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Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian  
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7-12-2007

### July 12, 2008: Secular Israeli Democracy

Bruce Ledewitz

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Title: Secular Israeli Democracy

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7/12/2008--There is no more damning criticism of the whole idea of Hallowed Secularism than the book *The Hebrew Republic: How Secular Democracy and Global Enterprise Will Bring Israel Peace at Last* by Bernard Avishai. Avishai argues that Israel and its neighbors will never live in peace until the State becomes secular. He is not looking at the Muslims who hate the Jewish presence when he says this, but at the non-democratic elements of Israeli life. Non-Jews will never be equal citizens in the current Jewish State because of Zionist ideology, the Haredi-community and the settler movement in the occupied territories. Avishai's book is the second proposal for radical change in Israel's Jewish identity. According to a review of Avishai's book, by Adam Lebor in the *New York Times*, "[r]ecently, the Adalah advocacy center proposed a new draft constitution for Israel. It would abolish the law of return, which awards immediate citizenship to Jewish immigrants; it would require coequal and separate education systems and new, inclusive, national symbols." Avishai would go further, to abolish official religious orientation altogether. Perhaps Avishai is naïve to imagine capitalism as a force that brings people together. The "global enterprise" of which he writes has not been a constructive force everywhere. But the problem for those of us who think that religion is a force for good is Avishai's experience. From his perspective, and he has reason for thinking so, the world would be better off if religion just disappeared. This is, after all, just what Christopher Hitchens says.