



## Hindutva and Secularism

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*“India will be a land of many faiths, equally honoured  
and respected, but of one national outlook.”*

—Jawaharlal Nehru, January 24, 1948 (quoted in: T.N. Madan,  
*Locked Minds, Modern Myths: Secularism and Fundamentalism in  
India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi 1997), 233.)

### INTRODUCTION

The construction of Indian secularism is one of the most precious, celebrated, and fragile fruits of post-Independence India. The edification of the secular, a space autonomous from confessional religion, was supposed to be a remedy for the effects of the interreligious tensions, particularly between Hindu and Muslims. The father of Indian secularism, Jawaharlal Nehru, with the Congress Party of India, has been celebrated for creating secular institutions and, most importantly, a climate of tolerance among members of different faiths. The Constitution of India is adamant that India is “a sovereign socialist *secular* democratic republic that secures for all its citizens ... liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship”

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B. S. Nayak, D. Chakraborty (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Reflections on  
South Asian Transitions*,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36686-4\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36686-4_6)

(emphasis added).<sup>1</sup> Despite being a nation overwhelmingly Hindu, the Constitution places all religions on the same level and does not give preference to any religion over another. Unity in diversity was the guiding principle of the founding fathers of India. Nehru and his colleagues believed that only a pluralistic democracy could hold the people of different religions together and keep India united. Their project was a form of Indian nationalism, namely, a nation based on the notion of Indianness. Another form of nationalism, however, was challenging Nehru's nationalism: it promoted the idea to convert India into a Hindu state. A Hindu state is built on Hindu culture, which is a distinct culture, and includes all those who were not either Muslims or Christians. At the center of the Hindu nationalist project is the notion of *Hindutva*, one that encompasses all Indians, including those belonging to other religions (with the exception of Muslims and Christians), seen as Hindus. In the words of Veer Savarkar (1883–1966), leader of the *Hindu Mahasabha*, the Hindus “are not only a nation but a Jati (race), a born brotherhood” (Savarkar 1923: 89).<sup>2</sup> The concept of *Hindutva*, in other words, refers to an ethnified Hindu identity and has been adopted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in its 1996 election manifesto in terms of “a unifying principle which alone can preserve the unity and integrity” of India (BJP 1996); it has remained the party's guiding philosophical principle ever since.<sup>3</sup>

Indian secularism has shown itself to have limited and fragile roots in Indian society. Increasingly, the strategy of secular containment, by which Nehru meant that there should be a distance between state and the ubiquitous presence of religion in the public sphere, has been criticized and eventually marginalized. More importantly, the strategy of protecting and nurturing the reality of religious pluralism in the country through the agency of a secular state has lost its verve. The retreat of secularism began in the last decade of the twentieth century, with the famous demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, when the Hindu nationalists pulled down a mosque after a populist campaign because it was assumedly on the same spot as a former temple of a Hindu god. Today, India is ruled by a Hindu nationalist, Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He belongs to a Hindu nationalist political party, the BJP, and he spent his formative years working for a nationalist group called the Rashtriya SwayamSevak Sangh (RSS). He pushes a strategy of homogenization of Indian society centered on the cultural, religious, and political guidance of Hindu identity.

Scholarship on the crisis of Indian secularism and the rise of Hindu nationalism is the result of two strands of debates. The first strand revolves

around the political agenda and the policies advanced by Hindu nationalists. The second strand interprets Hindu nationalism in cultural terms. A reflection on the destiny of Indian secularism in an era of Hindu nationalism belongs to this second strand. In sum, Hindu nationalism approaches Indian secularism as a historical product of colonialism that has been in formation since the nineteenth century, but scholars and defenders of Indian secularism see it as an ontological reality, an inherent and transhistorical component of Indian identity. Before proceeding, however, I need to define the terms ‘secular,’ ‘secularization,’ and ‘secularism’ and explain what I mean by ‘Hindu nationalism.’

