In this article I argue that people have a right to spirituality, a claim-right; it is therefore the duty of society, including secular societies, to enable its citizens to exercise this right (Hohfeld, 1913, p. 32). This means that spirituality should not be left only to the realm of laissez-faire, and that society has a moral duty to nurture spiritual opportunities for children and adults. Moreover, I uphold the idea that all people, including those who live in secular societies, have the right not only to any spiritual life, but to their own, i.e., the spiritual values of their particular upbringing (Margalit and Halbertal, 1994).

Secular societies fail to do so, and hence they suffer from a “spiritual void” (Wu & Wenning, 2016, p. 566) or a “meaning gap” (Yaden et al., 2017, p. 554), to quote two of many publications that point to a spiritual crisis in secularism from an intellectual and not a religious point of view (e.g., Dreyfus & Kelly, 2011; Grayling, 2011; de Botton, 2012; Harris, 2014).

I claim that this failure is due to the overwhelming place that work occupies in people’s lives in secular societies and to a narrow understanding of the meaning of leisure, an understanding which I call leisure 1. Work is a mode of life in which there is an investment of mental and physical energy directed toward, adopting reality and our place within it (preserve or change) in a way that will suit our intentions, needs, and desires. Leisure 1 designates times in which we distract ourselves from reality. It is about entering a mode in which the specific realm of reality that we encounter is already tailored to our wishes, such that we see, hear, and feel what we want. Although leisure 1 can promise enjoyable experiences, it does not have a meaningful impact on the reality in which we live, our place within it, and our affinity with it. Thus, leisure 1 is not a necessary mode for a flourishing human life.

In secular societies, the combination of work and leisure 1 has pushed to the far periphery practices of contemplation which, as I claim in line with Pieper (1963), among others, are the core of any spiritual practice, and also constitute a special kind of leisure which I refer to as leisure 2. Contemplation and leisure 2 are the foundations of spiritual life. After I expand on the idea of contemplation and leisure 2 to include many practices, among them philosophy, I argue that it is not necessary to characterize secularism as an un-spiritual worldly culture (Zuckerman and Shook, 2017, p. 5), and in line with Castoriadis (1991) I describe philosophy and the arts as belonging to the particular spiritual tradition of the democratic secular culture.