

God As Political Philosopher By Kancha Ilaiah

Using the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne as a case study, John E. Alvis shows that a novelist can be a political philosopher. He demonstrates that much of Hawthorne's works are rooted in the American political tradition. Once we view his writings in connection with the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence, we grasp that what Thomas Jefferson and John Adams had stated explicitly, Hawthorne's fiction conveys dramatically. With examples drawn from Hawthorne's shorter works, as well as acknowledged classics, such as *The Scarlet Letter*, John E. Alvis shows that Hawthorne's characters bear something sacred in their generic humanity, yet are subject to moral judgment. He conveys reciprocity between obligations regulating individual relations and the responsibilities of individuals to their community. From America's founding proclamations in the Declaration of Independence we take a sense of national aspirations for a political order that conforms to laws of nature and nature's God. From this higher law emerge the principles enumerated in that revolutionary document. Are these principles confined to the political, or do they reach into the experience of citizens to inform conduct? Do they include family, local community, and individual face-to-face relations with neighbors and strangers? Can one make a distinct way of life by fidelity to such standards as higher law, equality, liberty, natural rights, and consent? This study is distinguished from other writings on Hawthorne in its largely positive focus on America. Alvis characterizes Hawthorne as a rational patriot who endorses America's new terms for human association. This fascinating study provides new insights into the mind of one of the greatest American writers.

In *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*, Michael Zuckert proposes a new view of the political philosophy that lay behind the founding of the United States. In a book that will interest political scientists, historians, and philosophers, Zuckert looks at the Whig or opposition tradition as it developed in England. He argues that there were, in fact, three opposition traditions: Protestant, Grotian, and Lockean. Before the English Civil War the opposition was inspired by the effort to find the "one true Protestant politics--an effort that was seen to be a failure by the end of the Interregnum period. The Restoration saw the emergence of the Whigs, who sought a way to ground politics free from the sectarian theological-scriptural conflicts of the previous period. The Whigs were particularly influenced by the Dutch natural law philosopher Hugo Grotius. However, as Zuckert shows, by the mid-eighteenth century John Locke had replaced Grotius as the philosopher of the Whigs. Zuckert's analysis concludes with a penetrating examination of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, the English "Cato," who, he argues, brought together Lockean political philosophy and pre-existing Whig political science into a new and powerful synthesis. Although it has been misleadingly presented as a separate "classical republican" tradition in recent scholarly discussions, it is this "new republicanism" that served as the philosophical point of departure for the founders of the American republic.

During a time of global conflict, the theological question of whether Muslims, Jews, and Christians worship the same God carries political baggage. Is the God of ISIS the same as the God of Israel? Do Sunni Muslims and Protestant Christians pray to the same Creator and Sustainer of the universe? In this *Counterpoints* volume, edited by Ronnie P. Campbell, Jr., and Christopher Gnanakan, five leading scholars present the main religious perspectives on this question, demonstrating how to think carefully about an issue where opinions differ and confusion abounds. They examine related subtopics such as the difference between God being referentially the same and essentially the same, what "the same" means when referring to God, the significance of the Trinity in this discussion, whether religious inclusivism is inferred by certain understandings of God's sameness, and the appropriateness of interfaith worship. The four main views, along with the scholars presenting them, are: All Worship the Same God: Religious Pluralist View (Wm. Andrew Schwartz and John B. Cobb, Jr.) All Worship the Same God: Referring to the Same God View (Francis J. Beckwith) Jews and Christians Worship the Same God: Shared Revelation View (Gerald R. McDermott) None Worship the Same God: Different Conceptions View (Jerry L. Walls) Additionally, essays by Joseph Cumming and David W. Shenk explore the implications of this question specifically for Christians wanting to minister among and build relationships with Muslims. Cumming stresses that finding common ground is key, while Shenk advocates for a respectful focus on differences. Insightful, gracious, and relevant, *Do Christians, Muslims, and Jews Worship the Same God?* sheds light on one of the most important theological issues of our day.

Leslie Thiele presents an original and accessible essay on the great thinker's attempt to lead a heroic life as a philosopher, artist, saint, educator, and solitary. He takes as his point of departure Nietzsche's conception of the soul as a multiplicity of conflicting drives and personae, and focuses on the task Nietzsche allotted himself "to make a cosmos out of his chaotic inheritance." This struggle to "become what you are" by way of a spiritual politics is demonstrated to be Nietzsche's foremost concern, which fused his philosophy with his life.

