

A Review of *The Cognitive Basis of Stupidity*

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Abstract

The Cognitive Basis of Stupidity shows that the mechanism of belief in supernatural and cultural systems is one and the same. There is no difference in the way we believe in God or the government. We take both on faith and fit incoming data to suit our predispositions be they spiritual or secular. Contrary to Darwinian thinking, the basic cognitive mechanism of the mind is maladaptive in the long run and best presented as a normal, dysfunctional learning process which occurs when a schema formed by linguistic biases and social norms acts via the neurotic paradox to establish a positive feedback system which can render behavior irrelevant and carry detached actions to maladaptive excesses.

Keywords: beliefs, data, schema, language, norms

The article shows that this cognitive mechanism comes into play as human cultures evolved to answer eternal questions like, "Who are we?", "Where did we come from", "Where are we going", etc. In addition to developing comforting rituals rather than coping mechanisms we tend to seek to convert others to our belief systems. Of our major religious systems, Islam receives extensive attention in the context of the psychic method of processing information described above.

The problem with spiritual religions now is that they have become a cultural drag which keep us from gaining control of nature and ourselves. First of all, they are phenomenally wasteful, with billions of dollars poured into institutions which have no material effect on anything, and which would be much more profitably directed toward secular systems of engineering and science. Second: believers can be/are

phenomenally dumb. Why would someone intelligent enough to fly a 747 loaded with people and fuel into a perfectly fine building? BELIEF! Not money; not sex; not fame.¹ Why else would someone whip his own back into a bloody mess, immolate his daughter, denounce his grandmother as a witch² or gas millions of people not because of anything they had done but because of their race? No one but a fanatical idiot could wish social morality would be based on the Bible, Koran or some secular doctrine. Any student of history would have to concede that *the greatest cause of human suffering is "Righteousness"* coupled with a racist, sexist, homo-phobic, xenophobic political doctrine of despotism and dictatorship.³ It is people with faith who bring tragedy upon themselves and those around them.⁴

On the other hand, any collective morality must be based on sense of human compassion

fostered by understanding and appreciation of the potential contributions of others for the benefit of all. Fortunately, organized religions are positive motivators too. The leaders and followers of our civil rights movements did not come from our libraries, classrooms⁵ or scout troops. They came from our churches, which are, nevertheless on their collective deathbeds in the more advanced societies⁶ for their failure to provide meaningful, useful and functional answers to eternal questions. As a way of thought much less belief, religion has to go. In this context, what Muslims hate most about the West is not Christianity or Judaism but secularization—the amorality of spiritual freedom.⁷

The conclusion of this article must be that we are stupid because we seek to support our belief system—whatever it happens to be—rather than to test it to determine if it is valid. Accordingly, we evaluate incoming information based on appeal rather than validity. The thesis presented is richly documented and a breakthrough in understanding how the human mind works.

¹ Dawkins, R. 2017. *Science in the Soul*. Random House; New York. 382-384. In which totalitarian Islam is presented as theological snake oil. See also: Ibrahim, R. *Sword and Scimitar*. Da Capo; New York. 2018. 1-3.

² Dawkins. op. cit. 277.

³ Jones, V. *Beyond the Messy Truth*. Ballantine; New York. 2017. 30. The greatest mass murderers of the 20th century were secular—Hitler,* Stalin and Mao. The current terrorism of Muslim fanatics is retrograde in this respect. *Hitler convinced himself that Jews constituted a race and did his thing in the name of race, although anyone of any race can become a Jew—i.e., join the Jewish faith/religion. Historically, Jews were Semites, as were Muslims—so it gets messy.

⁴ Konner, M. (MD) *Believers*. Norton; New York. 2019.

⁵ Jones. op. cit.

⁶ Dawkins. op. cit. 250.

⁷ Butler-Bowdon, T. 50 Politics Classics. Nicholas Brealey; Boston, MA. 2105. 140. They also hate trees, (C. Mann. 227.) presumably because they are not found in the desert.