Indian thought together at a time when India was coming to the end of British rule and was to be divided between Hindu and Muslim. Both Buber and Mallik were personally concerned with dialogue between their religions, Judaism and Hinduism respectively, and Islam. Both believed that conciliation is possible with mutual acceptance and non-violence. Their different civilisations still consider religion to be politically indispensable.

Europe, on the other hand, considers religion to be outdated as a mode of civic regulation. The slow but sure process of stripping it of political authority began with religious reformers themselves, with popular or even royal support, and continued with philosophers who complained that religious belief is superstitious. The historical process went in tandem with the development of civil law, based on Roman law, but supplemented with common law. Religion, which had been an essential background to legitimacy, lost political status, though it retained, and still retains, a symbolic presence at state events, such as marriages, funerals, and coronations. This political view, that religion is an irrelevance, was not and is not shared by the citizens of countries under European rule, who valued and persist in valuing their religious identity. The religious identities of Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Muslim, continue to thwart 'the great powers' who use democracy as a cloak for self-interest, commercial society, and military supremacy.

In this book we find a contrary outlook. The author describes two thinkers who considered that politics without religion is a body without a soul: the morality of religion is the only proper source of political authority. One was an Austrian Zionist, the other a Hindu. But they differed in their personal positions because the

Judaist believed that God had chosen the Jews to lead mankind, while the Hindu did not think that God had selected one race as a moral elite. Mallik believed that all religions are working in the same direction towards a universal good and should be helped to be themselves without destructive conflict between them. Indeed one of Mallik's central principles is that one should avoid conflict by refusing to take part in it. Buber agreed and rejected a violent solution towards Zionist self-government. After being silenced by the Nazis he migrated to Palestine where he advocated a bi-national Palestinian state to be shared between Jews and Arabs.

Malik was an admirer of Gandhi. At the same time he believed that the threat of conflict is inevitable, but is always resolvable with non-aggression and patience. The religious believe themselves, wrongly, to be always in the right. New accommodations have to be made. His position is supported by a scholarly view of history which combines metaphysics with social anthropology. He contrasted selfish European individualism with Hindu collectivism, with a parallel contrast between Hobbesian obedience to the written law of a sovereign and Hindu obedience to unwritten, traditional laws of the community.

The author hopes that her evocation of Judaic and Hindu aspirations for universal human perfection, which preserves religious and national identity, vividly evoked in the works of Buber and Mallik, may encourage cultural dialogue in that direction.

One advantage of a religious morality is that it tries to look at mankind as the god does, impartially and benevolently, even if some are privileged to lead others. Another is that conscience is felt to be a divine representative whose judgment is to be feared or desired. Again, to sincerely avow religion promises others a kind of security and selfless behaviour not offered by respect for civil law.

Yet, on the civil and irreligious side, there is the fact that the irreligious can be impartially benevolent, conscientious, and just, without appeal to a god, whose preferences are unverifiable and even partisan. The reference to 'human rights' is not a religious one. But when world leaders assert their right to protect their national interest at any cost, even at the cost of torturing the enemy, humanism is pushed into the background as a hopeless dream and a useless protection against religious fanatics.

This book comes when Islam asserts itself as the moral leader of the future, while Western governments put their faith, not in God, but in the rule of law and its democratic acceptance. Some of these governments, however, refuse to submit to international law and set themselves above their fellow democracies, which they undemocratically claim to lead. If that continues, which side will prevail, the religious who practise what they preach in the name of a universal god, or the irreligious who preach democracy for nations but supremacy of leadership for the nation with the most powerful weapons? Is one as irrational as the other? Isn't Mallik's recommendation of non-violent but mutual agreement the only rational option? If so, nations must be prepared to treat each other as equals with equal rights to self-advancement, self-protection, and justice under international law.

We must be grateful for this well researched review which offers an unusual fraternity of philosophers each of whom is revealed in scholarly detail and with sympathy. We are benefiting from years of study, discussion, and contemplation, by one whose spiritual leader was Gandhi and whose husband was famous as a parliamentary leader of Hindu nationalism.

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Tadeusz SZUBKA, *Filozofia analityczna. Koncepcje, metody, ograniczenia* [Analytic Philosophy. Concepts, Methods, Limitations], Wrocław, 2009.

So-called analytic philosophy is undoubtedly one of the most popular styles of contemporary philosophy. It was developed in the USA and Great Britain at the beginning of the 20th century. At present, the proponents of this approach to philosophy can be found on all the continents where philosophy is practised. Analytic philosophers have drawn attention to language and the argumentation of philosophical theses. And although both language and philosophical argumentation had been the focus of attention of philosophers for a long time, it was the analytic philosophers who truly revolutionised this field, by means of the application to these issues of the formal tools of dynamically developing contemporary logics. Analytic philosophy has recently been enjoying enormous popularity. This is indicated by the growing number of conferences, both national and international, monographs, and an impressive number of articles published in different scientific periodicals. The situation in Poland is similar. Here also, from year to year, the interest in analytic philosophy grows, as does the number of publications and specialists, who devote all their intellectual efforts to exploring this complex and interesting trend in contemporary philosophy. Professor Tadeusz Szubka, in his recently published metaphilosophical study entitled *Analytic Philosophy. Concepts, Methods, Limitations*, has undertaken to describe the trends and methods of contemporary analytic philosophy. In the introduction, the author says: "(...) the idea of writing this monograph first appeared when I was preparing my postdoctoral degree at the beginning of 2002. It is intended partly as a summary of many years of research into analytic philosophy, which I started in the early 1980s while preparing my Master's and then PhD thesis under the supervision of rev. Professor Stanisław Kamiński at the Catholic University of Lublin. It is also supposed to be a modest contribution to Polish research in the field of analytic philosophy, which has resulted, among others, in the publications by Michał Hempoliński, Jacek Juliusz Jadacki, Stanisław Kamiński and Jan Woleński" (p. 8) Describing the objective of his study, the author says: "This monograph is by no means a complete review of analytic philosophy. Nevertheless, it is a certain attempt at its methodological organization and evaluation, containing not only the well-known trends and schools,