The publication of volume 2 of Philip T. Grier's translation of *The Philosophy of Hegel as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Humanity* completes the first appearance in English of any of the works of Russian philosopher I. A. Il'in (Ilyin). Most of the contents of volume 2 will be unknown even to those who have read the 1946 German version prepared by Il'in, because in that version he omitted eight of the original ten chapters. These omitted chapters provide an extended reflection on the central categories of Hegel's moral, legal, and political philosophies, as well as of the philosophy of history. The topics examined are, in order: freedom, humanity, will, right, morality, ethical life, personhood and its virtue, and the state. Contained within these chapters are some notably insightful expositions of core doctrines in Hegel's philosophy. Il'in's colleague A. F. Losev accurately observed in the same year the text first appeared: "Neither the study of Hegel nor the study of contemporary Russian philosophical thought is any longer thinkable without this book of I. A. Il'in's."

In *The Priority of the Person*, world-class philosopher David Walsh advances the argument set forth in his highly original philosophic meditation *Politics of the Person as the Politics of Being* (2015), that "person" is the central category of modern political thought and philosophy. The present volume is divided into three main parts. It begins with the political discovery of the inexhaustibility of persons, explores the philosophic differentiation of the idea of the "person," and finally traces the historical emergence of the concept through art, science, and faith. Walsh argues that, although the roots of the idea of "person" are found in the Greek concept of the mind and in the Christian conception of the soul, this notion is ultimately a distinctly modern achievement, because it is only the modern turn toward interiority that illuminated the unique nature of persons as each being a world unto him- or herself. As Walsh shows, it is precisely this feature of persons that makes it possible for us to know and communicate with others, for we can only give and receive one another as persons. In this way alone can we become friends and, in friendship, build community. By showing how the person is modernity's central preoccupation, David Walsh's *The Priority of the Person* makes an important contribution to current discussions in both political theory and philosophy. It will also appeal to students and scholars of theology and literature, and any groups interested in the person and personalism.

Each chapter in *Christianity and Political Philosophy* addresses a philosophical problem generated by history. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen discusses the limits of natural law; Cicero and the politics of the public orthodoxy; the problem of political power and the forces of darkness; Sir John Fortescue and the English tradition; Donoso Cortes and the meaning of political power; the natural law tradition and the American political experience; Eric Voegelin and the Christian tradition; and Jaffa, the School of Strauss, and the Christian tradition. Wilhelmsen is convinced that mainstream philosophy's suppression of the Christian experience, or its reduction of Christianity to myths, deprives both Christianity and philosophy. He argues that Christianity opened up an entirely new range of philosophical questions and speculation that today are part and parcel of the intellectual tradition of the West. Wilhelmsen remains relevant because political philosophy in America today is following the historic cycle of political philosophy's

importance: as things get worse for the nation because it is internally riven by ideological and spiritual conflicts, there is a greater need for the political philosopher to raise and explore profound questions and reassert forgotten truths about man and society, the soul and God, and good and evil, as well as the ground of political order. This is the latest book in Transaction's esteemed Library of Conservative Thought series.

New translation of the first major work of the greatest English political philosopher.

This volume translates four chapters of Bodin's *Six livres de la république*, a vast synthesis of comparative public law and politics.

Al Seckel has rescued many of Bertrand Russell's best essays on religion, free thought, and nationalism from their resting places in obscure pamphlets, hard-to-find books, and out-of print periodicals to form a superb compilation.

"This new edition of Will Kymlicka's best selling critical introduction to contemporary political theory has been fully revised to include many of the most significant developments in Anglo-American political philosophy in the last 11 years, particularly the new debates on political liberalism, deliberative democracy, civic republicanism, nationalism, and cultural pluralism." "The book now includes two new chapters on citizenship theory and multiculturalism, in addition to updated chapters on utilitarianism, liberal egalitarianism, libertarianism, Marxism, communitarianism, and feminism. Extended guides to further reading have been added at the end of each chapter, listing the most important books and articles on each school of thought, as well as relevant journals and web sites."--BOOK JACKET.

Seeking God is a Platonic dialogue on the nature of the religious experience and the conditions under which this experience is possible. The dialogue takes place between three characters, a philosopher, a Sufi, and a Christian monk. They meet in the Syrian Desert and share their views and experiences on what it takes to have a union with God. The main premise that is presented and analyzed in the dialogue is that God reveals himself in nature, human civilization, and the human heart. Love is the beginning and end of the path that leads to the quest for God and the light that illumines this path. Living from the standpoint of the Divine is the basis of the good life. This book presents a vivid picture of the beauty and sublimity of the Divine, the joy of the religious experience, and the joy of life.