### TERMS

A discussion of the secular requires establishment of some basic analytical distinctions between ‘the secular’ as a central modern epistemic category, a synonym, ‘secularity,’ and two similar terms, ‘secularization’ and ‘secularism.’<sup>4</sup> While the former, ‘secularization,’ is a genealogical conceptualization of modern world-historical processes, the latter, ‘secularism,’ operates as a world-view and historical embodiment of the secular. All three concepts, ‘the secular,’ ‘secularization,’ and ‘secularism,’ are obviously related but are used to describe three different phenomena operating in three distinct realms of knowledge.

‘The secular’ is a central modern category to construct, codify, grasp, and experience a realm or reality differentiated from ‘the religious.’ One can explore the different types of ‘securities’ as they are codified, institutionalized, and experienced in various modern contexts and the parallel and correlated transformations of modern ‘religiosities’ and ‘spiritualities.’ In brief, ‘the secular’ stands for a (ontological) reality. ‘Secularization’ refers usually to the genealogy of the secular, that is, the actual empirical-historical patterns of transformation and differentiation of ‘the religious’ (ecclesiastical institutions and churches) and ‘the secular’ (state, economy, science, art, entertainment, health and welfare, etc.) institutional spheres from western early modern to contemporary societies. The thesis of ‘the decline’ and ‘the privatization’ of religion in the modern world have become central components of the theory of secularization. Both the decline and the privatization theses, however, have undergone numerous critiques and revisions in the last 30 years. In sum, ‘secularization’ is the genealogy and the theory of secularization; it explains how and why the modern became secular. ‘Secularism’ refers more specifically to the kind of

secular world-views (or *Weltanschauungen*), which may be either consciously held and explicitly elaborated or taken for granted. But modern secularism also comes in multiple historical forms, in terms of different normative models of legal-constitutional separation of the secular state and religion, or in terms of the different types of cognitive differentiation between science, philosophy, and theology, or in terms of the different models of practical differentiation between law, morality, and religion, etc. In the end, ‘secularism’ is both the ideology and the historical incarnation of the secular; it is the way the secular works.

Finally, I want to frame the borders of what I call ‘Hindu nationalism.’ Hindutva—Hindu nationalism, literally ‘Hindu essence’—is an ideology (‘one culture, one nation, one religion’) that aims to create a Hindu *rashtra* (nation) by replacing ‘Indianness’ on the unique criteria of national identity, the ultimate goal being to move India toward becoming a Hindu nation. In the words of Vinayak Domodar Savarkar, who coined the term, “Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race.” He added that “Hinduism is ... a part of Hindutva.”<sup>5</sup> That said, Hindu nationalism is a political project that employs religion for political purposes. Additionally, it reinterprets traditional Hindu symbols and practices in a nationalist context. Hindu nationalists challenge both intellectually and practically people of other faiths as a way to protect themselves from what they consider outside invaders, that is, Christians and Muslims, even though Christian and Muslim witness has been circulating in India for centuries.

Hindu nationalism is growing and has been building strength for decades. It seems now to be working in symbiosis with the ruling Hindu nationalist party, BJP. Here I do not pay attention to the generic, although criminal, actions of Hindu fundamentalist organizations such as the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal (DB), and Akhil Bharatiya Janata Party (ABVP), driven by the intent of organized and systematic persecution against Christians and Muslims and incitement of communal violence. I instead specifically refer to those government-driven policies, in place or at least announced, such as (1) the denial of constitutional rights to practice and propagate one’s own religion, (2) the anti-conversion legislation, (3) the revision of the Constitution of India with regard to two articles of the Constitution that seem to give significant concessions to minorities or the minority-dominated state, and (4) the ideologizing of history through rewriting history textbooks within the educational system (schools, educational institutions, and universities).<sup>6</sup> That said, the list of

governmental policies listed above should be considered prudently. I have no doubt that many BJP politicians would like to revise the Constitution and place restrictions on religious minorities, but I understand that Prime Minister Modi has publicly disavowed any intention to revise the Constitution or introduce federal anti-conversion legislation. Again, I don't doubt a larger agenda at work—but I think that one needs to give the government some credit. To put it differently, I locate 'Hindu nationalism' not at the social, cultural, or eventually broadly political level, but at the level of policy—at the level of the central government of the federal state, which in the mind of Jawaharlal Nehru, the main architect of the relation between the state and religion in India, is ultimately responsible for the secular governance of the public sphere in which secularism as well as religions operate.<sup>7</sup>

