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*EXacerbating Criticisms of Unscientific Antihumans*

Dear: In the previous four chapters, I tried to show you what I mean by my four-part of strategy for dealing with religious fundamentalists. Again, the four parts are the same as kids use to treat other kids who are “real brats”:

- 1) Ridicule their ideas and their “heroes”,
- 2) Set a better example,
- 3) Explain to them what they’re doing wrong and how to behave better, and
- 4) Exclude them from cooperative activities.

My goal for this chapter is to explain what I mean by “EXacerbating Criticism of Unscientific Antihumans”, or in the vernacular, by “upping the ante” in criticizing theists. In summary, my recommendations – for when it seems necessary – are not just to ridicule theists for their ideas, excoriate them; not just show them better examples, shove them “in their faces”; not just explain to them what they’re doing wrong, “rub their noses in it”; and not just exclude them from cooperative activities, expel them, exile them, and in some cases, even more.

Now, Dear, whereas I wouldn’t be surprised if you don’t see the need to “up the ante”, perhaps it would be useful if I start with an example “closer to home”. I’ll put it this way: Your mother supports Islamic terrorists.

“No way!” exclaims a certain uninhibited grandchild.

“Yes, way”, responds a certain unintimidated grandfather – although I admit that your mother is not the terrorists’ most important supporter: as I write this, the four most important supporters of terrorism in the world are Osama bin Laden, President G.W. Bush, Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the Catholic Pope.

“Huh?” responded the grandchild.

Dear: Your mother supports terrorism (admittedly, unwittingly) by supporting their way of “thinking”. Thus, by holding beliefs more strongly than relevant evidence warrants, your mother supports terrorists doing the same – as do Bush, Blair, and the Pope. By setting such examples, all theists (i.e., all unscientific antihumanists) are saying to the terrorists, in effect: “Of course it’s okay to believe in the absence of evidence; that’s exactly what we do.” They then add something to the effect, “But you’re naughty for believing a fairy tale different from our, true, fairy tale...” Understandably, however, terrorists ignore the latter part of that message.

Notice, Dear, that all non-Islamic religious people (such as your mother) believe in a god who approves of (and will reward them for) practicing and promoting activities natural to all social animals (including humans), such as cooperation, compassion, empathy, and so on. Meanwhile, Islamic terrorists believe in a god who approves (and will reward) their practicing and promoting activities natural to all humans, such as protecting the weak, promoting justice, defending honor, etc. In their unscientific, antihumanistic (and thereby, antihuman) approach, however, all religious people err in believing that some giant Jabberwock in the sky has anything to do with compassion, cooperation, empathy, justice, honor, or anything else.

Consequently, by clinging to her concept of God, your mother gives tacit approval (through her method of forming her beliefs, i.e., in the absence of evidence) to anyone who similarly “believes”, regardless of evidence. Thereby, your mother supports the terrorists – not, of course, that she supports the terrorists’ beliefs or tactics, but she supports terrorists even more fundamentally: because she does it herself, she supports the terrorists’ method of forming their ideas, holding opinions more strongly than is justified by relevant evidence, and believing in concepts because “it feels good”. Thus, Dear, by “believing” as she does, your mother (unwittingly) promotes Islamic suicide bombers. By her actions, she is demonstrating not only her approval but even her encouragement of people living in a dream world, divorced from reality. Similar is true for all people who profess “faith” in the absence of evidence, regardless of details about their “faith”.

Alternatively, you can see the fundamental error of all unscientific antihumans by examining their decisions from the perspective used in “operations research”, which is “the application of scientific methods and techniques to decision making”. A common tool in operations research is to

\* Go to other chapters *via*

construct a “decision tree” (or “influence diagram”), which is simply a graphical representation of any decision process, displaying possible choices and consequences of those choices. Decision trees are most useful when they include estimates for associated probabilities (that your various decisions are “true”), but for simplicity, here I’ll not explicitly include probabilities (although that could be done using probability estimates, e.g., those that I showed you in an earlier chapter for the probability that any god exists). If you search on the web, you can find a huge amount of information about such topics and even some “applets” that allow you to construct decision trees to help you in making decisions.<sup>1</sup>

For the decisions made by unscientific antihumans, however, the resulting decision tree is so simple that I can sketch it using only words. The “first node” in such a decision tree can be labeled simply “Belief in God”. From this node, two “branches” can be labeled “Based on Evidence” and “Based on Other Criteria”. The first of these two branches, “Based on Evidence”, then branches to “Direct Evidence” and “Indirect Evidence”. As I described in the **I**-chapters, the “Direct Evidence” branch terminates (because there is no direct evidence for the existence of any god) but the “Indirect Evidence” branch has a host of subsequent branches – none of which do I want to comment upon again. Instead, I’ll just repeat my conclusion that evidence suggests that the probability of any god’s existence is essentially certainly smaller than the astoundingly small number  $10^{-100}$  and more likely it’s smaller than  $10^{-1,000}$ . For those of us who demand evidence to support our beliefs, that ends the decision process: we dismiss the “god idea” as silly.

For your mother and others who unwittingly support the terrorists, however, they go back to the branch labeled “Based on Other Criteria [for belief in God].” This node branches into a host of other branches (e.g., those I addressed in **X2**, dealing with Reasons for Religion), such as family, fancy, fear, feelings, and so on, none of which do I want to comment upon again. I want just to point out the obvious result that this “decision process” leads your mother to believe that the Book of Mormon is “God’s holy word” and that her children must be brought up in “the one, true faith” to ensure their “eternal bliss in celestial paradise” – and leads terrorists to blow themselves up and to fly airplanes into buildings to secure their places in their own “paradise.” Thus, Dear, your mother and the terrorists make the same choice in their decision process (namely, to take the route down the path labeled

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a good one is at <http://www.cs.ubc.ca/nest/lci/CISpace/Version4/dTree/>.

“Based on Other Criteria” rather than down the path labeled “Based on Evidence”) and by choosing the same branch of the decision tree as do the terrorists, your mother is thereby supporting the decisions of terrorists.

Again, Dear, notice that terrorists are no different from other people; they do what they “believe” they “should”. They “believe” that what has occurred is “wrong” (be it some court ruling, the restriction of some civil rights, the opening of an abortion clinic, the “desecration” of some “holy site”, the loss of some “holy land”, the “humiliation” of “their people”, or whatever), they “believe” that they “should” attempt to redress such “injustices”, and they “believe” that their god (whether Yahweh or Allah or Jesus) not only approves what they do but will reward them for their acts. All of which can be made to seem eminently reasonable and logical (and is made to seem reasonable, by those who recruit terrorists). The fundamental flaw in such reasoning, however – the unreasonableness of it all – is their decision to adopt beliefs unsupported by evidence. But then, that’s what all religious people (aka unscientific antihumans) do. Consequently, if sane humans are to eliminate terrorism, then the key is to excoriate all people (such as your mother) who hold beliefs more strongly than relevant evidence warrants.

Other people have reached similar conclusions, of course, as the following quotations illustrate.

“The man who does not do his own thinking... is a traitor to himself and to his fellow-men. [Robert Ingersoll]

“It is not disbelief that is dangerous to our society; it is belief.”  
[George Bernard Shaw]

“History shows that there is nothing so easy to enslave and nothing so hard to emancipate as ignorance, hence it becomes the double enemy of civilization. By its servility it is the prey of tyranny, and by its credulity it is the foe of enlightenment.”  
[Lemuel K. Washburn]

“Nothing is more dangerous than a dogmatic worldview – nothing more constraining, more blinding to innovation, more destructive of openness to novelty.”  
[Steven Jay Gould]

Recently, Sam Harris has picked up the same banner and carried it extremely well. Here’s how he made the point in the Epilogue to his 2004 book *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*.

This world is simply ablaze with bad ideas. There are still places where people are put to death for imaginary crimes – like blasphemy – and where the totality of a child’s education consists of his learning to recite from an ancient book of religious fiction. There are countries where women are denied almost every human liberty, except the liberty to breed. And yet, these same societies are quickly acquiring terrifying arsenals of advanced weaponry. If we cannot inspire the developing world, and the Muslim world in particular, to pursue ends that are compatible with a global civilization, then a dark future awaits all of us...

Religious violence is still with us because our religions are *intrinsically* hostile to one another. Where they appear otherwise, it is because secular knowledge and secular interests are restraining the most lethal improprieties of faith. It is time we acknowledged that no real foundation exists within the canons of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, or any of our other faiths for religious tolerance and religious diversity.

If religious war is ever to become unthinkable for us, in the way that slavery and cannibalism seem poised to, it will be a matter of our having dispensed with the dogma of faith. If our tribalism is ever to give way to an extended moral identity, our religious beliefs can no longer be sheltered from the tides of genuine inquiry and genuine criticism. *It is time we realized that to presume knowledge where one has only pious hope is a species of evil. Wherever conviction grows in inverse proportion to its justification, we have lost the very basis of human cooperation. Where we have reasons for what we believe, we have no need of faith; where we have no reasons, we have lost both our connection to the world and to one another. People who harbor strong convictions without evidence belong at the margins of our societies, not in our halls of power.* [Italics added]

I hope, Dear, that you read the above italicized sentences especially carefully; the thrust of this chapter is to propose how progress might be made accomplishing the objectives suggested by those statements.

In particular and as I already mentioned, I want to suggest some details about how to “up the ante” in the four ways that I already listed: 1) Don’t just ridicule the ideas of theists, excoriate them, 2) Don’t just set better examples, shove better examples “in their faces”, 3) Don’t just explain to theist what they’re doing wrong, rub their noses in it, and 4) Don’t just exclude theists from cooperative activities, expel them, in some cases exile them, and in some extreme cases, execute or otherwise exterminate them. In what follows, I’ll assemble some suggestion in each of those four categories, starting with

*1) Don’t just ridicule the ideas of unscientific antihumans, excoriate them.*

First, Dear, you should try to understand “what we’re dealing with”: as is frequently quoted, the ancient Chinese sage Sun Tzu said, “Know your enemy...”<sup>2</sup> To that end, consider the following selection of quotations from the website “Fundies Say the Darndest Things” (<http://www.fstdt.com/>). This selection was copied from another website<sup>3</sup> and is “dated”; if you want to see more examples, I’d encourage you to go to the source site, not only to see more recent examples but also for other information available at the site (including links to the original statements). You might be well advised, however, not to peruse the above website when someone is looking over your shoulder or can easily trace your internet activities (e.g., at school), since some of it’s “pretty raunchy”. In any case, have a look at the following examples (in which I’ve purposefully not corrected any spelling, punctuation, and other errors) – and while you’re doing so, please think about “what we’re dealing with”.<sup>4</sup>

1. “Multiculturalism in America should ONLY mean we have choices of eating Chinese food, Indian food, Thai food, French food, etc...”  
{*buzzthepug!*, FreeConservatives [Comments (40)] 2007-Aug-11}
2. “Whoever voted for evolutionists, well I am sorry we have new evidence, the Theory of Relativity, that points toward a young earth. Who said Christians are again science, I never did.”  
{*Thank you Troops*, Hannity [Comments (63)] 2007-Aug-05}
3. “God does not want us not to use common sense.”  
{*celticmist138*, Rapture Ready [Comments (52)] 2007-Aug-10}
4. “Wouldn’t it be great if the troops were all handed out bibles as part of their protection gear?” {*I Believe*, Rapture Ready [Comments (68)] 2007-Aug-19}
5. “ALL viruses are good for human beings, but sad to say, the human being immune systems were wrecked/weakened by sin, then, these viruses are become dangerous.”  
{*samurai*, IIDB [Comments (29)] 2007-Aug-20}
6. “The TEACHERS of evolution (unwittingly, at least usually) encourage dishonesty, murder, rape, stealing, etc. Beliefs lead to actions. If one believes that “God does not see” their actions – this encourages some behaviors over others. Honesty is

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.warriormonks.com/aow/artofwar-contents.html>, it’s the world’s oldest (and still one of the most important) texts on military strategy ever written. Sun Tzu (“Master Sun”) is the honorary title given to Sun Wu (c.544 – c.496 BCE).

