

Inquiring Minds: RE-EXAMINING OUR DEEP BELIEFS

#53 Jan. 20, 2019 Do you agree with Einstein's quote, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."?

[Introduction](#) Past Issues from 2011 to 2019: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [11](#) [12](#) [13](#), [14](#) [15](#) [16](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#) [20](#) [21](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) [28](#) [29](#) [30](#) [31](#) [32](#) [33](#) [34](#) [35](#) [36](#) [37](#) [38](#) [39](#) [40](#) [41](#) [42](#) [43](#) [44](#) [45](#) [46](#) [47](#) [48](#) [49](#) [50](#) [51](#) [52](#)

GRATITUDE EXERCISE STILL BEARING FRUIT

As reported in the last issue, our core family agreed to try two weeks of emailing each other 3 good things for which we were grateful during the day. Well, we liked the positive benefits so much that we have been doing it for the past two months and may continue indefinitely. It's a way of being mindful of the good all around us, and also keeping in touch. A few of our friends liked the idea and also tried it. We invite any of you interested to do the same. Hope it works for you.

CLASSIC BOOK BY ATHEIST SAM HARRIS

CHALLENGES (AND HELPS?) BELIEVERS OF ALL FAITHS

One of the short books Patricia read to me following my retina procedure was [Sam Harris'](#) 115-page book [Letter to a Christian Nation](#). Fortunately our spiritual community, [Companions on the Journey](#) (COJ), has been prepared for most of his arguments for 20 years by charismatic teacher/psychologist Fr, Seán Ó'Laoire. As far as I can tell, he agrees with much of what Harris says, but is more mystical in his approach. So, in our



Sam Harris, Ph.D

opinion, the first part of the book beats a dead horse when it condemns the barbarities and inaccuracies of the Old Testament. Yet Harris says he does that because in the US some 37-50% of Christian sects believe that God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years. [\(Gallup\)](#) Also 36% of Muslims in France support [Sharia](#) law over French. One reason Harris seems to be against any God and religion is that even the moderate and liberal believers still tolerate the extremists within their ranks; and these are the ones who do all the damage, from terrorism to trying to

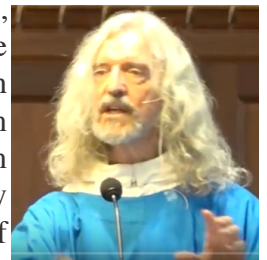
"Thousands of people have written to tell me that I am wrong not to believe in God. The most hostile of these communications have come from Christians. This is ironic, as Christians generally imagine that no faith imparts the virtues of love and forgiveness more effectively than their own. The truth is that many who claim to be transformed by Christ's love are deeply, even murderously, intolerant of criticism..." —Harris [more](#)

impose their personal beliefs on others, misguided by toxic scriptures or by their misinformed leaders. As science gradually explains the world in more rational terms, many have been looking at all the damage over history that blind faith has caused. As defined by the [OED](#), "Belief is an acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof." (Is not *proof* also something verified by experience and/or common sense?) Faith and belief have become such an individualistic endeavor, but it can and should be questioned if it is not beneficial to the entire cosmos.

We both found Sam Harris' *Letter to a Christian Nation* refreshing in the sense that he takes on many of the beliefs still held by even moderate and liberal Christians who really haven't examined them against the ever-changing backdrop of history and science.

SEAN'S STREAMING COSMIC MASS FROM AFAR AND A PRESCIENT (?) HOMILY ABOUT HARRIS

Just after we had read Harris' book, we attended Seán's Mass of the Cosmos (view in part [here](#)) which was streamed from his home in Healdsburg. That was quite an experience in itself, but his homily coincidentally echoed much of what we had just read. Seán is anti-dogmatic, and embraces the best



Seán Ó'Laoire Ph.D

insights of many wisdom traditions of the world including [Christian](#), [Buddhism](#), [Taoism](#), [Jainism](#), [Sikhism](#), [Judaism](#), etc., and even art and science. I think Seán and Sam ([great bio](#)) are kindred spirits, and, if they ever met, could easily become good friends; for both have many similar beliefs rooted in humanistic philosophy and science, and are actively working to make the world a kinder and more loving place.

We feel Seán has done much over the years to educate, liberate, and inspire his followers to follow the truest mystical principals of many enlightened beings in our midst, as exemplified in this brief [YouTube clip](#) at East West store in Palo Alto. (Seán presides in person on the first and third Sundays at 9:30 am [at this spiritual community and location](#).) *Welcoming your thoughts -Joe*