### INDIAN SECULARISM

After the collapse of Mohandas 'Mahatma' Gandhi's plan to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, in 1947 the Indian subcontinent was divided into two states, India and Pakistan. India portrayed itself as a pluralistic nation that welcomes ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.<sup>8</sup> However, the existence of a weak national identity, the potential for further Hindu-Muslim conflict, and the rise of secessionist and separatist aspirations forced Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India) to counter the country's ultimate risk of disintegration with the creation of a form of secular nationalism functioning as the ideology of a centralized federal state led by a strong central government. At that time, the main concern of the generation of leaders born out of the fight for independence was the protection of the unity and integrity of the nation.<sup>9</sup> The strategy was to build the post-colonial India around a common Indian identity: Indianness. Indianness was one of the main ideas of the Congress Party during the pre-independence era, and it became a crucial ingredient to helping India remain united: 'unity in diversity.' Indian nationalism, a nation built on the Indian identity, would provide unity to the heterogeneous people of India. On the more practical side, the cornerstone of this strategy was the erection of a state that is officially secular and it is not leaning toward any specific religion. In this way, a modern, secular nationalism would operate as a nation-building force and give foundation to a new, unifying identity for all Indians. It would also contain, regulate, and facilitate the dialogue among the traditional, old-fashioned religious identities.

Nehru understood the dominant role of religion in Indian society. He described the creation of a secular state in a religious society as the biggest problem that he had during his years in power. In 1961, just three years before his death, he wrote: “We talk about a secular state in India. It is perhaps not very easy even to find a good word in Hindi for ‘secular’. Some people think it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct ... It is a state which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities.”<sup>10</sup> In these words there is, *in nuce*, the character of Indian secularism and the difference between Indian secularism and western secularism.<sup>11</sup> In post-Independence India, religion was not supposed to be limited or privatized. On the contrary, to borrow the words of Gandhi, religion would remain the source of absolute value, the single most important ingredient of social life; the state would support each and every religious community in the celebration of their own myths and rites. Religion would be public as much as politics, because, to mention Gandhi once more, “those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.”<sup>12</sup> That said, however, the public space hosts both religion(s) and state and is a place of continuous dialogue between religious traditions and between religions and secularism.<sup>13</sup> The public space is, ultimately, a place of dialogue, infused of, and rooted in, the religious, with the state operating as a secular margin, as an agent that is not allied with any particular religion or an instrument of any religious organization.

The generation of a nation-state based on secularism out of a multi-religious reality like India could not come without difficulties. One difficulty is related to the relationship between politics and religion. One simple way to see it is that the public sphere hosts a cohabitation of politics and religions, in which the former is responsible for maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation, guaranteeing the administration of the country, resolving disputes among religions groups, and protecting the constitutional right of religious freedom. The latter conserves its grip on Indian consciousness and remains the metaphysical ground on which individuals and communities stand. A second way to understand the politics-religion relationship is to consider politics and religion distinct from yet entangled with each other. Although in distinct fashions, both politics and religions pursue tolerance, seek justice, and fight hunger, war, and exploitation. In that sense, there is no political factor that is not at the same time a religious factor; there is no religious factor that is not ultimately political. This is Gandhi’s view. Politics without religion becomes instrumental and

cynical; religion without politics become irrelevant and unswervingly otherworldly.

A second difficulty is concerned with the practical functioning of the secular. The Constitution of India recognized the equal right to freedom of conscience as well as the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion (art. 25:1); it also defends the fundamental rights of minority (religious) groups and prohibits the Indian state from discriminating against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth (art. 23:2); finally, it declares that there shall be no official state religion, no religious instruction in state schools, and no taxes to support any particular religion (arts. 25–28). A decisive article of the Constitution permits religious and linguistic minorities to establish and run their own educational institutions (art. 30:1). That said, the Constitution does not define accurately what is meant by a secular Indian state and how politics and religion should be distinct yet entangled. Moreover, the Constitution grants the state the right to regulate “any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice” to provide for social welfare and reform to all sections (art. 25:2).<sup>14</sup> But it does not explain how this right should be exercised in combination with the right to freely profess one’s own religion. In general, the Constitution does not give clear directives as to how the pragmatic and diplomatic role of the state is to be implemented with regard to religion and disputes between religious groups; therefore, the remedy for these difficulties is to be found at a more practical level, at the level of the central (federal) government, which has far greater powers than, for example, the central (federal) government of the United States. In the end, how secularism works in India might be found not in the law of the Constituent Assembly but in the praxis of the centralized government.