<sup>3</sup> Copied from <http://www.atheistperspective.com/top-20-fundies-say-the-darndest-things/>.

<sup>4</sup> Another huge list of examples is at <http://www.rebas.se/writings/theistquotes.shtml>.

definitely NOT encouraged when one ascribes to evolutionary beliefs. Evolution also teaches the opposite of “Honor your Father and your Mother” (Fifth Commandment) when it implies/teaches that the future is in the offspring, so that one should concentrate on the children. Evolution teaches values.”  
 {*Editor*, CSE blogs [Comments (24)] 2007-Aug-20}

7. “I agree with Congressman Sali. Having a Muslim in office and a Hindu open Senate prayer shows just how far the people of America have fallen from the principles of God’s Word. Freedom of religion was to be able to worship the true God of heaven without the interference of government telling us how to. It was so we could worship the ONE true God, the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, and not the god of Ishmael, as Islam holds to, or one of the many gods of the Hindus. Yes, we are in the end times and the fight is between light and darkness, right and wrong, God and the devil. Those who choose God are on the winning side and will have the ultimate victory! Praise God!”  
 {*Rachel*, One News Now [Comments (55)] 2007-Aug-13}
8. “Also, I really doubt there will ever be an overpopulation because it’s part of god’s creation, if it appears that there’s an overpopulation, the god or whoever made everything would then resize Earth a bit bigger to fill up for new people to live.”  
 {*Serapy*, Eyes on Final Fantasy [Comments (55)] 2007-Aug-11}
9. “The people in this country may be diverse, but only one God exists – and Jesus is not of Middle Eastern descent.”  
 {*E J Broomell*, One News Now [Comments (51)] 2007-Jul-16}
10. “When you throw Human Logic and Reasoning out the window and just believe God, things become much, much clearer.” {*MC1171611*, King James Bible Only [Comments (89)] 2007-Aug-11}
11. “A few weeks ago a mans cell phone went off during the most critical part of the invitation. It may have distracted someone who was about to make a decision. I felt sorry for the guy, but his carelessness could have very well cost someone their soul.” {*No2Flesh*, RaptureReady [Comments (44)] 2007-Aug-15}
12. “Homosexuals and Jews are alot alike. Ever seen a poor fag? Didn’t think so... That’s why they both hate The Bible, because they’re both abomonations. Jews killed Jesus, fags would’ve just fucked him to death.” {*DarkBlade*, <http://rpgforumsonline.com/forum/index.php> [Comments (57)] 2007-Apr-01}
13. “Since your a athiast, i belive you think you will be a tree when you die correct? Well i hope you become a tree they cut you down and print the bible on you”  
 {*severaxer1*, YouTube [Comments (85)] 2007-Aug-01}
14. “Apes are just creatures twisted by Satan to mock Jesus by giving EVILolition credibility. Further more they are naturally lust crazed for human women. Since

they are not natural creatures they should be exterminated forthwith as the tools of evil they are.” {*BJ Tabor*, Blogs4Brownback [Comments (79)] 2007-Aug-01}

15. “My personal life has become more stressfull lately. Gays are a primary reason for it. I don’t have health insurance because of Gays. My marriage has been under a lot of stess and the homosexuals are making that worse.” {*ethang5*, Apologetics.org [Comments (85)] 2007-Aug-01}
16. “A few days ago, I looked out my window and saw what looked like to me angel-shaped clouds floating across the sky. There seemed to be several. Wonder if the Lord is still sending us messages of hope that His return is imminent, and that we’ll see Him sooner than we think?” {*SisterNChrist*, Rapture Ready [Comments (61)] 2007-Aug-02}
17. “I think that most dancing arouses feelings that young (or old, for that matter) people should not have. My personal opinion is that only married people should dance.” {*iluvjunkfood14*, CBH [Comments (70)] 2007-Aug-02}
18. “Atheists use atheism as an excuse to justify debauchery. Deep down, all those so called atheists believe in God and fear divine retribution for denying the Lord’s existence. So they try to be a little bit nicer than the Christians as an insurance policy.” {*Angel*, “Atheist doctors more likely to care for the poor than religious ones” [Comments (68)] 2007-Aug-02}
19. “The theory of evolution could be dropped out of books today and would never effect the outcome of any field of study.” {*Creationist*, Free Republic [Comments (39)] 2007-Aug-03}
20. “There is no defense for atheism. It is the poison of the world – even Muslims are against atheists. Atheists try to say that man made God. How STUPID can you get, how can something make the thing that made it? Their logic is screwed up, they try to teach our kids that we’re no better than monkeys when we were made in God’s image, are they saying that God is a monkey or a bacteria? We have to stamp out this evil from America, it’s just what the terrorists want is for us to lose our faith in God.” {*BigBadBrothers*, Youtube [Comments (58)] 2007-Aug-04}

Dear: To deal with stupidity such as is illustrated above, the ante must be raised, starting with not just ridiculing their ideas but excoriating them.

A good example of such excoriation was written approximately a thousand years ago by the Syrian poet Abul-Ala-Al-Ma’arri (973–1057):

The world holds two classes of men – intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence.

More recent examples include the following.

One of the principal founders of this country (along with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton), Thomas Paine, wrote:

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish [viz., Islamic] appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I'm sure that Paine would have included Mormonism in his list of such churches, had it been concocted before his time.

About 150 years later, Bertrand Russell (one the most important 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers) wrote:

It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age; but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and this dragon is religion.

And about 50 years still later, one of this country's great novelists, Kurt Vonnegut, wrote:

Say what you will about the sweet miracle of unquestioning faith, I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely vile!

Now, with ascendancy of the Christian "Reich" in this country and the spread of Islamic extremism in the Muslim world, surely every sane person in the world sees how "vile" organized religion – organized ignorance – can be. As George H. Smith wrote in his *Atheism, The Case Against God*:

Theism represents an attack on man's ability to understand the universe – and the advocacy of theism, theology, attempts to reduce man to a state of perpetual ignorance. The concept of god, as Spinoza put it, is an asylum of ignorance.

But as "biting" as the above examples are, they still don't adequately illustrate what I mean by "excoriating them". A more stinging excoriation of Christianity (and of Mormonism) that's available on the web is the cartoon on the web (artist not specified) with the following caption (authorship not specified):<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> At <http://www.myspacers-anonymous.org/pg/images/christianity.jpg>.

**Christianity:** The belief that some cosmic Jewish Zombie can make you live forever if you symbolically eat his flesh and telepathically tell him that you accept him as your master, so he can remove an evil force from your soul that is present in humanity because a rib-woman was convinced by a talking snake to eat from a magical tree. Makes perfect sense to me.

Another example is the following, written by the Mexican mural painter Diego Rivera (1886–1982).<sup>6</sup>

Stupid people! . . . You talk of heaven, pointing with your fingers over your head. What heaven is there? There is only air, clouds which give rain, lightening which makes a loud sound and breaks tree branches, and birds flying. There are no boys with wings nor any ladies or gentlemen sitting on clouds. Clouds are water vapor which goes up when the heat of the sun's rays strikes the rivers and lakes. You can see this vapor from the Guanajuato mountains. It turns to water which falls in drops, and so we have rain.

At the entrance of this place, I saw boxes to collect money, and a man asking for more money. I also know the priest who comes often to our house to drink my aunt's good [cocoa] and glasses of liquor. With the money he collects for the church, he pays the painters and sculptors to paint all these lies and puppets. He does this to get more money to make stupid people like you believe that these are truths and to make you fear the Virgin Mary and God. In order to have the priest appease these idols to spare you because you are cruel, dirty, and bad people, you give this money to the priest. Does that fear stop the beggars, the poor people, and the jobless miners from sneaking into the houses of the rich people, the grocery stores, the clothing stores of the gabachos, and the haciendas of the gringos, and taking from them a little of what they need?

What about you, you old fool? If there really is a Holy Virgin or anyone up in the air, tell them to send lightening to strike me down or let the stones of the vault fall on my head. If you are unable to do that Mr. Priest, you're nothing but a puppet taking money from stupid old women. You're no better than the clown in the circus coaxing coins from the public. If God doesn't stop me, then there must be no God. Get out of here! You see, there is no God! You're all stupid cows!"

Still another example is the following article [written on 23 October 2005 and in which I've made some minor punctuation changes and added a few notes (e.g., "or Mormon") in "square brackets"].<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Copied from Mark Gilbert's article (which I hope you'll read) entitled "Famous Dead Atheists", available at <http://www.jmarkgilbert.com/atheists.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Copied from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cenk-uygur/if-youre-a-christian-mu\\_b\\_9349.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cenk-uygur/if-youre-a-christian-mu_b_9349.html).

**If You're a Christian, Muslim, or Jew [or Mormon!] – You are Wrong**

by Cenk Uygur

We live in a twisted world where right is wrong and wrong reigns supreme. It is a chilling fact that most of the world's leaders believe in nonsensical fairytales about the nature of reality. They believe in Gods that do not exist and religions that could not possibly be true. We are driven to war after war, violence on top of violence, to appease madmen who believe in gory mythologies.

These men are called Christians, Muslims and Jews [and Mormons].

Osama bin Laden is insane. He believes God whispered in the ear of Muhammad 1,400 years ago about how he should conquer Arabia. Muhammad was a pure charlatan – and a good one at that. He makes present religious frauds like Pat Robertson look like amateurs.

He said God told him to have sex with as many of the women he met as possible. I'm sorry; I meant to say "take them as wives." God told him to kill all other tribes that stood in his way – or that would not placate him with assurances of loyalty or bribes. God told him, conveniently, that everyone should follow him and never question a word he said.

He sold this bag of goods to the blithering idiots who lived in the Arabian Peninsula at the time. If that weren't shockingly stupid enough, over a billion people continue to believe the convenient lies that Muhammad told all that time ago – to this very day.

We live in a world full of insane people. Sanity is an island battered in an ocean of frothing delusion. The people who believe in science are the minority. The people who believe in bloody fairytales are the overwhelming majority.

George W. Bush is the most powerful man alive. He is a class-A imbecile. He is far less [more?] intelligent than the average Christian. But like most of the others, he believes Jesus died for his sins. That idea is so perverse and devoid of logic it should shock the conscience. Instead, it gets him elected, and earns him the reverence of a great percentage of America. America! The most advanced country in the world – run by a bunch of villagers who still believe Santa Claus is going to save them.

There is no damn Easter Bunny. There is no Jesus waiting to return. Moses never even existed. These were all convenient lies from the men of those times to gain power. Their actions were rational – they wanted to deceive their brethren so that they could amass power. I get their motivations. But I cannot, for the life of me, understand our motivations, thousands of years later, still following the con-men of yesteryear into our gory, bloody, violent end.

Jesus is said to have said on the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" – because Jesus was insane and the God he thought would rescue him did not

exist. And he died on that cross like a fool. He fancied himself the son of God and he could barely convince twelve men to follow him at a time when the world was full of superstition.

