

## **Secular Notion of Incarnation**

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Why do religious believers seek to find a metaphysical underpinning to morality and why do secularists seek to resist them? Is there something essential to the idea of morality in the images of the Olympian Gods looking down at humanity; of the Bodhisattva weeping tears of compassion and so forth? How do we move from sympathy and solidarity to the idea of pity or compassion?

Religious believers in the West who think that secularism will bring about moral disaster insist that needs what they call a transcendent source or metaphysical underpinning. Secularists, meanwhile, believe that religion brings in its wake an obscurantist fundamentalism that causes its own moral damage. Is it possible to adjudicate between these positions? Can we find a middle way between moral absolutism and moral relativism in the Buddhist notion of compassion?