### CRISIS OF INDIAN SECULARISM

In the last few decades, the Indian secularism debate has focused on detecting and analyzing the crisis of secularism in the face of the rising forces of Hindu nationalism.<sup>15</sup> This debate is important because it has contributed to clarification of certain elements of both the nature and the genealogy of Indian secularism. As a matter of fact, some have claimed, with some reason, that the very same notion of ‘secularism’ in India is ambiguous and that it means different things to different people.<sup>16</sup>

On the one side, there are the critics of Indian secularism who emerged during the time of the struggles for independence, framed by leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar.<sup>17</sup> Thanks to them, the Constitution of the country remained secular, giving equal regard for all the religions and denying the status of state religion to any one particular religion. In the past two decades, however, Hindu nationalism has labeled secularism assured by the Constitution as ‘pseudo secularism’ of the minorities in order to propagate their religions. In their view, secularism was imposed by foreign westernized elites onto a profoundly religious Indian population. Revered Indian historian and leading scholar on ancient India Romila Thapar questions whether secularism belongs to Indian civilization.<sup>18</sup> To put it differently, the idea of secularism is an alien import in India and has failed to take root there. Some have chosen a different line of criticism, according to which the main cause of the crisis of the secular is internal to the secular state. In fact, although India has professed to be a ‘secular state,’ a state which treats all religions impartially, the state has never been completely impartial or detached from religion.<sup>19</sup> On the contrary, the state has regularly intervened to regulate the affairs of some religious communities while leaving others alone (e.g., with regard to temple management and supervision of fairs and pilgrimages).<sup>20</sup> A further line of criticism is articulated by some, who argue that secularism’s regulation of religion in Indian society has led to a backlash and radicalization in the form of Hindu nationalism.<sup>21</sup> Regarding this, I mention a book by Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom*; although not focused on India, Hurd offers an illuminating analysis of the unintended consequences of the liberal state’s secular regulating instinct toward religion.<sup>22</sup>

In summary, on the one hand, the critics of the *status quo* raise concerns about secularism as a regulatory agent of religion and as being alien to Indian society. On the other hand, the defenders of the *status quo*, namely, the Indian secularism that emerged out of Independence, claim that Indian secularism has its roots in the historical and social realities of India and is quite different from western secularism.<sup>23</sup> Those people argue that a specifically Indian form of secularism has come into being because of the historical conditions under which it emerged.<sup>24</sup> For example, some claim that Indian secularism is distinct from western secularism, for it was transformed in the process of responding to problems like caste discrimination and extreme religious diversity. Gary Jacobsohn calls the result of this process, “the ameliorative model,” which “embraces the social reform impulse



of Indian nationalism in the context of the nation's deeply rooted religious diversity and stratification."<sup>25</sup> In this context, Rajeev Bhargava asserts that secularism has a clear meaning, that is, "a separation of organized religion from organized political power inspired by a specific set of values." But these elements can be interpreted in several ways. Therefore, secularism has no fixed content but "multiple interpretations which change over time."<sup>26</sup>

What is interesting here is that Hindutva frames Indian secularism as the result of the effects of western secularism in India, effects that should be unveiled and reversed. For Indian nationalism, Indian secularism is only a mythos, a distinct story that transcends reasoning. As such, it cannot be refuted, only out-narrated. And the counter-narrative of Indian nationalists is that Indian secularism is a historical product which has been in construction since the time of British colonialism and that it is too strongly based on a western representation of India as multiethnic and religiously plural. By rejecting secularism, India would be able to return to its roots and recover the ancient tradition of Hindu civilization and its values.

