



Beyond the Secular West (Religion, Culture, and Public Life)

By Akeel Bilgrami



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What is the character of secularism in countries that were not pervaded by Christianity, such as China, India, and the nations of the Middle East? To what extent is the secular an imposition of colonial rule? Has modern secularism evolved organically, or is it even necessary, and has it always meant progress? How does secularism comport with local religious cultures in Africa, and how does it work with local forms of power and governance in Latin America?

A vital extension of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, in which he exhaustively chronicled the emergence of secularism in Latin Christendom, this anthology applies Taylor's findings to secularism's global migration. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Nacim, Rajeev Bhargava, Akeel Bilgrami, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Sudipta Kaviraj, Claudio Lomnitz, Alfred Stepan, Charles Taylor, and Peter van der Veer each explore the transformation of Western secularism beyond Europe, and the collection closes with Taylor's response to each essay. What began as a modern reaction to—as well as a stubborn extension of—Latin Christendom has become a complex export shaped by the world's religious and political systems. Brilliantly alternating between intellectual and methodological approaches, the volume fosters a greater engagement with this phenomenon across disciplines.



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Editorial Review

Review

In counterpoint to Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, a stellar list of contributors offer a diverse range of critical perspectives exploring the ways in which the secular and secularism are translated and transformed as they travel beyond Latin Christendom: from China to India, from the Mexican Revolution to Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal. There is no comparable collection, as challenging and rewarding for expert and educated public alike.

(José Casanova, Georgetown University)

Beyond the Secular West is a distinguished and important set of essays that responds to *A Secular Age* with critical, broad-ranging, and sympathetic intelligence. The contributions hang together coherently despite the various regions and disciplinary orientations that they represent and richly illuminate the complexity of the issue of secularity as a global phenomenon with a long, diverse history.

(Uday Singh Mehta, CUNY Graduate Center)

This volume responds to Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*. Framed with an introduction and responses by Charles Taylor, the essays explore how Taylor's work applies to cultures beyond Western Latin Christendom.... Highly recommended.

(Choice)

About the Author

Akeel Bilgrami is the Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy and a professor on the Committee on Global Thought at Columbia University. His books include *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom?* (Columbia University Press, 2014); *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (2014); *Self-Knowledge and Resentment* (2012); and *Belief and Meaning* (1995).

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