

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF Vaibhav Gujral,
Taylor Hathaway-Zepeda
MANAGING EDITOR Stephen Wertheim
MEDIA EDITOR Shelly Agarwal
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Patrick McKee
FEATURES EDITORS Krister Anderson, Doug Lleb
PERSPECTIVES EDITORS Eric Lee, Nathan Sharp
WORLD IN REVIEW EDITORS Noam Lerer, Andrea Woloski
GLOBAL NOTEBOOK EDITORS James Kwok, Meredith Moore
INTERVIEW/ENDPAPER EDITORS Lin Ting Li, Becky Buckwalter
REVIEW ESSAYS EDITORS David Katz, Ben Zimmer
CORRESPONDENCE EDITOR Norman Ho
WEB CONTENT EDITORS Jaclyn Granick

PHOTO EDITOR Anna McCallie
DESIGN EDITOR Gowri Aragam
WEB EDITOR Peter Zhou
VISUALS EDITOR Graham Eckert

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING Ed Zhong
DISTRIBUTION MANAGER Arif Lakhani
COMPTROLLER Helen Weng

ASSOCIATE STAFF

Shelly Agarwal, Gowri Aragam, Julia Choe, Killian Clarke, Hampton Foushee, Jackie Granick, Gretchen Guo, Noah Hertz-Bunzl, David Katz, June-Ho Kim, Susanna Kim, Ajay Kumar, James Kwok, Eric Lee, Lin Ting Li, Martin Liby, Joseph Luna, Anna McCallie, Meredith Moore, Nathan Sharp, Adam Alexi Solomon, Helen Weng, Andrea Woloski, Jenny Wong, Benjamin Zimmer

ADVISORY BOARD

Jorge Domínguez, H.D.S. Greenway, Sohail Hashmi,
J. Bryan Hehir, Stanley Hoffmann, Samuel P. Huntington, Bill Kovach,
Roderick MacFarquhar, Joseph Weiler, Jennifer Widner

The Harvard International Review is published quarterly by the
Harvard International Relations Council, Inc.

Copyright 2006 (ISSN 0739-1854) Harvard International Relations Council.
No material appearing in this publication may be reproduced without permission of the publisher. The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the editors. All editorial rights reserved. The Harvard International Review is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin, the Political Science Abstracts, and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences. Microform and CD-ROM copies are available through Proquest Information and Learning, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346. Tel. (800) 521-0600. <http://www.il.proquest.com>

The Harvard International Review can be accessed
online at www.hir.harvard.edu.

PERMISSIONS

Reprint requests should be addressed to the Executive Editor,
P.O. Box 380226, Cambridge, MA 02238-0226 or sent by email to
distribution@hir.harvard.edu. Authorization to photocopy individual articles
is granted, provided a fee of \$.25 per page is paid to Copyright Clearance
Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923. The fee code for users of the
CCC Transactional Reporting Service is [0739-1854/93 \$00.00 + \$00.25].

OFFICES

P.O. Box 380226, Cambridge, MA 02238-0226. Tel: (617) 495-9607.
Fax: (617) 496-4472. Newsstand distribution: Comag Marketing Group, Inc.,
250 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019. Tel: (212) 649-4484.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individuals: one year (US\$20), two years (US\$38), three years (US\$54). Institutions and foreign subscribers: please add US\$10 per year of subscription. Checks must be drawn against a US bank. To subscribe, write Harvard International Review, Subscription Services Department, P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, call (717)632-3535, or log on to www.hir.harvard.edu. Claims for missing issues must be made within six months of the date of publication.

Cover Photo Courtesy:
AFP/Getty Images

Ode to Reason

SAM HARRIS is the author of *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. He is currently *pu completing a doctorate in neuroscience*.

Robert Hambourger's unfavorable review of my book, *The End of Faith* ("Ode to Intolerance," Winter 2006) alleges that I do not understand religion - at least as it is practiced by most people, most of the time. While he sought to illustrate this contention by stringing together many disconnected quotations from my book, he showed no sign of actually having understood my argument against religious faith. The fact that Mr. Hambourger has spent some of his considerable academic energies expounding upon "the reasonableness of belief in miracles" is quite telling.

In "The End of Faith" I argue that religion is quickly becoming incompatible with the emergence of a global, civil society. Despite the ecumenical efforts of many well-intentioned people, irreconcilable religious doctrines still inspire an appalling amount of human conflict. Religious faith - faith that there is a God who cares what name he is called, that one of our books is infallible, that Jesus is coming back to earth to judge the living and the dead, that Muslim martyrs go straight to Paradise, etc. - is on the wrong side of an escalating war of ideas. Given the degree to which our world has been fragmented by competing religious commitments, I argue that we must now find ways of meeting our emotional needs that do not require the maintenance of divisive religious dogmas. We must learn to invoke the power of ritual and to mark those transitions in every human life that demand profundity - birth, marriage, death, etc. - without lying to ourselves about the nature of reality. To this end, scientists and other rational people need to begin talking about ethics and spiritual experience in ways that are compatible with reason. In the last chapter of my book, I argue that the distinction between science and religion is not a matter of excluding our ethical intuitions and spiritual experiences from our conversation about the world, but rather a matter of our being honest about what is reasonable to conclude on their basis.

Mr. Hambourger writes as if the fact of God's existence was well established among the readership of the Harvard International Review. And yet, even pious readers of this journal, and perhaps even Mr. Hambourger himself, must know what it is like not to believe in Zeus. Why do we find it so easy, so painless - indeed, so necessary - to be atheists with respect to Zeus? One reason might be this: there is no good evidence to suggest that Zeus exists. Given this situation, we can all immediately appreciate how grotesque it would be if our public discourse in the 21st century were conducted, at every turn, in obeisance to the contents of the

Iliad and the Odyssey. Imagine if our debates about public policy - about the ethics of medical research, about the rights of adults to marry, about the value of certain international alliances - were constrained by the imaginary dictates of an imaginary god. Swap Zeus for the God of Abraham, and you will discover that this is precisely the situation we are in.

Mr. Hambourger has announced in these pages that my book is “an open appeal for religious intolerance.” Not quite. I am, however, appealing for the same “religious intolerance” that currently makes a belief in Zeus impossible to maintain, even in Greece. This is not the sort of intolerance that produced the gulag. We have not passed any laws against neopaganism - and yet, fanciers of Zeus do not become presidents of our universities, or presidents of the United States. Holocaust deniers don’t either. Neither do people who believe that Elvis is still alive or that astrology is an exact science. What sort of “intolerance” has achieved this winnowing of bad ideas? Perhaps Mr. Hambourger will permit me to call it by its true name - reason.

TITLE

*The Correspondence section of the Harvard International Review welcomes reader submissions. Articles are 500 to 600 words and usually respond to articles in the Features and Perspectives sections. Submissions may be edited if selected. We accept submissions on a rolling basis; please email them to **hir@hcs.harvard.edu**. Include your affiliation (if any) and contact information. You will be contacted only if your article has been selected for publication. Any questions about the Review should also be directed to this email address.*