The criticism of secularism and the claim of its apparent failure in the Indian context are known features of the Hindu nationalists. But both criticism and claim do not belong exclusively to them. For several decades now, Indian thinkers of different religious traditions and political orientations such as Ashis Nandy, Triloki Nath Madan, Mushirul Hasan, and Pratap Banu Mehta have been suspicious of secularism as an ontological category and rather interpreted it as a historical process. To borrow a sentence from Grace Davie, "an alternative suggestion is increasingly gaining ground: the possibility that secularization is not a universal process, but belongs instead to a relatively short and particular period of European history which still assumed (amongst other things) that whatever characterized Europe's religious life today would characterize everyone else's tomorrow."<sup>27</sup> An example of this post-secular perspective is the work of Ashis Nandy, who believes that secularism is an unintentional attempt to Christianize India. The entry point of Nandy's argument is that in agreement with Carl Schmitt's political theology, the political history of the West after Hobbes has been at the same time a religious history, in the sense that political concepts are derivatives of theology.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The transplanting of secularism from England to India equates to an importation of Christian concepts. Like Gandhi, Nandy considered the West and India as belonging not to two different histories but to two fundamentally different myths. In his words, Gandhi “rejected history and affirmed the primacy of myths over historical chronicles.”<sup>29</sup> The injection of secularism in the veins of Indian society, in Nandy’s opinion, is ultimately responsible for Hindu nationalism, Muslim resistance, and Sikh defensiveness in the sense that secularism has artificially attempted to promise what the older religious traditions, primarily Hindu, had guaranteed for centuries before the coming of the Raj, that is, peaceful coexistence in India. Other examples of critics are T.N. Madan and Mushirul Hasan. The former argues that secularism has failed to become part of the shared world-view of regular citizens and for the majority of people in India secularism is “a phantom concept.”<sup>30</sup> The latter has observed that “delinking of state and religion remains a distant dream; secularization of state and society an ideal.”<sup>31</sup> These and other scholars have raised the fundamental question of whether secularism—a transplanted concept in India of a universal organizational device for the political administration of the religious that supposedly contains within itself a mechanism for mediating cultural difference—has failed. Two misconceptions brought Indian secularism to its demise: first, the Euro/western model of secularization, imagined as an ideological project, is also a historical model; second, the attempt to distance religion from the political and legal processes of a multicultural and religiously pluralist society is foreign to Indian tradition.

The stakes are not just abstractly intellectual; they are also deeply ideological and political. Hindu nationalists add to these highly intellectual criticisms, in fact, the identification of the ultimate cause of this failure, namely, a single religious group that is ‘other’ to the majority populace and its own religious rites and rights. Nationalism of any kind, Purushottama Bilimoria notes, is constantly desirous of a homogenous nation and reclaims nativism and demands loyalty and allegiance to a single cause.<sup>32</sup> One might add to that that nationalism is permanently committed to condemn those at the margins of difference as basically agents of disorder who are disinterested in conforming. The Indian state instituted a Hindu Code Act regarding a uniform civil code for all ‘Hindus’ in the nation (including Sikhs), although leaving Muslims to their own Personal Law.<sup>33</sup> This is part of the reason that Hindu nationalists branded Indian secularism in terms

of pseudo-secularism. In the form of Bilimoria's rhetorical question, "why should the Hindus alone have to bear the burden of the regulatory and reformative agenda under the watchful eyes of the secular state, bent on secularization every aspect of Hindu faith and life, while the Muslim is exempted and is a willing claimant to the Constitutional license to continue with their own religiously sanctioned social practices, customs, and laws?"<sup>34</sup> The answer, unfortunately, has been raising anti-Muslim rhetoric and mobilization tactics and spreading of communal violence against religious minorities (including Christians).

