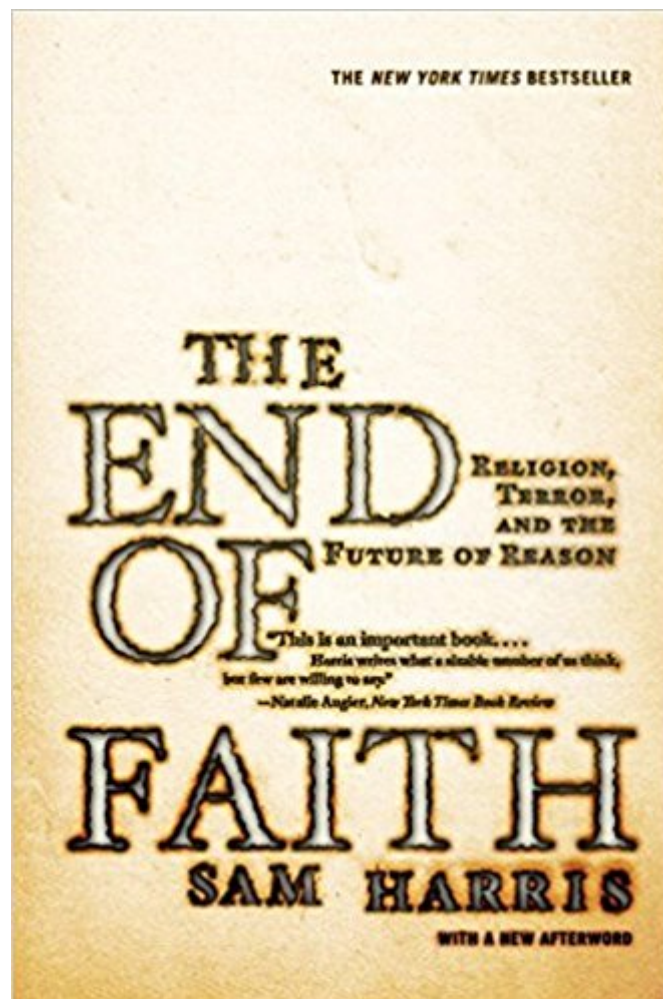




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The End Of Faith: Religion, Terror, And The Future Of Reason



Synopsis

"The End of Faith articulates the dangers and absurdities of organized religion so fiercely and so fearlessly that I felt relieved as I read it, vindicated....Harris writes what a sizable number of us think, but few are willing to say."â •Natalie Angier, New York Times In The End of Faith, Sam Harris delivers a startling analysis of the clash between reason and religion in the modern world. He offers a vivid, historical tour of our willingness to suspend reason in favor of religious beliefsâ •even when these beliefs inspire the worst human atrocities. While warning against the encroachment of organized religion into world politics, Harris draws on insights from neuroscience, philosophy, and Eastern mysticism to deliver a call for a truly modern foundation for ethics and spirituality that is both secular and humanistic. Winner of the 2005 PEN/Martha Albrand Award for Nonfiction.

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Customer Reviews

Sam Harris cranks out blunt, hard-hitting chapters to make his case for why faith itself is the most dangerous element of modern life. And if the devil's in the details, then you'll find Satan waiting at the back of the book in the very substantial notes section where Harris saves his more esoteric discussions to avoid sidetracking the urgency of his message. Interestingly, Harris is not just focused on debunking religious faith, though he makes his compelling arguments with verve and intellectual clarity. The End of Faith is also a bit of a philosophical Swiss Army knife. Once he has presented his arguments on why, in an age of Weapons of Mass Destruction, belief is now a hazard of great proportions, he focuses on proposing alternate approaches to the mysteries of life. Harris

recognizes the truth of the human condition, that we fear death, and we often crave "something more" we cannot easily define, and which is not met by accumulating more material possessions. But by attempting to provide the cure for the ills it defines, the book bites off a bit more than it can comfortably chew in its modest page count (however the rich Bibliography provides more than enough background for an intrigued reader to follow up for months on any particular strand of the author's musings.) Harris' heart is not as much in the latter chapters, though, but in presenting his main premise. Simply stated, any belief system that speaks with assurance about the hereafter has the potential to place far less value on the here and now. And thus the corollary -- when death is simply a door translating us from one existence to another, it loses its sting and finality. Harris pointedly asks us to consider that those who do not fear death for themselves, and who also revere ancient scriptures instructing them to mete it out generously to others, may soon have these weapons in their own hands. If thoughts along the same line haunt you, this is your book.--Ed Dobeas --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