Excellent marketing by some of his followers would later rescue his botched effort. How many people saw his miracles? One? Twelve? Eighty? Why didn't he show the whole world? Not because this is some giant pop quiz by God to test us – but because he did not perform any miracles!

Even his apostles didn't agree on what miracles he supposedly carried out or when he carried them out – whether he returned after death or he didn't – whether they saw him in person or just as a vision. Rational human beings shouldn't believe this kind of nonsense. Yet most of the world does.

If a man today killed his only son to show how much he loved other people, he would be considered a madman, locked in jail, and earn society's contempt. Yet Christians think this is some sort of noble act by their Father in Heaven.

In Heaven? What, with the harps and the winged angels? With 72 virgins? My God, how stupid do you have to be to believe such nonsense?

I know most of you don't actually read your religious texts, and when you do, you assiduously try to avoid the parts that make no sense whatsoever or hide underneath the comforting grasp of your religious leaders who have concocted a bunch of circular logic [thought it's a crime to even use the word 'logic' in regards to Christianity, Islam or Judaism (or Mormonism)] to shield you from the obvious folly of the written text.

So, I'm not calling you stupid if you haven't really read the material. And I know how powerful brainwashing is. We all received it when we were young, and it is exceedingly difficult to break its grasp. But people dance around the issue out of politeness because they don't want to call you what you are – ignorant.

There are a lot of people I love dearly and respect wholeheartedly who believe in religion. I hate to do this to them. But we have killed far too many people, wasted far too much time on this nonsense, for us to keep going in this direction for fear of offense.

Jesus was a lunatic. God is not coming to your rescue. He hasn't come to anyone's rescue [including Jesus'] in thousands of years... Muhammad was a power hungry, scam artist and ruthless conqueror. Moses and Abraham were figments of the imagination of some long dead rabbi. He would probably laugh his ass off at all of you who still believe the fairytales he made up thousands of years ago. He probably wouldn't even believe it if you told him.

Did I mention Judaism? The chosen people? Come on, get off it. People walk around in clothes from 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia, thinking they have been chosen by God when they look like a bunch of jackasses. I'm tired of all the deaths because we did not want to give offense. Orthodox Jews are wrong and ridiculous.

As are the orthodox and fundamentalists of all of the religions. It says in the Bible that it is an abomination to wear clothes made of two different cloths or to eat shellfish. If you think God will hate you because you mixed wool and linen or because you ate some shrimp, you are insane.

How long are we going to dance around the 800-pound gorilla in the room? The world is run by madmen. It's not just Bush and bin Laden. It's the leader of all of the countries in the Middle East, in almost all of the Americas, and in most of the rest of the world.

Have I offended you? That's too bad. Stop killing each other in the name of false and ridiculous Gods and I will stop ridiculing you. Trust me, your offense is much worse than mine.

Right now as you read this, there are ignorant, hateful Muslims teaching other ignorant Muslims how to put on a suicide belt. There are orthodox Jews telling other Jews how they must never leave their "holy land" no matter what the consequences are to other human beings. They assure their followers: "Remember, they are not the chosen ones, we are. If we crush and oppress them, don't worry, God will excuse it, and even desires it, because He is on our side."

There are maniacal Christians who are praying for the end of time. Who are hoping that most of the world's population is wiped off the face of the Earth by their vengeful and murderous God – who they believe, ironically, is a loving God. Unless, of course, you make the fatal mistake of not kissing his ass and appeasing him, in which case he will slaughter you and condemn you to eternal torture. What kind of sick people believe this?

The kind who live next to you. The kind who voted for George Bush. The kind who send their religious leaders to the White House to argue against even-handedness in the Middle East because it would prevent their sick prophesy. The kind who have undue influence over how we use the greatest and most lethal army ever built by man.

If you don't want to be called ignorant or misinformed, then get informed. Learn the real nature of our universe and put aside old wives tales about resurrected Gods, omniscient prophets and a guy who could split the Red Sea but couldn't find where he's going in the desert for forty years.

It's the year 2005. Let's start acting like it.

A more recent example, which I encourage you to read and that excoriates Canadian Muslims, was posted by a 4'11" Canadian woman in her anonymous blog at <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/:entry:fivefeet-2008-06-15-0000/>. I would copy and paste her "letter", here, but it contains many links to sites that support her claims; therefore, it would be better if you went directly to her blog. Her post starts:

The difference between what the Nazis said about the Jews and what people today are saying about radical Muslims is...

What we're saying about radical Muslims is true.

To pretend otherwise is to perform the intellectual equivalent of hiding Nazis in your attic during World War II.

Still more examples, which I recently "Stumbled Upon" on the internet, are at <http://www.edkrebs.com/herb/index.htm>.

Now, although I doubt if I can match the above excoriations, let me submit the following suggestions for how a few nuts might be shaken loose from their screwed-up religious views.

- The "beliefs" of the Hindus: superstition gone to seed.
- The "beliefs" of the Jews: ritualized fear and egotism.
- The "beliefs" of Christians: culturalized, narcissistic craziness.
- The "beliefs" of Mormons: moronic – with an extra 'm'.
- The "beliefs" of MUSLIMS: an acronym for Minds Unusually SLIM.
- Zoroaster was zonkers.
- Moses was a racist murderer; Hitler's mentor.
- Jesus was a jerk, but it was "Saint" Paul in his insanity who invented Christianity.
- Muhammad wasn't just mad (by his own admission), he was the epitome of bad: a role model of evil for Genghis Kahn, Stalin, and Mao.
- Luther was a lunatic; Calvin should have waited for Hobbes.
- Joseph Smith: a superstitious gold digger who finally struck it rich and became a clerical leader by selling the plagiarisms of the crazy cleric Sidney Rigdon to people too stupid to realize they were being duped.
- Clerics – the scum of the Earth.
- Clerical leaders – the scum that rises to the top in organized religions.
- Organized religions – selling supernatural superstition for profit.
- The supernatural – a mental refuge for frightened fools.

- Yahweh/Jehovah: racism, jealousy, revenge, covetousness, chauvinism, treachery, murder, rape, incest, licentiousness, genocide... deified by the Jews.
- Jews: an unfortunate group of people who were conned by their clerics into “believing” that their clerics are wise and who never had a “savior” – to tell the clerics to shut up and mind their own god-damn business.
- God: a way that fools and cowards say, “I dunno.”
- Jesus the Christ, son of God: a fictitious character concocted by sexually frustrated con artists called clerics who were scared as hell of female genitalia.
- Christians: an unfortunate group of people who were conned by their clerics into “believing” that their clerics are wise, that virginity is a virtue, that loving all people is good – but not love-making and not loving Jews (because they aren’t really people, because they said that Christ was a fictitious character concocted by sexually-frustrated con-artists who were scared as hell of female genitalia).
- Allah: an Arabic word that Muslims use, meaning, “I dunno.”
- Muslims: the world’s largest laboratory-demonstration of how people can be driven insane when humor is hounded from them; an unfortunate group of people who were conned by their clerics into “believing” that their clerics are wise and that Allah conveyed messages to the mad poet Muhammad, who first was kept by his first and old wife but who later enjoyed polygamy, pedophilia, and slaughtering people (especially Jews – who said that Muhammad, pbuh [= peas be upon him], was nothing but a mad poet, who was first kept by his first and old wife but who later enjoyed polygamy, pedophilia, and slaughtering people) and who became famous for institutionalizing terrorism, sanctioning murder and mayhem, and giving morons a license to hate (especially Jews – who said that Muhammad, pbbuh [peanut butter be upon him] was nothing but a mad poet, who first was kept by his first and old wife but who later enjoyed polygamy, pedophilia, and slaughtering people, especially Jews – who said...)...

Now, Dear, I readily admit – and hasten to add – that I don’t know enough to provide you with advice on how far that you, personally, should take such excoriation. Nonetheless, I strongly advise you to take care and would generally advise you to leave the most biting excoriation to “the professionals” (not only those who are competent comedians but also to those who have studied more psychology) – at least until “you’re older” (☺).

Until then, maybe you should couch your excoriation in more philosophical terms, such as the following by Karl Popper, which isn't restricted to just religious kooks:

... the mentality of the man with definitely fixed views, the 'committed man', is akin to that of the madman. It may be that all his fixed opinions are 'adequate' in the sense that they happen to coincide with the best opinion available at the time. But insofar as he is committed, he is not rational: he will resist any change, any correction; and since he cannot be in possession of the full truth (nobody is) he will resist rational correction of even widely mistaken beliefs... [Such people] take pride in rendering themselves incapable of breaking out of their shell; they make themselves prisoners of their manias.

And whereas the "manias" of such "madmen" (from Bush to bin Laden) can be dangerous for the rest of us, I then advise you, Dear, to take care when you excoriate them. And I would similarly advise you to take care before applying the second item on my list, i.e.,

*2) Don't just set better examples for unscientific antihumans; shove better examples "in their faces".*

A tremendous illustration (both of what's needed and of what I mean by shoving better examples "in their faces") has been provided by some brave Muslims and "ex-Muslims" (or as they call themselves, "secular Muslims"), many of whom (if not all) are under death threats for the positions they have taken in the past. Dear: please read the following "St. Petersburg Declaration" carefully – and think of (or better, "admire") the courage of those people who wrote and signed it.<sup>8</sup>

**Released by the delegates to the Secular Islam Summit,  
St. Petersburg, Florida on March 5, 2007**

We are secular Muslims and secular persons of Muslim societies. We are believers, doubters, and unbelievers, brought together by a great struggle, not between the West and Islam, but between the free and the unfree.

We affirm the inviolable freedom of the individual conscience. We believe in the equality of all human persons.

We insist upon the separation of religion from state and the observance of universal human rights.

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<sup>8</sup> Copied from [http://secularislam.org/blog/post/SI\\_Blog/21/The-St-Petersburg-Declaration](http://secularislam.org/blog/post/SI_Blog/21/The-St-Petersburg-Declaration).

We find traditions of liberty, rationality, and tolerance in the rich histories of pre-Islamic and Islamic societies. These values do not belong to the West or the East; they are the common moral heritage of humankind.

We see no colonialism, racism, or so-called “Islamaphobia” in submitting Islamic practices to criticism or condemnation when they violate human reason or rights.

We call on the governments of the world to

- Reject Sharia law, fatwa courts, clerical rule, and state-sanctioned religion in all their forms; oppose all penalties for blasphemy and apostasy, in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights;
- Eliminate practices, such as female circumcision, honor killing, forced veiling, and forced marriage, that further the oppression of women;
- Protect sexual and gender minorities from persecution and violence;
- Reform sectarian education that teaches intolerance and bigotry towards non-Muslims; and
- Foster an open public sphere in which all matters may be discussed without coercion or intimidation.

We demand the release of Islam from its captivity to the totalitarian ambitions of power-hungry men and the rigid strictures of orthodoxy.

We enjoin academics and thinkers everywhere to embark on a fearless examination of the origins and sources of Islam, and to promulgate the ideals of free scientific and spiritual inquiry through cross-cultural translation, publishing, and the mass media.

We say:

- To Muslim believers: there is a noble future for Islam as a personal faith, not a political doctrine;
- To Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha’is, and all members of non-Muslim faith communities: we stand with you as free and equal citizens; and
- To nonbelievers: we defend your unqualified liberty to question and dissent.

Before any of us is a member of the Umma, the Body of Christ, or the Chosen People, we are all members of the community of conscience, the people who must choose for themselves.

