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Book Review

Mark C. Modak-Truran

Mississippi College School of Law, mmodak@mc.edu

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distinction envisaged by him, the one that proposes that the martyr (or one who conquers the self), rather than the hero (or one who subjugates the opponent), be regarded as the universal foundation of society. Indeed, unless the individual disciplines himself, how can a society that aggregates not things but living individuals be itself an orderly whole?

The author poses a (seeming) contradiction that serves as a theoretical irritant: Why should Sikhism, which is such an antiritualistic religion on the whole, still be so insistent that every Sikh wear on his person the five symbols, of which unshorn hair is one? I also find admirable the author's candid admission that he has relied "solely on the information available in English," that is, "on second-hand sources," as well as his meticulous, if brief, account of his methodological approach (p. 2). Uberoi is also to be commended for his well-reasoned suggestion that "the Sikh initiation rite [may be regarded] as the antithesis of Hindu renunciation" (p. 5), as well as his resolve to take account of both "book" and "field" views in service of his method of "historical sociology" (p. 8). Although Uberoi is unnecessarily repetitive in giving his views on Sikh initiation (pp. 10–11), he closes the first chapter with the ingenious suggestion that "the five symbols of Sikhism may be said to signify . . . *sannyas yoga* (*kes* and *kangā*), *grihasta yoga* (*kacchā* and the uncircumcised state) and *rajayoga* (*kirpan* and *karan*)."

I am troubled by two pervasive defects of the book, namely, the absence of diacritical marks even where they are absolutely necessary and the occasional misspellings (e.g., pp. 12, 13, 17). *Kanga*, for example, should be *Kanghā*; *Kara* should be *Karhā*; *rajya yoga* (p. 17) should be *rāja yoga* (p. 17); and *satyagraha* should be *satyāgraha* (p. 114). Such defects in an Oxford University Press publication are surprising, to say the least, and do not inspire confidence in the author's attention to detail.

More important, however, is the commendable substance of the book. The author cites Niharangan Ray's admirable outline of Sikhism as exemplified in the lives of gurus, who, Ray suggests, overcome the fear of death (pp. 60–61). Uberoi is unerring in isolating "the chief problem of Sikh history," namely, "the problem of making an Indian modernity out of medievalism . . . without denying its national heritage" (p. 82). However, on the same page Uberoi makes a clear error, stating that "Gandhi spent his whole life . . . trying to convert the world to the non-dualism of truth and non-violence, the perennial religion of India" (p. 82). Pantanjali's list of yamas and niyamas opens with truth and puts *ahimsa* ("non-violence") next; in spite of the emphasis Gandhi all along put on the inseparability of these two cardinal principles of conduct, he did not identify truth with *ahimsa*. As Gandhi himself put it, "*Ahimsa* and Truth are . . . intertwined . . . [and] it is impossible to . . . separate them. . . . Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end" (*The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [Ahmedabad, 1938], 4:219). So it is wrong to speak of "the non-dualism of truth and non-violence." On the whole, however, the book is informative and educative.

CHANDRAKALA PADIA, *Banaras Hindu University*.

PERRY, MICHAEL J. *Religion in Politics: Constitutional and Moral Perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 168 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

This book not only represents the culmination of Michael J. Perry's thoughtful and important deliberation (two other books and numerous articles) on the

proper relation of morality (especially religious morality) to politics and law, but it also presents arguments that are very accessible to those in religious studies, philosophy, political science, and law. The central question that Perry is addressing is: "What role may religious arguments play, if any, either in public debate about what political choices to make or as a basis of political choice?" (p. 3). He argues that answering this question comprises two debates, "a debate about the *constitutionally* proper role of religious arguments in politics and a related, but distinct, debate about their *morally* proper role" (p. 4). Perry also emphasizes that he is concerned primarily with religious arguments and political choices "about the morality of human conduct" (p. 6) (e.g., abortion and homosexuality).

