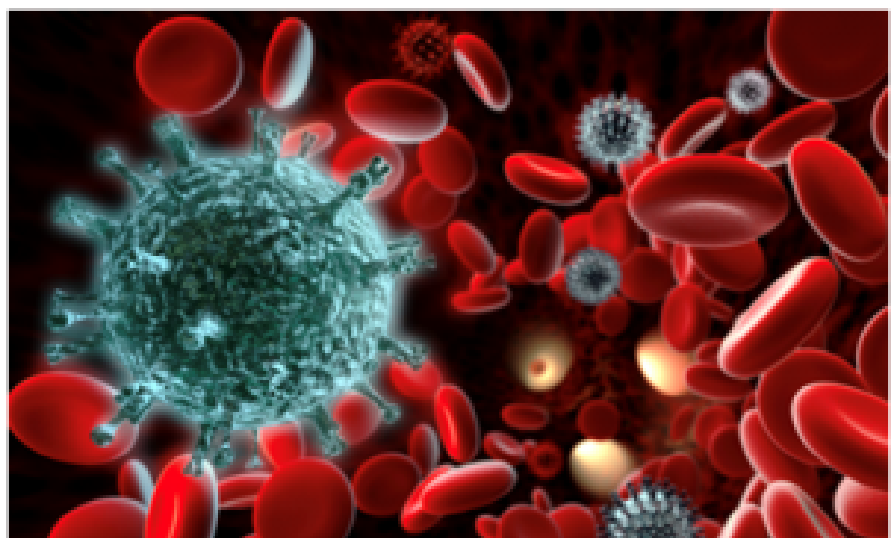


and internal harmony, the mind becomes disorganized and even dysfunctional. While our inborn immune system fights off viruses and bacteria that aim to kill us, another immune system, the mental immune system—MIS—gradually formed after birth, protects the mind and takes every measure to keep the mind's ideas and beliefs on the same page. Humans are living information machines, receiving input from both external sources as well as the body, processing it in some fashion and producing output: our thoughts and behavior. From the moment of birth, parents, siblings, and others play pivotal parts in supplying the input and influencing how it is processed.

The raw material for ideas and beliefs reaches us through the senses. The brain takes the massive barrage of input and attempts to organize it and incorporate it in an orderly fashion: a monumental task that is taken for granted until something goes seriously wrong. Relatively minor glitches in the workings of the mind, such as misunderstanding, misperception, and making poor decisions, occur daily and may not present serious problems. Over time, however, even these minor glitches in the mind, caused by faulty input, poor processing or both, can add up and significantly compromise its integrity.

The MIS is not limited to the sole task of preventing intrusion of the disruptive or undesirable input. It also actively seeks ideas that are harmonious and confirmatory of the ones already in the mind. Through the active admission of the supporting ideas, the MIS reinforces its defenses and reduces its vulnerability.



Given the tabula rasa—blank slate—nature of the mind, early input becomes of paramount importance in determining its further development. It was in recognition of this reality that the famed behavioral psychologist, J. B. Watson proclaimed:

“Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I’ll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. I am going beyond my facts and I admit it, but so have the advocates of the contrary and they have been doing it for many thousands of years.”

What Watson said may not hold perfectly in every case. Yet, the essence of his boast is indeed supported by numerous studies as well as naturalistic observations. Early environmental influences play the cardinal role in programming the mind—setting it on its course. In actuality, the brain seems to say: first come, first served. It is for this reason that Muslims are overwhelmingly born to Muslim parents, Hindus to Hindu parents, Catholics to Catholic parents, and so on. This is not to say that changes, even major changes, are not possible after the early years. They are possible and they do happen in some instances. However, in order to make major changes, happen, major re-working must take place in the mind. Change is effortful and the law of conservation of energy also applies to the working of the mind and mitigates change unless the incentives to do so overcome the default mode of inertia.

The parents, other adults and children, as well as the prevailing culture are powerful teachers and trainers of the young mind. In the Islamic world, Islam permeates every aspect of life with overbearing severity. The young mind has little access to competing non-Islamic input. As the child’s foundation of belief forms, the MIS works to protect it,

further reinforce it, and bar, falsify, or dismiss any ideas that may clash with the mind's already in-place contents. As humans, we lack comprehensive pre-programmed software—instincts—to direct us in life.

We, however, are born with pre-dispositions—rudiments of software programs that will be further elaborated in interaction with life. We are, therefore, importantly dependent on how we and others, and in what fashion, further elaborate the rudimentary software. Somehow, there has been a trade-off. As our brain evolved both in size and power, what few instincts we may have had gave way. In a real sense, we took charge of our own destiny. Science is learning more and more about the brain/mind, considered by many experts as the most complex and enigmatic entity in the universe. With each passing day, another piece of the brain/mind puzzle falls into place. During the Presidency of George W. Bush, psychologist Drew Westen and his team at Emory University used fMRI—functional magnetic resonance imaging—on 15 strong Republicans and 15 staunch Democrats to literally pinpoint the parts of the brain involved in what is called “confirmation bias,” the lead faculty of the MIS.