Endorsed by: *Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Magdi Allam, Mithal Al-Alusi, Shaker Al-Nabulsi, Nonie Darwish, Afshin Ellian, Tawfik Hamid, Shahriar Kabir, Hasan Mahmud, Wafa Sultan, Amir Taheri, Ibn Warraq, Manda Zand Ervin, Banafsheh Zand-Bonazzi*

The above is a wonderful step forward, similar to the brave steps taken during “the Cold War” by “Soviet dissidents” such Andrei Sakharov (winner of the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize). If the West is to win “the War on Terror” (or better, the War against Terrorists), we should award similar accolades and other support to those who promote “secular Islam”.

But even those who endorsed the above Declaration would probably agree that it’s only a small step on a very long journey. Yet, it’s an especially brave step, in that the endorsers have risked their lives by taking it: Muslim clerics have issued fatwas calling for their death for apostasy, because no separation of religion and state is recognized in Islam. In turn, Muslim clerics consider “secular Islam” to be an anathema (viz., “cursed”), because as I showed you in earlier chapters, they promote Islam as governing all aspects of all people’s lives – of course with the Muslim clerics doing the governing (or, as they claim, with their god ruling, viz., “theocracy”) – and they just happen to be the earthly representative of their god. As bin Laden said: “The Earth belongs to Allah and thus only Allah’s rule should prevail all over the earth.” Riiiiight.

Again, Dear, realize that Islam was never just a religion: ever since its concoction by Muhammad, it was a religious-political movement. In particular, in Islam there’s nothing comparable to the statement (made by both the clerics’ and the Gnostics’ Jesus) “Give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s”, which can be taken as the basis for the separation of religion and state. Of course, until the Reformation (about 500 years ago) the Catholic Church ignored Jesus’ recommendation, but in most Islamic nations, there’s still little distinction between government and religion, similar to the situation in Europe during its Dark Ages. Islam is thus an all-encompassing ideology, proposed to be applicable to all aspects of life. Thereby and as during WWII and the Cold War, the War Against Terrorists is fundamentally a war between ideas: the barbaric religious ideas of the Muslims against the secular humanistic ideas of the West.

Again, Dear, remember that even the concept of Islamic “nations” is inconsistent both with the goals of Islamism and the idea of “nation states” in the West. Thus, Islamists seek what the Catholics accomplished during

Europe's Dark Ages: a theocratic empire, in which leaders of states do the clerics' bidding. Currently, however, the Islamists' dream of an Islamic empire (called a 'caliphate', ruled by the 'caliph') is being thwarted not only by "Western culture" and by "corrupt Islamic governments" but also by bickering among Shiites (e.g., in Iran), Sunnis (e.g., in Syria), and Wahhabis (the followers of an extreme version of Sunni Islam, who currently rule Saudi Arabia in collusion with a corrupt monarchy). Consequently, unless a strong political leader emerges (as was the case during Islam's Ottoman Empire and could now occur in the person of someone such as bin Laden), Islamists will continue to be a group of extremely frustrated fanatics – and for those of us who want "just to go about, living our own lives", there's little more dangerous than "extremely frustrated fanatics".

Later in this chapter and the next, I'll suggest additional details about how to counteract such "extremely frustrated (religious) fanatics", but for now, I want to move on past both excoriating the theists and shoving better examples "in their faces" to the next recommendation on my list, i.e.,

*3) Don't just show unscientific antihumans what they're doing wrong, rub their noses in it.*

Again, my first recommendation for "exacerbating criticism" of religious fundamentalists (aka unscientific humanists) is to excoriate them – but to start, such excoriations should be done only with words. Yet, if words don't stop such idiots, then move on, not only to showing them what they're doing wrong (by "shoving better examples in their faces") but also by "rubbing their noses in it."

To understand why I recommend "rubbing their noses in it", Dear, please think about what's going on. To start, remember what Julius Caesar reportedly said: "Men willingly believe what they wish." Remember, too, what Alan Watts saw: the Anglo-Saxon root word 'lief' means 'wish'; so, 'belief' literally means, "wish to be". Therefore, although there are a huge number of reasons why people "believe" (as I explored in **X2**, dealing with "Reasons for Religion"), yet fundamentally, in the vast majority of cases, unscientific antihumans believe what they do simply because they want to. For example, they believe that, if they're good, they'll live forever in paradise, because, fundamentally, that's what they want. There's zero evidence to support such silly ideas, but that doesn't matter. It's what they

\* Go to other chapters *via*

want. They “know in their hearts” that their religion is “true”, because that’s what they want. Again, it’s the “proof-by-pleasure fallacy”, probably the most dangerous of all logical fallacies – based how many fools throughout the world have fallen for it and based on the consequences for the rest of us.

Actually, though, those of us who try our best to hold our beliefs only as strongly as evidence warrants wouldn’t really care that so many people want to succumb to their childish delusions. It’s a terrible waste of brainpower, it’s a pity that so much mental activity and money is wasted on such daydreams, but then, people waste their time and money on many silly activities. On the other hand, when such dimwits start chanting such slogans as “thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” or “death to the infidels” or similar, and then act accordingly, then: enough’s enough!

Think of it, Dear: in earlier times, when other religious groups had the power, all of them (including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Mormons) literally ‘excoriated’ the “unbelievers” (that is tore off their skin while torturing them – or just went directly to slaughtering them). Now, the terrorists proudly post video on the internet showing how they use butcher knives and swords to cut off people’s heads. And why? Because in all ages, some people refused to join in the believer’s “make believe”. They call us “the unbelievers”, but in reality, it is they who are “the unbelievers” – unbelievers in the value of the scientific method.

Allow me to repeat what I wrote before in the “excursion” **Qx** (in chapter **Qx-30**), in case you didn’t take that “excursion”.<sup>9</sup>

The religious kooks call themselves ‘believers’ (in their fairy tales) but simultaneously, they’re ‘unbelievers’ in the fundamental principle that beliefs should be held no more strongly than relevant evidence warrants. The religious kooks call scientific humanists ‘unbelievers’, but we believe in the principle that beliefs should be held no more strongly than relevant evidence warrants. The religious kooks believe that knowledge of the world can be obtained by “looking into your heart to find what’s true” (the “proof-by-pleasure fallacy”), but scientific humanists believe that the scientific method is the best way (and maybe the only way) to gain knowledge about the world external to our minds (because there’s a huge quantity of relevant data that supports that belief). So, who is the ‘believer’ and who is the ‘unbeliever’ – and in what?!

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<sup>9</sup> I’ve also written similar in one of my recent blob posts at <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com>.

Please, Dear, think of it some more – and think of it using “plain English”, cutting out all obfuscations hidden behind religious gobbledygook. A bunch of crazy kooks called Muslims say: “We believe in Muhammad’s fairy tale, as given in the Holy Quran.” A bunch of crazy kooks called Christians (and Mormons, too) say: “No, no: Muhammad’s fairy tale is just a fairy tale; our fairy tale, as given in the Holy Bible, is the true fairy tale.” And a bunch of crazy kooks called religious Jews say: “No, no, no; you’re all wrong; our fairy tale, as given in the Sacred Talmud, is the only true fairy tale.” Meanwhile, scientific humanists respond to the bunch of them: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

But that’s only the beginning of it. That much wouldn’t bother scientific humanists much: it’s a terrible waste that so many people are staggering around in their delusions, living within their respective fairy tales, but then the horrors begin. The crazy religious Jews say: “In our fairy tale, our God gave us a whole bunch of land – so, all you Muslims, get out.” The crazy Muslims say: “No way; in our fairy tale, land once owned by Muslims, is always our land – so, all you Jews, get out.” And the crazy fundamentalist Christians say: “Oh, good, a fight! In our fairy tale, a war to end all wars means that Christ will soon return, to reign in paradisiacal glory.” To which scientific humanists repeat: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

And if that’s not enough stupidity, there’s the attitude among fundamentalist Christians and especially Muslims that their “values” are to prevail over the whole world. Of course these “values” contain crazy ideas about science and morality, but the worst value adopted – adopted by all religious kooks – is that the epitome of “good” is to hold beliefs more strongly than relevant evidence warrants: followers are to believe in their respective fairy tales with all their “heart and soul and mind”, even though no evidence supports such fairy tales; instead, all evidence suggests that all such fairy tales are the ravings of mystic maniacs. So, once again scientific humanists repeat: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

The repercussions stagger the mind. Sane people would have thought that nobody could be so stupid. But in this trek through the quagmires of “revealed” religions, the same horrible theme has been repeated in every one of the stupid fairy tales. The theme is: if people don’t believe in our fairy tale, then they deserve to die. The Old Testament is overflowing with atrocities committed against the unbelievers of their fairy tale. The New Testament goes a step further into horror, promising those who don’t believe the Christian fairy tale that they’re headed for eternal torture in Hell (and promoting that all Jews experience hell on Earth). The Book of Mormon continues the stupidity about eternal torture for the unbelievers of their fairy tale and tries to hasten such eternal torture by promoting that unbelievers of their fairy tale be killed. And the Quran goes still another step further in such horrors, not only with even more explicit descriptions of tortures in Hell for the unbelievers of their fairy tale but also how to hasten it by killing the unbelievers, cutting off their arms, legs, and necks. To which scientific humanists up the ante by not only saying, “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales” but adding: “You people are criminally insane; you’ve gotta be stopped.”

Again: to try to stop them, I encourage not just excoriating them and shoving better examples in their faces but also “rubbing their noses in it”.

Marc Perkel provides an example of what I mean. He’s the founder of what he calls “the Church of Reality” – whose website I encourage you to visit. A number of years ago, I copied the following from his website, but it appears that the text has now been replaced or absorbed in other text.<sup>10</sup>

***Why Belief in God is Dangerous to Humanity***

by Marc Perkel

“So...” you may be asking, “So, I believe in the Bible. What’s the harm? Why do you care if I want to waste my life pursuing insanity?” Yes – that is a strong point generally. The right to be wrong is one of the core principles of the Church of Reality because we often make a lot of mistakes on the path to discovering the truth. But when a group of people threatens the well being of others, then it’s a different story.

In particular, Christians believe in the Apocalypse, or the end of the world. And because it’s important to them that they not be wrong, some of them are working towards making the world actually end. Others are just irresponsible and think that it doesn’t matter how bad they mess things up, because God will fix it and forgive them. That causes them to be irresponsible for their behavior and dangerous to society.

Faith in God is a dangerous thing. On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 a group of Muslims, acting on behalf of God, hijacked 4 planes and crashed them into buildings killing over 3,000 people. The reason these people did it was because they believed they were acting on behalf of God and that God will reward them by giving them 72 virgins to have sex with for eternity. The fact is that these mass murderers are not in Heaven and that they are not having sex with 72 virgins. They are dead along with their victims.

Why did this happen? Because they had faith! And as a result of their faith the world is a more dangerous place. Now, Christians are seeing this as an opportunity to use their influence in the American administration to not only wage a war to kill a bunch of Muslims but to take control of the world and impose God’s laws (or rather what they believe are God’s laws) on the rest of us by force...

Jesus is dead (if he ever existed at all) and he is not coming back. But people who believe he is coming are much more likely to destroy the Earth and use God as an excuse to make it happen. If religious fanatics get control of weapons of mass

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<sup>10</sup> Copied from <http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/>.

destruction, they will use them as part of their ritual fantasies – and the rest of us will suffer the consequences.

We live on this small ball of dust, and this ball is all we have for now. We have the technology to destroy all life on this planet (well, anyhow, all life of any complexity) and this is our home – and it's home to all of us. So, if some people believe in the Book of Revelations and use that as a basis or excuse to destroy the home for the whole human race, then they are encroaching on our rights.