Masterfully interweaving political, religious, and historical themes, *Not by Reason Alone* creates a new interpretation of early modern political thought. Where most accounts assume that modern thought followed a decisive break with Christianity, Joshua Mitchell reveals that the line between the age of faith and that of reason is not quite so clear. Instead, he shows that the ideas of Luther, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau draw on history, rather than reason alone, for a sense of political authority. This erudite and ambitious work crosses disciplinary boundaries to expose unsuspected connections between political theory, religion, and history. In doing so, it offers a view of modern political thought undistorted by conventional distinctions between the ancient and the modern, and between the religious and the political. "Original. . . . A delight to read a political philosopher who takes the theologies of Hobbes and Locke seriously." —J. M. Porter, *Canadian Journal of History* "Mitchell's argument both illuminates and fascinates. . . . An arresting, even stunning, contribution to our study of modern political thought."—William R. Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Scholar's Review*

"Fénelon is arguably the most neglected of all the major philosophers of early modernity. His political masterwork was the most-read book in eighteenth-century France after the Bible, yet to now we have lacked a single interpretive monograph in English devoted specifically to his thought. This monograph aims to correct this by providing the first such book-length study. In focusing specifically on Fénelon's political thought, it has three primary aims. The first is to provide a reconstruction of Fénelon's political ideas accessible to those who might be encountering Fénelon directly or at length for the first time. The second is to demonstrate the connections between Fénelon's political thought and several other fields to which he made significant and long-recognized contributions, including not only philosophy and political science but also economics, education, literature, theology, and spirituality. Third, the book aims to cut several new edges in our extant understanding and appreciation of Fénelon's political thought and its significance. On this front, it specifically argues that Fénelon is better understood as a moderate and modern thinker rather than as a radical or reactionary, and that Fénelon deserves to be seen not merely as a political thinker but as a political philosopher. Finally, *The Political Philosophy of Fénelon* argues for Fénelon's relevance to our political world today. Fénelon was a nuanced and insightful diagnostician of ills from egocentrism and social atomism to authoritarianism and imperialism, and our understanding of these phenomena so familiar to us today can benefit from attending to his insights"--

Covering philosophical issues ranging from tattooed religious symbols to a feminist aesthetics of tattoo, *Tattoos and Philosophy* offers an enthusiastic analysis of inking that will lead readers to consider the nature of the tattooing arts in a new and profound way. Contains chapters written by philosophers (most all with tattoos themselves), tattoo artists, and tattoo enthusiasts that touch upon many areas in Western and Eastern philosophy Enlightens people to the nature of tattoos and the tattooing arts, leading readers to think deeply about tattoos in new ways Offers thoughtful and humorous insights that make philosophical ideas accessible to the non-philosopher

Philosophy For Dummies is a complete crash-course in philosophical thought, covering key philosophers, philosophical history and theory and the big questions that affect us today. Tying in with standard UK curricula and including core topics such as logic, ethics and political philosophy, this impartial, expert guide cuts through the jargon to give you the facts.

Barry Cooper applies the insights of German philosopher Eric Voegelin to the phenomenon of modern terrorism, pointing out that the chief omission from most contemporary studies of terrorism is an analysis of the "spiritual motivation" that is central to the actions of terrorists today.

James V. Schall presents, in a convincing and articulate manner, the revelational contribution to political philosophy, particularly that which comes out of the Roman Catholic tradition.

Based on the Wilde Lectures in Natural Religion given by Anthony Kenny at Oxford from 1970 to 1972, here revised in light of recent discussion and reflection, this provocative book examines some of the principal attributes traditionally ascribed to God in western theism, particularly omniscience and omnipotence. From his discussion of a number of related topics, including a comprehensive treatment of the problem of the relations between divine foreknowledge and human freedom, Kenny concludes that there can be no such being as the God of traditional natural theology.