The participants were asked to evaluate statements by George W. Bush and John Kerry where the candidates clearly contradicted themselves. The researchers found that the Republicans were as critical of John Kerry as the Democrats were of George W. Bush, while both fiercely defended their respective political comrade. The surprising part of the study is that while the confirmation bias was at work, the brain areas ordinarily associated with rational decision-making were inactive. By contrast, an elaborate network of brain structures that process emotion and conflicts were highly activated. In short, confirmation bias has its own brain resources that shunt out the reasoning parts in order to protect the already in-place beliefs and preferences. The confirmation bias, the mainstay of the MIS, protects beliefs

values and ideas, be they political, religious, or of any other type; it is also helped in the discharge of its functions by the mind's defense mechanisms such as rationalization (faulty reasoning) and denial (refusing to accept the reality of the irrefutable).

Allocation of extensive faculties of the brain to content protection demonstrates the critical importance to its normal functioning of safeguarding the mind's contents. It is important to remember that rationality is not the master faculty of the brain. Emotions also play major parts in even tasks that are ordinarily thought to be the purview of rationality, particularly when one's beliefs, values, and ideas are at stake. Much of the work of the MIS is done without the person himself being fully aware of it. Confirmation bias seems to be almost automatic and autonomous—a first line of defense against unwelcome intruders and a means of summoning other resources of the mind to defeat the unwelcome invaders.

Because this subject is so extensive and detailed, I will now cut to the chase.

There is nothing inherently wrong with religion. Religion can be a tremendous force for good. However, when religion, this feeling-based belief, is filled with superstition, intolerance and hatred, then the beholder of that religion embodies those qualities and becomes a veritable menace to the self and to others. Feelings energize actions. Destructive feelings energize destructive actions.

Muslims living in theocratic states tend to be victims of their own religious brains: their religious brains are indoctrinated, from the moment of birth, by an extensive ruthless in-power cadre of self-serving mullahs and imams who are intent on maintaining their stranglehold on the rank and file of the faithful—their very source of support and livelihood. The mullahs and imams, as well as parents and

others, envelop the receptive mind, feed it their dogma, and shield it from information that may undermine or falsify their version of belief. For as long as there are bigoted, self-serving clergy and their collaborators with first exclusive access to the blank slate, the problem of supplying wave after wave of Islamofascists will persist.

Let's get to the bottom line in this: it is the brain/mind that assesses things, makes decisions, and orders actions. To the extent that the in-place software of the religious brain is exclusionary in nature, hateful in orientation, and violent in tendency, to that extent the individual is both the perpetrator and the victim of barbaric acts. The surest way of dealing with Islamofascism is through effective inculcation of a religious software that promotes tolerance of diversity, freedom of faith and conscience, goodwill to all, as well as purging of all the vile and discriminatory dogma that permeates this outdated primitive belief of some 1400 years ago.



While we must work through civilized means to find a cure to a deadly virus, we should also not spend our time in an imaginary Utopia ourselves. Have no doubt about

it, the Quran is an extremely dangerous book that must be brought under control by any means available to us before the Islamic fire eradicates us all.

This book of Allah with many direct commands to its believers to commit Jihad, an Islamic holy war against anyone who does not submit to Islam. Even the people of the Book, Jews and

Christians, are specifically targeted. Now, the only question that remains is the extent of the Muslim's obedience to the Quran, the Sunna and the life examples of Muhammad. To be sure, a great many Muslims are not following the dictates of the Quran perfectly, as they should, since they consider it to be the literal immutable perfect words of Allah. Hence, what I'm saying is in fact patently true and far from being patently false as you adjudicate.

Furthermore, nowhere do I say they believe in shedding the blood of others automatically, makes every Muslim go on a killing spree. Yet, the commandments of the Quran to the believers are clear and emphatic.

I am not speaking about those Muslims who are born into this religion. These individuals have not voluntarily chosen Islam as their faith and need not recite the Shahada. They are Muslims automatically by virtue of birth.

They may or may not become diehard jihadists. I reference those who voluntarily become Muslims and take the oath of faith— the shahada. Deciding to join or converting to Islam, means committing oneself to the creed and its goal. One cannot join an order without adhering to its precepts and practices. It is absurd, for instance, for a person to voluntarily join the military while saying that he doesn't believe the military's objective of killing the enemy. All these Muslims who are not rabid advocates of jihad are in clear violation of their creed. Even these people are complicit in the mayhem and murderous acts of their co-religionists by financial support and other ways.

My intention overall is and has always been to make sure as many Americans as possible understand Islam and its goal. I hope by working together, we can distinguish between the jihadists that are ready to commit mass murder in an instant, and those cultural Muslims who are most likely are as ignorant of Islam as non-Muslims.

Conclusion

Let me be honest, no realistic cure that would end the deadly virus of Islam has yet been discovered. But for now, here are a few suggestions.

The best place to start is clearly the home, then schools, and perhaps religious institutions where the deeply-entrenched mullahs and imams of vested interest must be compelled by law to refrain from preaching messages of hate and violence against unbelievers. Perhaps free societies should constitute a diverse panel of citizens to scrutinize all religious teachings and screen the software programs for destructive viruses. Once these viruses are introduced into the mind, clearing them, as we said before, becomes difficult if not impossible. A religious brain programmed by the message of justice, love and respect for all is bliss, while the discriminatory, hateful, and violent religious brain is a curse.

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