Historically religion is the basis for most war. Christians slaughter Muslims, Muslims slaughter Jews, Jews slaughter Palestinians, Catholics slaughter Protestants. They all think that God gave them property. They think they are the “chosen people” and they all think they are acting on behalf of God. Because God is impotent and incapable of acting on his own behalf, these people have to do God's work for him, which often includes slaughtering the nonbelievers. Nonbelievers like me.

So, because of religion, some moron might start a nuclear war or similar and wipe out the human race; then, this planet will become just another lifeless piece of dust in the universe. Or maybe the cockroaches will take over and become intelligent and form a better society, but I have to admit that I'm partial to humans – one of my prejudices, I suppose. I just think it's a bad idea to annihilate the human race. As the founder of the Church of Reality, I'm going to go ahead and abuse my powers and declare that annihilating humanity is officially a sin...

Actually, it's a sin built upon sins, or better, a mistake built upon a litany of mistakes: the stupidity and greed of the people and their clerics have led to mental abuse of children, indoctrinating them in religious balderdash that has polluted humanity for millennia. With their “blind faith” people demonstrate that it doesn't matter if you “believe” in tooth fairies or leprechauns or Martians or the “Second Coming” or that “Allah is god and Muhammad is his prophet”: if you profess “faith” in something, even though no evidence supports your “belief”, then you're demonstrating to others that it's perfect acceptable to “just have faith.” With your “blind faith”, therefore, you're demonstrating, for example, that it's perfectly acceptable to hijack airplanes and fly them into buildings to get into paradise – provided only that's what the hijackers “truly believe”. Such madness must be stopped.

At present, Muslims are the most dangerous religious kooks – because for centuries, enlightened humans have been rubbing the noses of Yahwists and Christians in the Bible's and their stupidities. A recent example of rubbing

Muslim noses in their own stupidity is contained within the following “Letter to Mankind” by a group of brave ex-Muslims.<sup>11</sup>

Dear fellow human,

Today humanity is being challenged. Unthinkable atrocities take place on daily basis. There is an evil force at work that aims to destroy us. The agents of this evil respect nothing; not even the lives of children. Every day there are bombings, every day innocent people are targeted and murdered. It seems as if we are helpless. But we are not!

The ancient Chinese sage Sun Zi said, “Know your enemy and you won’t be defeated”. Do we know our enemy? If we don’t, then we are doomed.

Terrorism is not an ideology, it is a tool; but the terrorists kill for an ideology. They call that ideology Islam.

The entire world, both Muslims and non-Muslims claim that the terrorists have hijacked “the religion of peace” and Islam does not advocate violence and terror.

Who is right? Do the terrorists understand Islam better, or do those who decry them? The answer to this question is the key to our victory, and failure to find that key will result in our loss and death will be upon us. The key is in the Quran and the history of Islam.

Those of us who know Islam, know that the understanding of the terrorists of Islam is correct. They are doing nothing that their prophet did not do and did not encourage his followers to do. Murders, assassinations, beheadings, massacres and sacrilege of the dead “to delight the hearts of the believers” were all practiced by Muhammad, were taught by him, and were observed by Muslims throughout the history.

If ever truth has mattered, it is now! This is the time that we have to call a spade a spade. This is the time that we have to find the root of the problem and eradicate it. The root of Islamic terrorism is Islam. The proof of that is the Quran.

We are a group of ex-Muslims who have seen the face of evil and have risen to warn the world. No matter how painful the truth may be, only truth can set us free. Why this much denial? Why so much obstinacy? How many more innocent lives should be lost before YOU open your eyes? A nuclear disaster is upon us. This will happen. It is not a question of “if” but “when”. Oblivious of that, the world is digging its head deeper in the sand.

We urge the Muslims to leave Islam. Stop with excuses, justifications, and rationalizations. Stop dividing mankind in “us” vs. “them” and Muslims vs. Kafirs.

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<sup>11</sup> Copied from <http://www.faithfreedom.org/oped/sina40908.htm>.

We are One people, One mankind! Muhammad was not a messenger of God. It is time that we end this insanity and face the truth. The terrorists take their moral support and the validation for their actions from you. Your very adherence to their cult of death is a nod of approval for their crimes against humanity.

We also urge the non-Muslims to stop being politically correct lest they hurt the Muslims' sensitivity. To Hell with their sensibilities! Let us save their lives, and the lives of millions of innocent people.

Millions, if not billions of lives will be lost if we do nothing. Time is running out! "All it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing." Do something! Send this message to everyone in your address book and ask them to do the same. Defeat Islam and stop terrorism. This is your world, save it.

The ex-Muslim Movement

As far as I'm concerned, the critical statement in the above communication from the brave ex-Muslims who wrote it is: "We... urge the non-Muslims to stop being politically correct lest they hurt the Muslims' sensitivity. To Hell with their sensibilities! Let us save their lives, and the lives of millions of innocent people." Toward that goal – and consistent with their advice – I'll now move on to the fourth item on my list, namely

*4. Exclude theists (i.e., unscientific antihumans) from existing and experimental cooperatives.*

Recall, Dear, that the basis of human progress, ever since humans came down from the trees, has been and continues to be cooperation among intelligent individuals. I'm as sure as I can be of anything that future progress will similarly depend on cooperation among intelligent and free individuals. But unscientific antihumans are neither intelligent nor free: they stupidly "believe" in the absence of evidence and thereby enslave themselves to the will of their clerics. As a result, the primary cooperatives in which such foolish slaves engage are those that promote enslavement of all humanity in such stupidity. To try to stop such stupidity, I therefore encourage that all theists – all unscientific antihumans – be excluded from existing and experimental cooperatives, which are designed to promote intelligent solutions to humanity's problems.

In the previous chapter I listed a few examples of how to exclude unscientific antihumans from existing cooperatives. In that list I included:

\* Go to other chapters *via*

- *Don't date them and certainly don't marry them,*
- *Don't engage in contracts with them,*
- *Don't cater to their businesses,*
- *Oppose their involvements in educational and scientific organizations,*
- *Oppose their involvements in any branch of any government.*

And because Islamists are currently a major threat to humanity's progress, I also included the following:

- *Oppose encroachments of Muslims in Western societies.* I'm sorry to single out the Muslims, Dear, but they've brought it on themselves: they're not just your "run of the mill" childish theists (i.e., unscientific antihumans): for far too many of them, their goal is to rule. Therefore, if they don't accept separation of religion from politics [e.g., if they don't "sign on" to the St. Petersburg *Declaration* quoted earlier in this chapter], if they don't agree with the fundamental Western principle of secular governments, then they should be expelled and exiled from Western nations.

And since I expect that the set of problems caused by Muslims in the West will be one of the most difficult that your generation will need to solve, Dear, I should probably add some additional comments. The case of excluding Muslims from cooperative activities, however, is too large a topic for me to try to describe it in this chapter; instead, I'll emphasize it in the next two chapters.

What I want to do in the remainder of this chapter, Dear, is to show you another example of what I mean by opposing the involvement of unscientific antihumans in any branch of government and then introduce the topics of excluding Islamic extremists from Western societies and exterminating Islamic terrorism (the two topics that will be the focus of the next chapter).

As another example of what I mean by opposing the involvement of unscientific antihumans in our government, consider the following post that I (aka "zoro") recently made in a response to a Christian (with the moniker "Keltoi") at an Islamic forum.<sup>12</sup>

Keltoi: I disagree with your comment:

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<sup>12</sup> At <http://www.islamicboard.com/comparative-religion/49101-have-you-talked-any-mormons-4.html>; subsequently, I posted this at my blog (at <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com>) along with several other examples, e.g., criticizing Huckabee, McCain, and even Obama.

On a related topic, the presidential candidate for the U.S. presidency, Mitt Romney, gave a fairly good speech last Thursday. It was a good reminder that there should be no religious test for office.

First, I disagree with your assessment of Romney's speech: I would describe it not as "fairly good" but "absolutely horrible."

For the possible benefit of others, I'll start with some background. In my view, the Republican candidate for president Mitt Romney (former governor of Massachusetts and a Mormon) felt it necessary to give the speech<sup>13</sup> because he was slipping in the Iowa polls relative to Mike Huckabee (a former governor of Arkansas and Baptist pastor). Therefore, Romney's political strategy was to give a nationally advertised and televised speech to "defend" his "religious credentials", under attack by many evangelical Christians, better described as the "Christian Reich."

Now, look at some of the details in his speech. Early in it, setting its tone, Romney proposed:

Freedom requires religion just as religion requires freedom. Freedom opens the windows of the soul so that man can discover his most profound beliefs and commune with God. Freedom and religion endure together, or perish alone.

Really? "Freedom requires religion"? "Religion" meaning in some way to "commune with God"? Because I've found no evidence to support the existence of an invisible friend in the sky that Romney calls "God", then I can't be free? Romney has an invisible friend in the sky who requires that HE be obeyed, and yet, I'm the one who isn't free? And exactly what shade of black is Romney's white?

Then there's Romney's: "religion requires freedom." Really? Aren't the Iranians, Pakistanis, Saudis, and so on, religious? Are they "free"? Isn't Romney religious? Is he "free"? Really? Free to think outside his indoctrination? Can he even think for himself?

And look again at: "Freedom opens the windows of the soul so that man can discover his most profound beliefs and commune with God." How does Romney "discover" his "beliefs": by evaluating evidence or by "listening to his heart" – or similar to Bush, by responding to what "his gut" tells him? That's how Bush got us into the Iraq war; it's called the "Proof by Pleasure Fallacy". Rather than "commune with God", how about communing with relevant data?

And then there's Romney's: "Freedom and religion endure together, or perish alone." Really? What evidence supports such a stupid statement? How about if his claim was at least stated more clearly: "Freedom and the science of savages called 'religion' endure together, or perish alone"? Is Romney a candidate for President of

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<sup>13</sup> E.g., see <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gJaX592vvFlcvadLA2fGymTHhQWAD8TC2LFO0>.

the United States or President of his Church? Did his bachelor's degree in arts, his master's in business administration, and his law degree really provide him with appropriate preparation to convey to the American public his scientific model of the universe?

Later in his speech, Romney had special condemnation for "secularists":

... in recent years, the notion of the separation of church and state has been taken by some well beyond its original meaning. They seek to remove from the public domain any acknowledgment of God. Religion is seen as merely a private affair with no place in public life. It's as if they are intent on establishing a new religion in America – the religion of secularism. They are wrong.

Look again at Romney's "the religion of secularism." No doubt it's meant to be a damning indictment, but what is its meaning? Secularism means separation of Church and State – and in case Romney doesn't know, it's a concept contained in our Constitution.

But if by 'religion' is meant "ideas to cling to" or "ideas that hold a group together", and if Romney meant by 'secularism' something similar to "scientific humanism", then I would agree that there is a "religion of secularism." It means something similar to: reject the science concocted by savages (i.e., "the God idea") and replace it with the best ideas that the scientific method has been able to generate ever since the science of savages was found to be stupid. As Mangasarian said: "Religion is the science of children; science is the religion of adults." From which it follows that Romney has the mental development of a child.

And as if to confirm that idea, Romney added:

We should acknowledge the Creator as did the Founders in ceremony and word. He should remain on our currency, in our pledge, in the teaching of our history, and during the holiday season, nativity scenes and menorahs should be welcome in our public places. Our greatness would not long endure without judges who respect the foundation of faith upon which our constitution rests. I will take care to separate the affairs of government from any religion, but I will not separate us from "the God who gave us liberty... Americans acknowledge that liberty is a gift of God, not an indulgence of government."

