

suffering and the aim of the psychotherapist is the same—this simple fact gives more credibility to Bien’s project than the tortuous writings of those whose entire lives are spent in analysing Freud and Jung in classrooms and seminars. It is difficult to cure a person; let alone to help that person reach *insight*. Then how difficult it must be to lead both the therapist and the patient both through and to mindfulness and then to the cessation of suffering? This book has practical implications for those helping others. This reviewer recently had a young lady confide to him that she is afraid of water and finds meaning in disjointed events—likes shadows, images of gods and goddesses, and the like. My training teaches me to tease out the childhood events of this person and label her as an obsessive-psychotic. In fact, I tried to locate her fears to some childhood sexual trauma. There were none and the lady was slightly discomfited when I tried to ask her about her intimate experiences. The transference and counter-transference mechanism was hindered in the process.

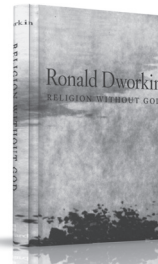
Bien forces me to rethink her condition in the light of Buddhist psychology and if I can see things in the light of Buddhism, why should I not think of what say, Hinduism, specifically the Tantras have to say about phobias? Where Bien stresses the annihilation of greed and anger and the lower passions; other talk-therapists of repute revel in encouraging the darkness in our hearts to have unbridled sway over us. The Bhagavadgita warned us much before the Buddha to control our minds; today’s psychoanalysts will pooh-poo the Gita as repressive. It is fine for Bien to locate mindfulness within Buddhism but he should have been a more careful researcher and ought to have pointed out that most of his exercises for therapists given in this book have their origins within Hindu canons. Bien’s otherwise excellent book does not even passingly mention the debt that Buddhist psychology owes to Hindu texts, including the *agamas* and the *nigamas*. Buddhist psychology derives from Hindu psychology. Three other points need to be mentioned, Bien has no control group to show the efficacy of Buddhist talk-therapy over other established therapies. Neither does he take into account the fact

that empirical research shows that meditation and the practice of mindfulness during the onset or the course of a psychiatric illness worsens the condition and thus should not be used while the patient is non-euthymic. Further, if Bien had clearly defined Buddhism, it would have helped us in locating his book within one or the other of the Buddhist traditions of mindfulness. Also it is disconcerting that nowhere is the great Vasubandhu (circa 4th to 5th century CE), that skilled Buddhist psychotherapist, explicitly mentioned within this book.

*Subhasis Chattopadhyay*

Psychoanalyst

Assistant Professor of English  
Ramananda College, Bishnupur



### **Religion Without God**

Ronald M Dworkin

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**I**n this collection of the Einstein Lectures delivered by the author at the University of Bern in December 2011, we find succinct and striking arguments that try to distinguish the debates on God from those on religion. Dworkin points out the religiosity prevalent in science and situates atheism also as ‘religious’. He questions the reason in associating the ‘minor premise’ (26) of a God with values. He argues how the beauty, unity, and symmetry of the universe are accepted by both science and religion. He delves into the constitutional and legal challenges of religious freedom and how such freedom can challenge many social values: ‘If we are to limit the protection of religious belief to godly religion, we must find our justification not in the science department of orthodox religions but rather in their other department, in the values they sponsor’ (113). This book is a small dart that has hit on the bull’s eye of the problematic of religion and god and should be read by anyone who believes or prefers not to.

*Editor*

Prabuddha Bharata