With Piergiorgio Paterlini, a noted Italian writer and journalist, Gianni Vattimo, a leading philosopher of the continental school, reflects on a lifetime of politics, sexual radicalism, and philosophical exuberance in postwar Italy. Turin, the city in which he was born and one of the intellectual capitals of Europe (also the city in which Nietzsche went mad), forms the core of his reminiscences, enriched by fascinating

vignettes of studying under Hans Georg Gadamer, teaching in the United States, serving as a public intellectual and interlocutor of Habermas and Derrida, and working within the European Parliament to unite Europe. Vattimo's status as a left-wing faculty president paradoxically made him a target of the Red Brigades in the 1970s, causing him to flee Turin for his life. Left-wing terrorism did not deter the philosopher from his quest for social progress, however, and in the 1980s, he introduced a daring formulation called "weak thought," which stripped metaphysics, science, religion, and all other absolute systems of their authority. Vattimo then became notorious for his renewed commitment to the core values of Christianity (he was trained as a Catholic intellectual) and for the Vatican's denunciation of his views. Through these interviews, Paterlini composes an utterly candid first-person portrait of a major thinker and a riveting account of homosexuality, history, politics, and philosophical invention in the twentieth century. An ambitious and radically original reading of philosopher Francis Bacon. Comprehensive in its ambitions and meticulous in its approach, *The Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon* is a new and unique interpretation of one of early modernity's more important thinkers. Whereas recent works on Bacon tend to confine themselves either to interpreting his historical context or to considering the founder of Baconianism from the perspective of one work in particular or the history of science in general, Tom van Malssen argues, through detailed and provocative interpretations of a number of Baconian writings, that the unity of Bacon's thought can only be revealed if these writings are read in historical and philosophical conjunction as well as on the assumption that they are all somehow part of the whole of Bacon's political philosophy. In addition to restoring Bacon to the pantheon of great philosophers, van Malssen demonstrates that a proper understanding of Bacon's political philosophy contributes significantly to our understanding of the nature of philanthropic science, the modern project, and ultimately ourselves. "This book will become an enduring pillar of our understanding of Bacon's philosophy. The scholarship and mastery of the historical sources, both philosophic and Biblical, are brilliant." — Jerry Weinberger, author of *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age: A Commentary on Bacon's Advancement of Learning* "The scholarship of Bacon in this book is masterful. It should transform and deepen the field, the 'field' being the nature and history of the philosophic life. This is arguably the most thoughtful, penetrating, and ultimately revealing book on Bacon ever written." — Svetozar Minkov, author of *Francis Bacon's "Inquiry Touching Human Nature": Virtue, Philosophy, and the Relief of Man's Estate*

Although best known for the hugely influential *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), Robert Nozick has eschewed the label "political philosopher," as the vast majority of his writings have focused on other areas. Indeed, the breadth of Nozick's work is perhaps greater than that of any other contemporary philosopher. A. R. Lacey presents the first book to give full and proper discussion of Nozick's philosophy as a whole and of critical reactions to it, spanning areas as diverse as ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of religion. The book begins by examining *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* and moves on to Nozick's noted work on the theory of knowledge and his notion of "tracking the truth." Lacey explores the philosopher's metaphysical writings, including his "closest continuer theory" of personal identity, and his reflections on free will and the existence of God. He addresses the moral basis of Nozick's political philosophy in depth. Later chapters discuss his ideas of "symbolic utility," his evolutionary account of rationality, and his varying treatments of Newcomb's Paradox. The book concludes with more general topics, including Nozick's thoughts on the meaning of life and what those who search for it are really looking for. Given Nozick's reluctance to respond to his critics, the book's discussion of the secondary literature on his work is invaluable. Throughout, Lacey finds themes that unite Nozick's diverse writings, noting, for example, his hostility to coercion of all kinds. Illuminating, informative, and clearly written, the book will be welcomed as an authoritative guide to Nozick's philosophical thinking.

In this provocative and scholarly book, Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd propounds a view of Gautama Buddha as India's first social revolutionary. Buddha did his best to give the principles of tribal democracy and egalitarianism a sanctuary in his own sangha. In so doing, he foreshadowed modern India's experiment with parliamentary democracy. Critical of the caste system, Buddha inducted low caste members into the sangha and made them his trusted advisers. He gave women an honoured place in the sangha. Dissent was indeed permitted, and even Buddha was not above the law. Pre-dating Socrates and Plato by some years, Buddha also foreshadowed key elements of their philosophy.

This book offers a model introduction to political philosophy, addressing philosophers from Plato to Rawls and Nozick, with each thinker treated as exploring perennial problems. These include ethical truth, free will, the common good, whether God exists, whether America could become a Hobbesian world sovereign, appeals to nature, free speech, the nature of rights, how one can argue with Nietzsche, whether history is predictable, whether the market can be humanized, and assumed genetic differences between races and genders. When a thinker poses a problem not resolvable at that time, (such as racial equality) modern social science and economics are used to provide answers. There are two persistent themes in this book: namely, that a futile search for ethical truth has drained the original image of the good society (Plato and Aristotle) of its rich content, and that the market has replaced justice as the ordering principle of human society leaving philosophers helpless unless they learn economics.