What nonsense! No god gave Americans liberty. I am an American and I do not "acknowledge that liberty is a gift of God." What liberty we have was paid for by the blood and limbs and lives of those who fought the tyrants who would impose their stupid ideas on us – such as their stupid religious ideas – and just as Romney and Muslim terrorists seek to do.

In sum, Romney's ideas are more closely allied to those of the Dark Ages than were those of the founders of this country, not only Paine and Jefferson and Madison, but even John Adams, whom Romney quotes:

In John Adam's words: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion... Our Constitution," he said, "was made for a moral and religious people."

What Romney neglected to mention (amazingly convenient for him) was that the quotation from Adams was contained in a letter that he wrote to army officers and that the concepts in the letter<sup>14</sup> are wholly consistent with Adams' application of Seneca the Younger's principle:

Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by rulers as useful.

Thus, although what Romney quoted shows that President Adams considered religion to be "useful" (especially for manipulating the troops), other quotations from Adams shows that he considered religion to be "false". Some examples of Adams' assessment follow:<sup>15</sup>

The divinity of Jesus is made a convenient cover for absurdity.

Indeed, Mr. Jefferson, what could be invented to debase the ancient Christianity which Greeks, Romans, Hebrews and Christian factions, above all the Catholics, have not fraudulently imposed upon the public?

The priesthood have, in all ancient nations, nearly monopolized learning... And, even since the Reformation, when or where has existed a Protestant or dissenting sect who would tolerate A FREE INQUIRY? The blackest billingsgate, the most ungentlemanly insolence, the most yahooish brutality is patiently endured, countenanced, propagated, and applauded. But touch a solemn truth in collision with a dogma of a sect, though capable of the clearest proof, and you will soon find you have disturbed a nest, and the hornets will swarm about your legs and hands, and fly into your face and eyes.

The United States of America have exhibited, perhaps, the first example of governments erected on the simple principles of nature; and if men are now sufficiently enlightened to disabuse themselves of artifice, imposture, hypocrisy, and superstition, they will consider this event as an era in their history. Although the detail of the formation of the American governments is at present little known or regarded either in Europe or in America, it may hereafter become an object of curiosity. It will never be pretended that any persons employed in that service

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<sup>14</sup> Available at <http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/adamsmilitia.html>.

<sup>15</sup> From <http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/quotes/adams.htm>.

had interviews with the gods, or were in any degree under the influence of Heaven, more than those at work upon ships or houses, or laboring in merchandise or agriculture; it will forever be acknowledged that these governments were contrived merely by the use of reason and the senses.

The quandary that Adams found himself in, derived from his application of Seneca's principle, was described well by Cliff Walker, who created "Positive Atheism's Bill List of Quotations" (from which the above Adams' quotations were taken). Walker wrote:

### **Oft-Misquoted Adams Quip**

What you see in a great many atheistic quotes lists:

"This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it!!!" – **John Adams**, letter to Thomas Jefferson.

### **What Adams was saying, in its actual context:**

"Twenty times in the course of my late reading have I been on the point of breaking out, 'This would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!' But in this exclamation I would have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company, I mean hell." – **John Adams**, quoted from Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Works of John Adams* (1856), vol. X, p. 254

John Adams is here describing to Thomas Jefferson what he sees as an emotion-based ejaculatory thought that keeps coming to him. This was not his reasoned opinion. Although John Adams often felt an urge to advocate atheism as a popular worldview (because of the sheer abuses perpetrated by religious charlatans), he was of the firm and reasoned opinion (basically undisputed in his day) that religion is essential to the goal of keeping the masses in line.

Knowing what we know today, to say this is pure slander against atheists. And yet it is still quite popular, especially among the uneducated, the widespread acknowledgement of its falsehood notwithstanding.

Thus, Adams was not above presenting such travesties as his National Day of Prayer and Fasting proclamation. These acts reflected his view that the masses needed religion to keep this world from becoming a bedlam. However, Adams, like Washington and Jefferson, did not apply this reasoning to himself – as we can plainly see from the quotations in the main section: religion was good for the masses but not for John Adams (for the most part), who was above all that and needed no piety in order to maintain his own sense of civility.

Meanwhile and in contrast, it's not clear to me if Romney's statement, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the savior of mankind", means that he regards such

nonsense as “true” or as just “useful”. But even giving Romney the benefit of the doubt that he’s smart enough to manipulate the masses, I’d bet that he “truly believes” that he has an invisible friend with him who wants him to take up residence at the White House – rather than a nut house!

Consequently, Keltoi, I also disagree with you: “It [Romney’s speech] was a good reminder that there should be no religious test for office.” Of course I agree that there should be no religious test for office, but I would maintain that anyone who claims to have an invisible friend in the sky with him is unfit for any political office.

And wilberhum, although I rarely disagree with you, I don’t think that your comment is sufficiently penetrating. You stated

We shouldn't judge anyone based on religion. Each and every religion has good and evil people in them.

I recall the great comment by Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg:

With or without religion, you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion.

Yet, I think that Weinberg’s assessment should be generalized – to something of the form:

With or without some ideology driving them, good people would be doing good things and evil people would be doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes some crazy ideology, such as Nazism, Communism, or any of the Abrahamic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism.

Finally for this chapter, Dear, I want to include some introductory remarks for the next (long) chapter, which deals with “Exterminating Islamic Terrorism”. I provide this “introduction” to emphasize two points: 1) Please realize that not all Muslims are terrorists, and 2) Please realize that, if your culture were different, you, too, could have been an Islamic terrorist.

Because not all Muslims are terrorists, I don’t want to leave you with the suggestion that all Muslims should be excluded from the West. Thus, certainly I welcome to the West all Muslims (and ex-Muslims) who agree with the St. Petersburg *Declaration* that I showed you earlier in this chapter. A more specific example of a welcome Muslim is the brave author of the following letter by EMILIO KARIM DABUL (NY Post; 17:29:43 2006/09/12)

September 12, 2006 – WELL, here it is, five years late, but here just the same: an apology from an Arab-American for 9/11. No, I didn't help organize the killers or contribute in any way to their terrible cause. However, I was one of millions of Arab-Americans who did the unspeakable on 9/11: nothing.

The only time I raised my voice in protest against these men who killed thousands of innocents in the name of Allah was behind closed doors, among the safety of friends and family. I did at one point write a very vitriolic essay condemning their actions, but fear of becoming another Salman Rushdie kept me from ever trying to publish it.

Well, I'm sick of saying the truth only in private – that Arabs around the world, including Arab-Americans like myself, need to start holding our own culture accountable for the insane, violent actions that our extremists have perpetrated on the world at large.

Yes, our extremists and our culture.

Every single 9/11 hijacker was Arab and a Muslim. The apologists (including President Bush) tried to reassure us that 9/11 had nothing to do with Islam, but was a twisting of a great and noble religion. With all due respect, read the Koran, Mr. President. There's enough there for someone of extreme tendencies to find their way to a global jihad.

There's also enough there for someone of a different mindset to find a path to enlightenment and peace. Still, Rushdie had it right back in 2001: This does have to do with Islam. A Christian who bombs an abortion clinic in the name of God is still a Christian, at least in his interpretation, and saying otherwise doesn't negate the fact that he has spent a goodly amount of time figuring out his version of the one true and right thing to do.

The men who killed 3,000 of our citizens on 9/11 in all likelihood died saying prayers to Allah, and that by itself is one of the most horrific things to me about that day.

And, while my grandparents never waged a jihad, their attitudes toward Jews weren't that much different than Mohammed Atta's. No, they didn't support the Holocaust, but they did believe that Jews were trouble in many different ways, and those sorts of beliefs were passed on to me before I'd ever actually met a Jew.

I'm sorry for that, for ever believing that anything that my grandparents or other relatives had to say about Jews or Israel, for that matter, had any real resemblance to truth. It took me years to realize that I'd been conned into believing the generalizations and stereotypes that millions around the Arab world buy into: that Jews, America and Israel are our main problem.

One look at the average Arab regime should alert us to the fact that the problem, dear Achmed, lies not overseas or next door in Tel Aviv, but in the brutal, corrupt despots

that we have bred from country to country in the Mideast, across the span of history. That history and its corresponding economic devastation is the main reason I reside on New York City's West Bank – New Jersey – not the one near Jerusalem. On my worst day, I'm happy about that fact. I'd rather be here than there, and experience the freedom and boundless opportunities that were mostly unknown to so many generations of my family in the Mideast.

For as long as I live, the image of those towers falling, as I watched in horror and disbelief from the corner of 40th and Fifth, will be for me my Pearl Harbor, for in that instant I recognized that not only was our city under attack – so was our freedom.

It still is. And will continue to be for years to come. And the threat is not from within, but from Islamic fascists who desperately want to destroy the freedom and opportunities that millions the world over still seek.

Five years after that awful day, it's time for all Arab-Americans, and Arabs around the world, to protest against Islamic fascism, to raise our voices – and, where necessary, our arms – against these tyrants until their plague of terror has been driven from the face of the earth forever.

The above represents a case where I'd like to shake the fellow's hand and say: "Welcome to America; I'm glad you came; I hope you'll stay."

Another Muslim whom I'd be glad to have as a friend is the author of the following article, even if he doesn't yet realize that his religion (similar to all religions) is just stupid speculations by savages. But, Dear, I'd like you to read this article not so much for your learning about another peaceful and friendly Muslim, but more for the insight that I hope you'll gain about how Muslims can become terrorists (or "Jihadists") – and for the hope that as you read the (long!) article (from which I've excluded many pages of "notes") you might realize that, if you had experienced similar, then you, too, could have become a terrorist.<sup>16</sup>

**The Development of a Jihadi's Mind**  
by **Tawfiz Hamid**

**W**hat occupies the mind of a *jihad*-driven Muslim? How is such fervor planted in young and impressionable believers? Where does it originate? How did I – once an innocent child who grew up in a liberal, moderate and educated household – find myself a member of a radical Islamic group?

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<sup>16</sup> Copied from [http://www.e-prism.org/images/20070606\\_CT5v2.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/20070606_CT5v2.pdf). The original article was published in Volume 5 of *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, edited by Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown (The Hudson Institute, Washington, D.C.).

These questions go to the root of Islamic violence and must be addressed if free societies are to combat radical Islam. To further this aim, I will explore the psychological development of a *jihadi*'s mind through my own first-hand experience as a former member of a Muslim terrorist organization.

I was born in Cairo to a secular Muslim family. My father was an orthopedic surgeon and an agnostic at heart; my mother was a French teacher and a liberal. Both considered Islam to be, primarily, an integral part of our culture. With the exception of my father, we would fast on Ramadan.

Even though my father was not religious, he understood our need to fit into the community and never forced his secular views on us. He espoused diverse philosophical ideas but encouraged us to follow our own convictions. Most importantly, he taught my brother and me to think critically rather than to learn by rote.

I never had any doubt, however, that we were Muslim – that Allah was our creator, Mohammed his messenger and the Quran our book. I believed that if I performed good deeds, I would be admitted to paradise where I could satisfy all my personal desires. I also knew that, alternatively, my transgressions would be punished by eternal torture in hell. I absorbed these beliefs largely from the surrounding environment rather than from my parents; they were shared by most children around me.