## NOTES

1. The statement is included in the preamble to the Constitution of India. See Sharad D. Abhyankar, "The Constitution of India," in Gisbert H. Flanz (ed.), *Constitutions of the Countries of the World*, Release 97-6 (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1997).
2. Vinayak D. Savarkar, *Hindutva* (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1923), 89.
3. Bharatiya Janata Party, 'For a Strong and Prosperous India—Election Manifesto 1996' (New Delhi, 1996).
4. This section is both an extract and re-elaboration of José Casanova, *Secular, secularizations, secularisms: The Immanent Frame*, October 25, 2007. At <https://tif.ssrc.org/2007/10/25/secular-secularizations-secularisms/>.
5. Vinayak Damodar, *Savarkar, Hindutva; Who is a Hindu?* (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969), 3-4.
6. For the revision of the Constitution, the goal of Hindu nationalists is to cancel the articles that permit religious and linguistic minorities to establish and run their own educational institutions and to grant special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir where Muslims constitute an overwhelming majority. The latter was reached when the Parliament passed a resolution repealing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution, in 2019. With regard to the goal of writing history textbooks, see Robert Eric Frykenberg, 'Hindutva as a Political Religion,' *Dharma Deepika*, July-Dec., 2004, 7-38, 24-5.
7. Madan, *Locked Minds, Modern Myths: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India*, 310.
8. At the time of the partition there were 361 million people living in India; of these people, 315 million were Hindus, 32 million Muslims, 7 million Christians, 6 million Sikhs, 1 million Buddhists, 100,000 Parsians, and a small minority were Jews. Source: Stukenberg Marla, *Der Sikh-Konflikt: Eine Fallstudie zur Politisierung ethnischer Identität* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 1.

9. The statement ‘the unity and integrity’ is included in the preamble to the Constitution of India. See Abhyankar, ‘The Constitution of India.’
10. Nehru. Quoted in Madan *Locked Minds, Modern Myths: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India*, 245–6.
11. Here I quote Professor Neera Chandhoke of National Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research: “The first Prime Minister of India, Nehru, identified three features that define secularism. The first two, freedom of religion or irreligion and equality of religious practices, can be protected by democratic rights. The third aspect, that the state should not be aligned to any one religion, is crucial to the principle of equality, even to a weaker form of equality as non-discrimination between groups.” Then Professor Neera Chandhoke discusses the risk of an alliance between state and one specific religion: “The overlap between two formidable forms of power poses a distinct threat to freedom of conscience and expression, provides opportunities to a religious group aligned with the state that are unavailable to other groups, and seriously compromises equal citizenship rights as a basic tenet of democracy.” He also mentions the question of the protection of minorities: “The task of secularism is to safeguard plurality and ensure equality, and equality has to provide for minority rights—to protect minority communities and promote their cultures. Otherwise minorities will always be at risk in a majoritarian society. This will imperil not only the culture and the practices of the minority community, but also endanger the rights of its members.” Neera Chandhoke, “Rethinking Secularism: A View from India,” *Global e-Journal*, Vol. 10, Issue 9, February 14, 2017.
12. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1940), 383. For the sake of this article, it is important to note that Mahatma Gandhi emphasized, at the same time, (1) the inseparability of religion and politics, and (2) the superiority of the former over the latter.
13. Nandy Ashis, Trivedy Shikha, Mayaram Shail, Yagnik Achyut, *Creating a Nationality. The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and Fear of the Self*. 2nd impression (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 327.
14. Chatterjee Partha, *A Possible India. Essays in Political Criticism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 241–2.
15. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India*; Thomas Pantham, “Indian Secularism and Its Critics: Some Reflections,” *The Review of Politics* 59 (1997): 523–40; Rajeev Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Sumit Ganguly, “The Crisis of Indian Secularism,” *Journal of Democracy*