Is dialogue between the major religions of the world possible? If it is possible, under what conditions? In this book, Michael H. Mitias argues that it is possible provided various conditions are met. These conditions include mutual respect, mutual understanding, and God-centeredness. First, how can a religion that is unusually complex--composed of a doctrine founded in a unique divine revelation, a leadership class of theologians, teachers, clergy, and administrators, and a community across global cultures--show uniform respect to another religion? How can a complex institution like a religion truly understand another religion? Third, can the different religions worship the same God if their conceptions of God are based on their unique doctrines? Mitias addresses these questions and argues that it is possible for religions to respect and understand one another. Further, he argues that the different conceptions of God are necessarily founded in a belief in the existence of a transcendent, infinite, and wise being. Michael H. Mitias is a retired Professor of Philosophy at Millsaps College, USA. He has published numerous articles and books in the area of aesthetics, philosophy of religions, political philosophy, and ethics. His most recent books are *The Transformative Power of Love* (2020), *Death, Family and Love* (2020), and *The Philosopher Converses with God* (2019).

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was the first great English philosopher and one of the most important theorists of human nature and politics in the history of Western thought. This superlative introduction introduces Hobbes' main doctrines and arguments, covering all of Hobbes' philosophy. A.P. Martinich begins with a helpful overview of Hobbes' life and work, setting his ideas against the political and scientific background of seventeenth-century England. He then introduces and assesses, in clear chapters, Hobbes' contributions to fundamental areas of philosophy: epistemology and metaphysics, in particular Hobbes' materialism and determinism and his relation to Descartes* ethics and political philosophy, concentrating on Hobbes' most famous work, *Leviathan*, and the theory of the social contract it advances* philosophy of science, logic and language, considering Hobbes' theory of nominalism and his writing on rhetoric and the uses of language;* religion, examining Hobbes' analyses of revelation, prophets and miracles. The final chapter considers the legacy of Hobbes' thought and his influence on contemporary philosophy. Additional features:* chapter summaries* annotated further reading.

We are currently witnessing an increasingly influential counterrevolution in political theory, evident in the dialectical return to classical political science pioneered most prominently by Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. In this context, the work of the relatively unknown Aurel Kolnai is of great importance. Kolnai was one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century to place the

restoration of common-sense evaluation and philosophical realism at the center of his philosophical and political itinerary. In this volume, Daniel J. Mahoney presents Kolnai's major writings in political philosophy, writings that explore - in ways that are diverse but complementary - Kolnai's critique of progressive or egalitarian democracy. The title essay contains Kolnai's fullest account of the limits of liberty understood as emancipation from traditional, natural, or divine restraints. 'The Utopian Mind,' a preface to Kolnai's critique of utopianism in a posthumous book of the same title, appears here for the first time. 'Conservative and Revolutionary Ethos,' Kolnai's remarkable 1972 essay comparing conservative and revolutionary approaches to political life, appears for the first time in English translation. The volume also includes a critically sympathetic evaluation of Michael Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics* and an incisive criticism of Jacques Maritain's efforts to synthesize Christian orthodoxy and progressive politics. *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy* is a searching critique of political utopianism, as well as a pathbreaking articulation of conservative constitutionalism as the true support for human liberty properly understood. It is a major contribution to Christian and conservative political reflection in our time.

The portrait of John Locke as a secular advocate of Enlightenment rationality has been deconstructed by the recent 'religious turn' in Locke scholarship. This book takes an important next step: moving beyond the 'religious turn' and establishing a 'theological turn', Nathan Guy argues that John Locke ought to be viewed as a Christian political philosopher whose political theory was firmly rooted in the moderating Latitudinarian theology of the seventeenth-century. Nestled between the secular political philosopher and the Christian public theologian stands Locke, the Christian political philosopher, whose arguments not only self-consciously depend upon Christian assumptions, but also offer a decidedly Christian theory of government. Finding Locke's God identifies three theological pillars crucial to Locke's political theory: (1) a biblical depiction of God, (2) the law of nature rooted in a doctrine of creation and (3) acceptance of divine revelation in scripture. As a result, Locke's political philosophy brings forth theologically-rich aims, while seeking to counter or disarm threats such as atheism, hyper-Calvinism, and religious enthusiasm. Bringing these items together, Nathan Guy demonstrates how each pillar supports Locke's Latitudinarian political philosophy and provides a better understanding of how he grounds his notions of freedom, equality and religious toleration. Convincingly argued and meticulously researched, this book offers an exciting new direction for Locke studies.