I attended the private Al-Rahebat primary school in the area of Dumiat, which is about 125 miles north of Cairo, when I was 6 years old. Though managed by Christian nuns, the school was supervised by the Egyptian government and required its Muslim students to attend classes on Islam. Before each Islamic lesson began, the teacher would dismiss the Christian students, who were then obliged to linger outside the room until the lesson was over. Adding salt to the Christian children's wounds, many Muslim pupils would tease them for their faith – telling them that they would burn in hell eternally because they ate pork and were "infidels."

This made a strong impression on me. I felt sorry for the Christians, sensing that they must be hurt by being treated as an inferior minority in an Islamic society. In my short life it was the first time I perceived that my Christian friends were not my equals. My parents had never suggested that we were superior to Christians, and I counted many among my friends. We used to play 'hide and seek' and other games together. Not only Christian children in the school were persecuted, however; non-practicing Muslims were scorned as well. Observant Muslim children would gather around those who did not fast during Ramadan and sing, "You who eat or drink during Ramadan are the losers of our religious... the black dog will tear apart your guts." Such treatment of Christians and non-practicing Muslims encouraged us to think that non-believers were inferior creatures and that it was right to hate them – they did not follow Islam and the Prophet Mohammed and, therefore, deserved to be

tortured in hell forever. Though my secular upbringing prevented these thoughts from entirely dominating my mind at the time, other children were affected even more.

### **The Beginning of a Dream**

When I was nine years old, I learned the following Quranic verse during one of our Arabic lessons:

But do not think of those that have been slain in God's cause (*shaheed*) as dead. Nay, they are alive! With their Sustainer have they their sustenance. They are very happy with the reward they received from Allah (for dying as a *shaheed*) and they rejoice for the sake of those who have not joined them (i.e., have not yet died for Allah). (Quran 3:169-70)

It was the first time I was exposed to the concept of *shaheed* (martyr), and naturally, I began to dream of becoming one. The thought of entering paradise very much appealed to me. There, I could eat all the lollipops and chocolates I wanted, or play all day without anyone telling me to study. What made the concept of *shaheed* even more attractive was its power to quell the fear I experienced as a young boy – for we were taught that if we were not good Muslims (especially if we did not pray five times per day), a “bald snake” would attack us in the grave. The idea of dying as a martyr provided a perfect escape from the frightening anguish of eternal punishment. Dying as a *shaheed*, in fact, was the *only* deed that fully guaranteed paradise after death.

In secondary school I watched films about the early Islamic conquest. These films promoted the notion that “true” Muslims were devoted to aggressive *jihad*. While jihadi seeds were thereby planted in my mind, they did not yet especially influence my personality or behavior. I was mostly occupied with schoolwork and such hobbies as sports, stamp collecting, chess and music. My father actively encouraged my brother and me to participate in ordinary activities. In fact, we were members of an exclusive private club where we pursued our hobbies and favorite sports. In my early years of high school, I was also – as many teenagers are – preoccupied with sex and hobbies. A variety of religious and cultural constraints made it virtually impossible to experience sexual activity, however.

During my last year of high school, I began to ponder seriously the concept of God while reading about the molecular structure of DNA in a biology book. These thoughts prompted me to learn more about Islam and to devote myself to serving Allah. I remember one particularly defining moment in an Arabic language class when I was sitting beside a Christian friend named Nagi Anton. I was reading a book entitled *Alshaykhan* by Taha Hussein that cited the Prophet Mohammed's words: “I have been ordered by Allah to fight and kill all people (non-Muslims) until they say, ‘No God except Allah’” (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*). Following the reading of this Hadith, I decisively turned toward Nagi and said to him, “If we are to apply Islam correctly, we should apply this Hadith to you.” At that moment I suddenly started to view Nagi as an enemy rather than as a long-time friend.

What further hardened my attitude on this matter was the advice I received from many dedicated Muslim fellow students, who warned me against befriending Christians. They based their counsel on the following verse:

O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends: They are but friends to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them (an infidel). Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust. (Quran 5:51)

In view of this verse and the previous one, I felt obliged as a Muslim to limit my relationships with my Christian friends. The love and friendship I once felt for them had been transformed into disrespect, merely because I wished to obey the commandments of my religion. The seductive ideas of my religious studies had diluted the influence of my secular upbringing. By restricting my contact with Christians, I felt that I was doing a great deed to satisfy Allah.

### **First Encounters with Jamaah Islamiyah**

My high test-scores enabled me to gain admission to the medical school at Cairo University in the late 1970s. At the time Islamism was proliferating rapidly. This was due in part to the money and textbooks Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi sect donated to promote Salafi Islam, but more importantly, Islamism gained adherents because Egyptians attributed the growing wealth of Saudi Arabia to its strict practice of Salafism. We enviously lamented, "Look how Allah has blessed the Saudis with money and oil because they apply *sharia* law." We believed that our economic problems would be solved if we did the same – just as Allah had blessed the Saudis, He would bless us.

At medical school I met members of Jamaah Islamiyah, an Islamic organization then approved by both the Egyptian government and the university, though later classified as a terrorist organization. Jamaah built a small prayer room in our medical school that later developed into a mosque with an associated library. The mosque was behind the physiology and biochemistry departments, and members of Jamaah came there daily before science classes to lecture to us about Islam. They warned us about the punishments awaiting us after death if we did not follow Islam strictly and were effective in advancing Islamism among many of the students, including me.

Our fear of being punished after death was exacerbated by our work in the cadaver room, where we dissected dead bodies. Seeing death regularly during anatomy and physiology courses made us feel that the life of this world was meaningless compared to "real" life after death. Jamaah Islamiyah impressed that idea on us by citing the following Quranic verse:

Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter – to them we shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein – without diminution... (yet) it is they who, in the life to come, shall have nothing but the fire – for in vain shall be all good things that they have done in this (world), and worthless all that they ever did. (Quran 11:15-16)

Indeed, the preachers used a range of verses... to warn those who did not follow Mohammed and Islam rigorously that they would suffer in hell forever.

Studying the anatomy and physiology of the human body increased my belief in a creator and made me more enthusiastic about my faith. The rising power of Jamaah Islamiyah inside the medical school was another critical factor in fostering my religious zealotry and that of my fellow students. Once Jamaah Islamiyah became influential, it prohibited such social events as listening to music, which it deemed un-Islamic. Female students were separated; they were not allowed to sit with males. Students were afraid to defy the group's hostile decrees. Its control reached the point where Christian professors were threatened.

I will never forget when they attacked an anatomy professor, Dr. Edward, because he asked Jamaah leaders to end their "mandatory" daily sermon so that he could start his anatomy class. Jamaah Islamiyah's control of our medical school gradually limited our rights. Its members exploited the lack of restrictions on their conduct to deprive everybody else of freedom.

### **Inside Jamaah Islamiyah**

During my first year of medical school, a Jamaah member named Muchtar Muchtar invited me to join the organization. Muchtar was in his fourth year, and Jamaah had given him the title *amir* (prince or caliph) – a designation taken from early Islamic writings that is associated with the Islamic Caliphate or Amir al-Momenin (Prince of the Believers). I accepted his invitation, and we walked together to Jamaah's mosque for noon prayers. On the way there Muchtar emphasized the central importance in Islam of the concept of *al-fikr kufir*, the idea that the very act of thinking (*fikr*) makes one become an infidel (*kufir*). (In Arabic both words are derived from the same three root letters but have different meanings.) He told me, "Your brain is just like a donkey (a symbol of inferiority in the Arab culture) that can get you only to the palace door of the king (Allah). To enter the palace once you have reached the door, you should leave the donkey (your inferior mind) outside." By this parable, Muchtar meant that a truly dedicated Muslim no longer thinks but automatically obeys the teachings of Islam.

Initially, I thought that I would experience an ordinary prayer session like those in other mosques. But before the prayers began, the participants were required to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and foot-to-foot. The leading cleric, Mohammed Omar, personally checked our arrangement for fifteen minutes to make sure that there were no gaps between our shoulders or feet. The reason for this exercise became apparent when Omar recited the following verse: "Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure" (Quran 61:4).

This militaristic attitude during prayers was the first step in preparing me for the concept of *jihad* against "the enemies of Allah," the non-Muslims. Following the prayers, members of Jamaah welcomed me and introduced me to a "brother" named Magdi al-Mahdi, who advised me to start reading Salafi books. I followed his advice and became immersed in those texts. After a few months of listening to Jamaah's belligerent religious sermons and reading the materials they recommended, my

personality was utterly transformed. I started to grow my beard. I stopped smiling and telling jokes. I adopted a serious look at all times and became very judgmental toward others. Bitter debates with my family ensued. My behavioral and intellectual transformation greatly alarmed my father. My mother was also concerned; she said that the Quran should be understood in a more moderate manner and advised me to stop reading Salafi materials.

Salafi teachings expressly forbid acting on sexual desire. They prohibit a man from touching any woman or even looking at one. Speaking to a woman on a personal level is not permitted. To be alone with a woman without relatives present, it is believed, would “invite Satan to be the third person.” Women became for members of Jamaah, therefore, forbidden creatures. But while relations with women were strictly proscribed, the erotic passages in Salafi writings... simultaneously aroused in us a powerful sexual desire. This dilemma led us to conclude that dying for Allah provided our only hope for satisfying our lust, because that lust could be satisfied only in paradise. It is not surprising that Osama bin Laden and other terrorist leaders sent letters to their suicide murderers that described to them the *Hur*, or white ladies awaiting them in paradise...

In addition to its severe prohibitions governing sexual conduct, Salafi Islam also strictly limits most artistic expression, which it considers to be satanic. Music involving string instruments is *haram* (forbidden). Songs, especially romantic ones, are prohibited as well. It is *haram* to listen to a woman’s singing voice. Even drawing is restricted. Such harsh prohibitions suppressed my ability to appreciate beauty and prepared my mind to accept the inhuman elements in Salafi doctrine. By way of contrast, it is interesting to note that Sufi Muslims enjoy music, singing and dancing, and they rarely, if ever, engage in terrorism.

Unfortunately, I followed Salafi Islam. My hatred toward non-Muslims increased dramatically, and *jihadi* doctrine became second nature to me. My goal of being a physician and healing the sick grew tainted, infected by my strong wish to subjugate non-Muslims and impose *sharia* law.

### **Meeting Zawahiri**

At one afternoon prayer session, an imam I had never met before gave a sermon. He was one of the fiercest speakers I had ever heard. His passion for *jihad* was astonishing. He advocated complete Islamic dominance, urging us to pursue *jihad* against non-Muslims and subdue them to *sharia* –the duty of every true Muslim. His rhetoric inspired us to engage in war against the infidels, the enemies of Allah. He particularly condemned the West for the freedom of its women. He hated the fact that Western women were permitted to wear what they pleased, to work and to have the same opportunities as men. He dreamt of forcing the West to conform to a Taliban-style system in which women were obliged to wear the Islamic *hijab*, were legally beaten by men to discipline them, and were stoned to death for extramarital sex.

\* Go to other chapters via

After the imam's speech my friend, Tariq Abdul-Muhsin, asked me if I knew this speaker. When I said I did not, Tariq told me that he was Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri [bin Laden's "advisor"] and, because I was a new member of Jamaah, offered to introduce us.

Al-Zawahiri was exceptionally bright, one of the top postgraduate students in the medical school. We called him by his title and first name – Dr. Ayman. He came from a well-known, highly educated and wealthy family. As was customary for Jamaah members, he wore a beard and dressed occasionally in the Pakistani style of the Taliban. He disapproved of Egypt's secular government; he wanted Egypt to follow *sharia* law and Coptic Christians to be made *dhimmis* – second-class citizens submissive to Islam. To disparage secular Arab governments, he cited the following verse: "For they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, Infidels" (Quran 5:44).

