

World's Religions After September 11

Some Philosophical Reflections*

The reader's first reaction to the title is likely to be one of scepticism, for although the events of September 11 are doubtless firmly etched in modern memory, and their connection to the world's religions, or at least to one of them, is plain enough; to propose that these events could prompt philosophical reflections seems so far-fetched as to suggest an academic's desperate search for a new topic – a push for novelty. Perhaps the clarification would palliate the reader somewhat that what we mean by philosophical reflections are considerations, which do not go all the way into pure philosophy but, nevertheless, embody reflections of a philosophical nature, inasmuch as their attempt is to place some of the issues raised by the events of September 11, specially in relation to world religions, in a broader perspective. The need for such reflection can hardly be questioned even here in India, now that we have had our own version of the 9/11, namely, the 26/11.

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I would like to focus on six such issues in what follows.

Reflections on Religion:

One needs to build up gradually towards the first philosophical consideration by dwelling for a moment on the implications the events indelibly associated with September 11 have had on the standing of religion in the public eye. One is struck by the negative imaging of religion in public discourse in general in the wake of

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