"In this concise and engaging book, Jeremy Waldron explores these questions in the company of the seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke. Waldron believes that Locke provides us with 'as well-worked-out a theory of basic equality as we have in the canon of political philosophy.' But for us it is a challenging theory because its foundations are unabashedly religious. God has created us equal, says Locke, and a proper grasp of the implications of this equality is inseparable from an understanding of ordinary men and women as creatures of God, created in his image and 'made to last during his, not one another's Pleasure'." "But this is not just a book about Locke. *God, Locke, and Equality* discusses contemporary approaches to equality as well as rival interpretations of Locke, and this dual agenda gives the whole book an unusual degree of accessibility and intellectual excitement. Indispensable for Locke scholars and for those who study the foundations of equality and the relation between politics and religion, it will be of interest also to philosophers, political theorists, lawyers, and theologians around the world."--Jacket.

The Philosopher's English King offers a close reading of the *Henriad*, presenting Shakespeare's teaching on political authority and contributing to the burgeoning scholarship on Shakespeare as a political thinker.

Cambridge scholar and political philosopher John Neville Figgis examines how ideas concerning politics and religion changed during the Renaissance. Drawing on a range of pertinent texts from a period spanning over two centuries, Figgis examines how some of the finest scholars of the Renaissance era established and refined their ideas. In the earlier part of the period, politics was deeply intertwined with the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope. Later on, the upheaval of the Reformation resulted in a dramatic surge of ideas, changing forever how the rule of a given monarch was connected with Christendom. By the 17th century, the controversial notion of the divine, God-given right of kings to rule had emerged. As Figgis recalls, the notion met with opposition and eventual revolt in the Netherlands; the deposing of the Dutch monarch sent shockwaves through Europe, and foresaw the beginnings of the Enlightenment era.

What does it mean to die? What is the role of death in human life? The theme of this novel focuses on these two questions in the medium of a duel between the god of death, Mowt, and Dr. Athenaion, a devotee of the god of love. In the course of delineating the duel, the author spotlights the meaning of death as a human phenomenon in the context of a truly loving family. Mowt inflicts several devastating calamities upon Dr. Athenaion, but in spite of this infliction, two love affairs sprout and see the light of day in the Athenaion family.

Within this emanative scheme we encounter some of the basic ideas of Avicenna's religious and political philosophy, including his discussion of the divine attributes, divine providence, the Hereafter, and the ideal, "virtuous" city with its philosopher-prophet as the recipient and conveyer of the revealed law, a human link between the celestial and the terrestrial worlds."--BOOK JACKET.

What is it like to meet God, to converse with him about the most important questions of human life, and then to have union with him? What is it like for a finite being to stand in the presence of the infinite being? James Amore, a philosopher, is in quest of God. This quest originated from a strong desire to have union with the sun of all suns: God. This desire took hold of his heart and mind when he was a young man; it grew and developed into an overwhelming passion when he became an adult. Relying on information he received from his grandmother, who was a clandestine mystic, he decided to meet God on the Peakless Mountain. After twelve days of ascent, which was dangerous and exposed him to death a few times, he met God. To his surprise, God speaks, and he spoke to him in English. He had a two-day conversation with him, and then he declared to God that he would not leave until he had union with him. God warned him against this request, but James Amore was determined to sit in his lap and listen to the music of his heartbeats. Well, God granted him his wish. We do not know how long this union lasted, but we know that when James emerged from it, he was an old man and a deaf flute player! We meet him playing his flute at St. John the Divine, a cathedral in Jackson, Tennessee.

Religious freedom is the prototypical liberal freedom, a cornerstone of modern political rights. *Freedom "of Religion and the Secular State"* examines the concept of religious freedom, focusing on today's hot-button issues, including blasphemy and religious vilification; the teaching of biological evolution in schools; the health and welfare of children (particularly where religious beliefs clash with modern forms of medical treatment); claims by some religious organizations for a right of conscientious objection (e.g., doctors who refuse to perform abortions); and the recognition of Sharia law in Western societies. Such issues are topical, controversial, and intransigent. Somewhere at the core of contention lies fear of overweening government power, used to impose a favored understanding of the world - or another, transcendent, world - or to persecute those with a different understanding. With a background in legal and political philosophy, philosophy of religion, and moral theory, Russell Blackford traces the historical