Perry begins his argument with a general account of the "free-exercise norm" (government may not disfavor any religious practice) and the "nonestablishment norm" (government may not favor one or more religions) of the First Amendment, which should prove invaluable to those not well versed in First Amendment jurisprudence. Given this account, Perry concludes that "neither citizens nor even legislators or other public officials violate the nonestablishment norm by presenting religious arguments in public political debate but that a political choice would violate the norm if no plausible secular argument supported it" (p. 6). Similarly, as a matter of political morality, he argues that it is not only permissible but also important that religious arguments are presented in public political debate so that they can be tested. In this respect, Perry underscores that religiously based moral discourse can be "deliberative rather than dogmatic" (e.g., ecumenical or interreligious dialogue) and that it "is not always more sectarian than secular moral discourse; it can be less sectarian" (pp. 46, 48).

However, offering religious arguments in public debate is not the difficult question (either constitutionally or morally) but rather whether religious arguments can provide the basis for political choice without violating the nonestablishment norm or political morality. Perry differentiates between religious arguments about human worth and human well-being. With respect to certain religious arguments about human worth (e.g., that all human beings are sacred), he concludes that these may be relied on by citizens, legislators, and other public officials "even if, in their view, no persuasive secular argument supports the claim that all human beings are sacred" without transgressing the nonestablishment norm or political morality (pp. 6, 69). By contrast, Perry maintains that when citizens, legislators, and other public officials make political choices about the morality of human conduct, both the nonestablishment norm and political morality dictate that they "should not rely on a religious argument about the requirements of human well-being unless, *in their view*, a persuasive secular argument reaches the same conclusion about those requirements as the religious argument" (p. 6, my emphasis). In other words, Perry proposes a "persuasive" or "plausible" secular argument requirement for relying on religious arguments about human well-being as a basis of political choice. For Perry, a religious argument presupposes the truth of a religious or theistic belief (a belief about the existence, nature, activity, or will of God) that relies partly on revelation (pp. 31, 73). In comparison, a secular argument is negatively defined as a rational argument that does not depend on an atheistic or a theistic belief. Thus, Perry implies that a plausible secular argument is one that is neither theistic nor atheistic and not based on revelation (i.e., is rational).

Despite Perry's rigorous arguments, the plausible-secular-argument requirement presents several problems. First, rather than providing a uniform standard

for determining the role of religious arguments as a basis for political choice, the plausible-secular-argument requirement results in individualized and varied determinations of when reliance on religious arguments is permitted either by the nonestablishment norm or by political morality. Under the plausible-secular-argument requirement, certain citizens, legislators, and other public officials may embrace the same religious argument, but they would not uniformly rely on or reject it as a basis for political choice. Even if, in principle, the religious argument is supported by a plausible secular argument, not all individuals will realize this because of their differing rational capabilities to discern it. Further, even if individuals all had the same rational capabilities, Perry does not make it clear what makes a secular argument reasonably "plausible" or "persuasive," and, thus, individuals will utilize different standards of plausibility. For example, Perry argues that John Finnis's secular argument against homosexual sexual conduct (which Finnis obviously thinks is plausible or sound) is not sound for several reasons (pp. 85–96). However, Perry does not show that Finnis violates his own standard of plausibility (i.e., is internally inconsistent) or that Finnis accepts Perry's standard of plausibility but fails to satisfy it. Thus, the plausible-secular-argument requirement produces varying results according to individual rational capabilities and according to individual standards of plausibility.