- 14 (2003): 11–25; Anuradha Dingwaney Needham and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, ed., *The Crisis of Secularism in India* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007); S. N. Balagangadhara and Jakob De Roover, “The Secular State and Religious Conflict: Liberal Neutrality and the Indian Case of Pluralism,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 15 (2007): 67–92; Badrinath Rao, “The Variant Meanings of Secularism in India: Notes Toward Conceptual Clarifications,” *Journal of Church and State* 48 (2006): 47–81.
16. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India*, 2, 244; M. M. Sankhdher, “Understanding Secularism,” in Sankhdher (ed.), *Secularism in India: Dilemmas and Challenges* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1995), 1–2; H. Srikanth, “Secularism versus Pseudo-Secularism: An Indian Debate,” *Social Action* 44 (1994): 39–54.
  17. Jakob De Roover, Sarah Claerhout, S. N. Balagangadhara, “*Liberal Political Theory and the Cultural Migration of Ideas: The Case of Secularism in India*,” *Political Theory* 39, no. 5 (September 2011): 571–599.
  18. Romila Thapar, “Is secularism alien to Indian civilization?” in Aakash Singh and Silika Mohapatra (eds.), *Indian Political Thought: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
  19. The Muslims of Kashmir claim that they have not been granted government posts because of their religion, and the same is argued by the Sikhs.
  20. Partha Chatterjee, “Secularism and Tolerance,” in Rajiv Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics*, 353–66; Rao, “The Variant Meanings of Secularism in India: Notes Toward Conceptual Clarifications,” 48–9.
  21. T. N. Madan, “Secularism in Its Place,” in Rajiv Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics*, 297–320; Ashis Nandy, “An AntiSecularist Manifesto,” *Seminar* 314 (1985): 14–24; Ashis Nandy, “The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance,” in Rajiv Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics*, 321–44; Ashis Nandy, “Closing the Debate on Secularism: A Personal Statement,” in Rajiv Bhargava (ed.), *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, 107–117.
  22. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).
  23. See, for example, Rajeev Bhargava, “The distinctiveness of Indian secularism,” in Aakash Singh & Silika Mohapatra (eds.), *Indian Political Thought: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), 99–119.
  24. Neera Chandhoke, *Beyond Secularism: The Rights of Religious Minorities* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42; Pantham, “Indian Secularism and Its Critics: Some Reflections”; Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890–1950* (Bloomington & Indianapolis:

- Indiana University Press, 2008), 4–6. To place the evolution of Indian secularism in a global context, see Linell E. Cady and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (eds.), *Comparative Secularisms in a Global Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
25. Gary Jacobsohn, *The Wheel of Law: India's Secularism in Comparative Constitutional Context* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 49–50.
  26. Rajeev Bhargava, “The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism,” in T. N. Srinivasan (ed.), *The Future of Secularism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21–2. See also Gurpreet Mahajan, “Secularism as Religious Non-Discrimination: The Universal and the Particular in the Indian Context,” *India Review* 1 (2002): 33–51. An interesting addition to the list is Peter Van der Veer’s comparative historical sociology study of religion and nationalism in India and China, entitled *The Modern Spirit of Asia*. Although focused on modernity in its multilayered and complex phenomenon, Van der Veer addresses secularism as a constituent element of modernity. He identifies a kind of third pathway between the critics and the defenders of Indian secularism. In his opinion, secularism entered India through the mediation of western imperialism and, as such, it maintains a western origin. He locates the onset of Indian secularism in the nineteenth century: according to Van der Veer, Indian secularism was aligned politically to the emergence of the nation-state, economically to industrialization, and ideologically to an emphasis on progress and liberation. However, the development of secularism in Indian society, in his view, is dependent upon the deep history of such society. In turn, such deep history has resulted in fundamental differences with regard to western secularism. See Peter Van der Veer, *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Secular and the Spiritual in India and China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
  27. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.
  28. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
  29. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 55.
  30. T.N. Madan, “Secularism in Its Place,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (1987), 747–759, 749.
  31. Mushiral Hasan, “Minority Identity and Its Discontents: Ayodhya and Its Aftermath,” *South Asian Bulletin* 14, no. 2 (1994), 24–40, 26.

32. Purushottama Bilimoria, "The Pseudo-Secularization of Hindutva and its Campaign for Uniform Civil Codes," *Nidan: Journal of the Department of Hindu Studies* 18 (2006), 1–21, 2.
33. Personal laws of Hindus have been largely codified via the so-called Hindu Code Bill (1955–57). The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, reins in prohibition against the practice of bigamy. Hindu Succession Act gave widows right to absolute maintenance and daughters the right to inherit. The Hindu Code also eased the pressures on divorce and marital difficulties, property rights, and inheritance among Hindus, while it did not reverse the inclinations of caste, patriarchy, and race.
34. Bilimoria, "The Pseudo-Secularization of Hindutva and its Campaign for Uniform Civil Codes," 6.