In this sometimes simplistic and misguided book, Harris calls for the end of religious faith in the modern world. Not only does such faith lack a rational base, he argues, but even the urge for religious toleration allows a too-easy acceptance of the motives of religious fundamentalists. Religious faith, according to Harris, requires its adherents to cling irrationally to mythic stories of ideal paradisiacal worlds (heaven and hell) that provide alternatives to their own everyday worlds. Moreover, innumerable acts of violence, he argues, can be attributed to a religious faith that clings uncritically to one set of dogmas or another. Very simply, religion is a form of terrorism for Harris. Predictably, he argues that a rational and scientific view -- one that relies on the power of empirical evidence to support knowledge and understanding -- should replace religious faith. We no longer need gods to make laws for us when we can sensibly make them for ourselves. But Harris overstates his case by misunderstanding religious faith, as when he makes the audaciously naïve statement that "mysticism is a rational enterprise; religion is not." As William James ably demonstrated, mysticism is far from a rational enterprise, while religion might often require rationality in order to function properly. On balance, Harris's book generalizes so much about both religion and reason that it is ineffectual. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

True to his reputation, Sam Harris is extremely well thought out, speaks vividly but clearly, and takes a controversial stance but offers evidence and logic difficult to argue with. I will admit, while

tolerance is a valuable moral undertaking, this book will not provide any effort in that direction. In fact, while Harris is completely void of any racial or religious hate, his stance is such that tolerance may no longer be the very best option-too much tolerance can act against us and may even be at the root of a global problem

It is a bold approach to tackling the issue of religious doctrines and how they affect their followers beliefs and actions. Sam Harris puts it all on the table and pulls no punches as he compares modern educated reasoning to the thoughts and philosophies of the authors of such doctrines espoused thousands of years ago and still blindly followed today. A person who is a firm believer of their doctrine of choice will not find this book comforting and will most likely call Dr. Harris the devil. A person who has serious concerns about following any of these doctrines will most likely come away from this book with further insight and common sense information to objectively look at the subject with a discerning eye. As Dr. Harris so clearly points out, we demand objective proof in almost anything we do or accept in our lives before we take action on it, except when it comes to religious faith... there it seems people are willing to follow their doctrine off the proverbial cliff with no questions asked. I commend Dr. Harris on his work and gumption to put it out there. I would highly recommend the book to anyone with a penchant for learning and truth when it comes how they should live their life.

At last a book that clearly demystifies the dangerous, soul-killing fantasies that form the basis of all the organized religions. Thank-you most deeply Mr. Harris for the clarity and reason you bring to the entire subject. In conversations with learned friends I have quoted and shall continue to quote you a great deal. You have put into cogent argument the ideas of so many people who, like me, lacked the literary skill you have in abundance. I look forward with trembling anticipation to reading your other books. Sincerely, Jack Blair. Vancouver.

Sam Harris remarked that "It is time that we admitted that faith is nothing more than the license religious people give one another to keep believing when reasons fail". In "The End Of Faith" Harris argues that such "Faith", which is believing in something despite lack of and or evidence to the contrary because you want it to be true, is dangerous in this day and age and may even lead to the destruction of humanity (especially with weapons of mass destruction now in existence). He was motivated to write this book, and much of his life work in general, after the events of 911. He makes his case with strong reasoning skills utilizing research, analogies, first hand account and more. He

does so with great wit and flair (The Intro is particularly engaging leaving you wanting more and more.) It's important to stress that this book, unlike his colleagues other books, is not about the existence of God. It's about beliefs and how the nature of those beliefs are formed, behave and shape our world. If you're looking for books on the existence of God I recommend "Godless" (Barker) & "The God Delusion" (Dawkins). I recommend this book and check out his other work. I would recommend you watch him talk to (on YouTube or his podcast) he's an even better public speaker.

Well, well done. Put into words something so many of us want to say, and he nails it in a straight forward manner. Could not put this down and will be getting more of his work. Do not miss this book, you will not be disappointed.

Sam Harris seldom disappoints and The End of Faith is no exception. The book is written so eloquently and it clearly demonstrates the ill effects of religion on our world. Harris does a wonderful job of identifying, explaining and supporting every claim he makes. The pages upon pages of scientific data and research analysis made the book that much better. Sam Harris does a better job than both Dawkins or Hitchens in presenting his opinion in a way that doesn't immediately defend and I think that is critical in approaching someone who might otherwise slam the book shut. I'm very glad that Sam is such a young man because I can't wait to read the next 5 books he writes.

There is little that I can contribute to the discussion of this book that hasn't already been exhausted some ten-plus years after its publication. However, I will say that I think that Sam Harris is one of the foremost thinkers of our time and this is a great example of why.

Great book for opened minded people who can think for themselves. No one can prove what the truth is right??

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