Perry further argues that the lack of a plausible secular argument calls into question "the persuasiveness or soundness of any religious argument about the requirements of human well-being" and indicates that "the religious argument is problematic" or "highly suspect" (pp. 72, 74, 75). Although Perry contends that this view is accepted by "most religious believers in the United States" and that "the Roman Catholic religious-moral tradition has long embraced that position" (p. 72, 74) (citing Saint Thomas Aquinas for support), this position is in tension with both Aquinas's (the father of Roman Catholic theology) and John Calvin's (the father of Reformed Protestant theology) understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation. While Aquinas maintained that sacred doctrine (the whole truth) could not be inconsistent with natural reason (partial truth), he rejects subordinating revelation to reason (i.e., "grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it"). In fact, with respect to the variability of rational capabilities noted above, Aquinas claims that revelation (divine law) is more reliable than human reason (natural law)—even though reason plays a substantial role in Aquinas's ethics—and that revelation (divine law) is needed to correct for the uncertainty of human judgment, especially on contingent and particular matters, because different people form different judgments. Thus, for Aquinas, a religious argument based on revelation is more reliable than a plausible secular argument. Likewise, for Calvin, a religious argument based on revelation is more reliable because human reason is corrupted by sin (self-deception). Perry tries to counter this claim by arguing that humans could likewise deceive themselves about what God has revealed (p. 75). However, Calvin recognizes this problem and argues that proper moral judgement must be "spiritually discerned" in Scripture (revelation), which requires that one has received the "gift" or "grace of illumination" (which is not a natural endowment) from God.

Consequently, for both Calvin and Aquinas, an individual who discerns from revelation that certain human conduct is immoral would be warranted in relying on this belief as the basis of a political choice even if no plausible secular argument could be found to support the same conclusion. My point is not that Aquinas and Calvin are necessarily right but that they rely on different epistemological

claims about the reliability of revelation and reason (as bases for moral evaluation) that Perry does not fully engage. Thus, in an attempt to find grounds for political choice about human well-being that are acceptable to nonbelievers (a plausible secular argument), Perry proposes a test that many religious believers (including Calvinists and some Roman Catholics) could not accept. Despite these problems, Perry presents a compelling and accessible argument for his position, and *Religion in Politics* merits reading by all who are interested in the role of religion in politics. MARK MODAK-TRURAN, *Mississippi College*.

JOHNSON, JAMES TURNER. *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997. xi+185 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$16.95 (paper).

The Cold War "realists," whose influence lingers in academia and the corridors of power, tended to formulate their analyses in terms of national interest and the balance of power, the political expressions of "the Enlightenment belief in a common human rationality" (p. 7), that could be harnessed and manipulated by the burgeoning social sciences. For the most part, that "realism" discounted the role of religion in understanding political conflict. In his latest book, James Johnson argues not only that those ways of thinking are historically inadequate but that the work of Alasdair MacIntyre has made it impossible to ignore "the importance of the dissonances in how different communities understand ethics and highlights the potential conflict this dissonance breeds" (p. 8). In order to give MacIntyre's argument its due, it is important to be methodologically self-conscious. How, Johnson asks, can we mount the sort of "comparative dialogue" that "requires identifying similar items and issues and bringing them into contact across cultural dividing lines" (p. 22)? He suggests five "substantive questions," beginning with the nature of "holy war" and moving on to justification, authority, conduct, and the impact of the concept on "the actual practice of statecraft" (p. 27). That the middle questions track the *ad bellum* and *in bello* criteria of the just-war tradition is no accident. Much of the power of that tradition comes from isolating not simply what it would mean for a war to be just but what it takes generally to identify anything as a rational political action. To act without being able to provide something by way of justification, without some recognized form of authority, or with indifference to how a policy could be carried out, could not be a *political* action, even a misguided one. That Johnson brackets these questions between the details of a tradition's self-understanding and the vicissitudes of history signals his commitment to a different kind of realism, one that insists on taking seriously what political actors believe and do.

The middle chapters of this short volume trace the answers to these questions in a variety of Christian, Muslim, and secular sources, from Augustine to the Hanafite thinker al-Shaybani ("the Hugo Grotius of Islam" [pp. 68-69]), al-Farabi, Thomas Aquinas, and the classics of early modern international law. The most innovative discussion, however, emerges in chapter 6, "Holy War and the Practice of Statecraft," where Johnson distinguishes the "juristic ideal" of jihad from both "defensive jihad," as understood by Saladin, and *ghaza*, the "war for the faith" associated with the Ottoman empire. Here the tension between principle and practice comes out very nicely. Even the early caliphs, as Johnson reads the evidence, tempered the juristic ideal with political and economic goals

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