When I met him, Zawahiri welcomed me affectionately. He spoke quietly, gazing intently at me through his thick glasses. With a serious expression he placed his hand on my shoulder and said, "Young Muslims like you are the hope for the future return of *Khilafa* (Caliphate or Islamic global dominance)." I felt a great sense of gratitude and honor. I wanted to please him by contributing to his "noble" cause. Throughout my membership in Jamaah, I would meet with Zawahiri on six more occasions. He did not have much time to spare however; Zawahiri was deeply involved in several Islamist organizations.

One of Zawahiri's significant achievements was to personalize *jihād* – that is, to have transformed it from a responsibility of the Umma, the Islamic collective, to a duty of Muslim individuals. His goal is to spread the empire of Islam through the actions of individual radical Muslims, each of whom is incited to wage a personal *jihād*. This allows young Muslims to carry out suicide bombings without the endorsement of the collective body. Zawahiri and his fellow *jihadis* base their philosophy on the verse that states, "Then fight in Allah's cause – you are held responsible only for yourself – and rouse the believers (to fight)" (Quran 4:84).

### **The Distortion of My Mind**

Within several months I was invited to travel to Afghanistan to join other young Muslims in training for *jihād*. It was fairly common to be recruited after the end of Friday prayers. Volunteering to train in Afghanistan was very simple: I only needed to register my name in certain mosques, and organizers would carry out all the logistical and financial arrangements. I was excited to go because I believed that I would be fulfilling "the command of Allah" to wage *jihād*. It seemed the easiest way to guarantee my salvation in the afterlife and to attain my purpose in life.

We viewed both the Soviets and the Americans as enemies. The Soviets were considered infidels because they did not believe in the existence of God, while the Americans did not follow Islam. Although we planned to fight the Soviets first, our ultimate objective was to destroy the United States – the greatest symbol of the

infidel's freedom. My personal dream was to be an Islamic warrior, to kill the enemies of Islam, to smite their necks in accordance with the Quranic verse that reads, "When ye meet the Unbelievers smite at their necks" (Quran 47:4). We considered the Prophet Mohammed to be our role model. The Quran commanded us to follow in his footsteps: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah" (Quran 33:21).

Salafi Islamic texts demonstrate Mohammed's uncompromising nature... They encourage devout Muslims to emulate the Prophet's deeds and to accept and defend his actions in even the harshest passages. When confronted by outsiders, however, these same Muslims insist that such stories are misinterpreted because they are taken out of context – though they rarely, if ever, provide the context. This self-protective denial effectively paralyzes further criticism by the West. Meanwhile, these texts are taught and understood in a very literal way by both the young members of Jamaah and many other Muslims. I was not allowed to question any established teaching of Salafi ideology. The Salafists consider any criticism of Islamic texts as *redda* (apostasy) punishable by death and eternal damnation. Out of simple fear, then, I attempted to idolize Mohammed and to emulate him as he is portrayed in the Sunna... The fear of such harsh punishment deters most other Muslims from criticizing Salafi teaching as well.

I increasingly felt at ease with death because I believed that I would either defeat the infidels on earth or enjoy paradise in the afterlife. *Jihad* against non-Muslims seemed to me to be a win-win situation. The following verse, commonly cited by Jamaah members, validated my duty to die for Allah:

Allah has purchased the believers, their lives and their goods. For them (in return) is the Garden (of paradise). They fight in Allah's Cause, and they slay and are slain; they kill and are killed... it (paradise) is the promise of Allah to them." (Quran 9:111)

I passed through three psychological stages to reach this level of comfort with death: hatred of non-Muslims or dissenting Muslims, suppression of my conscience, and acceptance of violence in the service of Allah. Salafi religious indoctrination played a major role in this process. Salafists promoted our hatred for non-Muslims by emphasizing the Quranic verse that read, "Thou wilt not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who resist (i.e., do not follow) Allah and His Messenger" (Quran 58:22).

Salafi writings also helped me to suppress my conscience by holding that many activities I had considered to be immoral were, instead, *halal* – that is, allowed by Allah and the Prophet. My conscience would normally reject polygamy, for example, because of the severe psychological pain it would cause my future wife. Salafi teaching encourages polygamy, however, permitting up to four wives as *halal*: "Marry women of your choice, two or three or four" (Quran 4:3). I accepted such ideas – ideas that contradicted my moral outlook – because I came to believe that we

cannot negotiate with God about his commandments: “He (Allah) cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)” (Quran 21:23).

Once I was able to suppress my conscience, I was open to accepting violence without guilt – the third psychological stage. One Salafi method of generating this crucial attitude is to encourage violence against women, a first step in developing a brutal mentality. Salafists emphasize the following text:

Men are superior to women because Allah has given them more preference than to women, and because they financially support them. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear that they do not obey you, admonish them, avoid making sex with them (as a form of punishment), and beat them; but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all). (Quran 4:34)

A mind that accepts violence against women is much more likely to be comfortable murdering hated infidels and responding to the verse that reads: “O Prophet, strive hard (fight) against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be harsh with them. Their abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed” (Quran 9:73). It is clear that the three psychological stages in Salafism that I have described are deeply interconnected.

### **Hesitation and New Understanding**

As I considered attending a terrorist training camp, however, my conscience reasserted itself. The habit of critical thinking that my parents had instilled in me when I was growing up began to undermine the violent indoctrination to which I had been subjected. If I had taken the next step toward *jihad*, I might well have become a terrorist killer. Instead, I experienced an intense inner struggle that felt like an earthquake shaking my principles. I realized that harming innocent people is immoral and that a religious ideology pledging war on non-believers must be bankrupt.

It is unfortunate and disastrous that the theological underpinnings of Salafism are both powerful and prevalent in the approved, traditional Islamic books. These texts teach, moreover, that the Quran's later, more violent passages abrogate its earlier, peaceful ones. This concept, called *nasikh wa-l-mansukh*, has effectively diminished the influence of the peaceful verses.

When I discussed the implications of the violent passages with a few Sufi clergy, they suggested that one “should be good and peaceful to all mankind” and that “the understanding of the violent verses will be clarified on the day of judgment.” These views were not based on rigorous Islamic eschatology, however, or on an objective analysis of the religious books. They merely embodied a desired perception of Islam. My secular parents offered the same tolerant perspective, insisting that Islam is a religion of peace. But for me both responses were unsatisfactory because they suffered from the same problem – they were not theologically grounded. My difficulty was not resolved, and I continued to live with a complex dilemma.

My crisis of conscience was mostly internal, but I did share some of my doubts with my mother. On one occasion a fellow medical student named Abdul Latif Haseeb

started a conversation with me about religion. We discussed whether it was right to kill apostates or stone women to death, as well as whether Mohammed could be considered a pedophile because he married the seven-year-old Aisha... We weighed the merits of declaring war on non-Muslims to spread Islam and agreed that it should be rejected because it is condoned only by supplemental Salafi books rather than by the Quran itself.

Haseeb belonged to a sect known as Quranist, which strictly adhered to the teachings of the Quran but rejected other writings. This opened my eyes. I was impressed that my new friend disagreed with many Salafi teachings. I also realized that Haseeb was not alone in his beliefs; his father and several mutual acquaintances shared the same ideas. They relied on new interpretations of the Quran and spurned the traditional Salafi textbooks. They accepted and tolerated different views within Islam and, in most circumstances, had a peaceful analysis of the verses.

Haseeb invited me to join the sect, and I accepted his invitation in order to examine the Quranists' ideas more thoroughly. Though not without problems, the sect possessed at least some rigor and was more moderate than Salafism. It provided me with a protected sanctuary that allowed me to keep my identity as a Muslim while giving me the flexibility to reinterpret Quranic verses in a nonviolent way. The group counted among its members the liberal peace activist Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, whom I met on one occasion. Mahmoud was later murdered in Sudan by exponents of Salafi doctrine for the crime of "apostasy" because his teaching clashed with theirs. I eventually built on the Quranists' ideas in developing a fresh understanding of the Quran that is compatible with the values of human rights and modernity.

### **Combating Salafi Islam**

By immersing myself in Salafi ideology, I was better able to judge the impact of its violent tenets on the minds of its followers. Among the more appalling notions it supports are the enslavement and rape of female war prisoners and the beating of women to discipline them. It permits polygamy and pedophilia. It refers to Jews as "pigs and monkeys" and exhorts believers to kill them before the end of days:

Say: "Shall I tell you who, in the sight of God, deserves a yet worse retribution than these? Those (The Jews) whom God has rejected and whom He has condemned, and whom He has turned into monkeys and pigs because they worshipped the powers of evil: these are yet worse in station, and farther astray from the right path (than the mockers)." (Quran 5:60)

Homosexuals are to be killed as well; to cite one of many examples, on July 19, 2000, two gay teenagers were hung in Iran for no other crime than being gay...

These doctrines are not taken out of context, as many apologists for Islamism argue: they are central to the faith and ethics of millions of Muslims, and are currently being taught as part of the standard curriculum in many Islamic educational systems in the Middle East as well in the West. Moreover, there is no single *approved* Islamic textbook that contradicts or provides an alternative to the passages I have cited. It has

thus become clear to me that Salafi ideology is what is largely responsible for the so-called “clash of civilizations.”

Consequently, I have chosen to combat Salafism by exposing it and by providing an alternative, peaceful, and theologically rigorous interpretation of the Quran. My reformist approach naturally challenges well-established Salafi tenets, and leads Muslims who follow Salafi Islam to reject me. Why? I have not altered the Quran itself. My system is simply one of inline commentary, in which dangerous passages are flagged and reinterpreted to be non-violent...

For over fifteen years I have tried to preach my views in mosques in the Middle East, as well as to my local community in the West, but have faced the unwavering hostility of most Salafi Muslims in both regions. Muslims who live in the West – who insist to outsiders that Islam is a “religion of peace” and who enjoy freedom of expression, which they demand from their Western hosts – have threatened me with murder and arson. I have had to choose between accepting violent Salafi views and being rejected by the overwhelming majority of my fellow Muslims. I have chosen the latter.

Even though radical Islam began to reassert itself in the 1970s, it did not become widely pervasive until quite recently. In the early 1990s many people were intrigued by my ideas, and only a few militants threatened me with violence. One day, after I gave a peaceful Friday sermon, I walked home with a friend. To my surprise, several men ran up and threw stones at us from behind in order to intimidate me from returning and speaking in their mosques. As time has passed, this violent and threatening behavior has become more common: Dr. Wafa Sultan in the US, Abdul Fatah in Egypt, and many, many others have received and continue to receive death threats. Recently, Dr. Nawal Al-Sadawi, a liberal Muslim thinker and women’s rights activist, was forced to flee Egypt because of her public statements. Dr. Rashad Khalifa was murdered in the United States after he published his own re-interpretation of the Quran which was less violent than was traditional. In Egypt, Dr. Faraq Fuddah was shot to death after publishing condemnations of Jihadists. Egyptian Nobel Prize winner Najib Mahfouz was stabbed in the neck for writing his novel, *Awlad Haretna*, perceived by Salafists as blasphemous. The list goes on.

Still, the majority of members in many Muslim communities have adopted the violent teachings of the Islamists. Salafi indoctrination operates through written words and careful coaching. It is enormously seductive. It rapidly changed me into a *jihadi*. Salafi sacred texts exert a powerful influence on millions of Muslim followers throughout the world, and terrorism is only one symptom of the Salafi disease. Salafi doctrine, which is at the root of the West’s confrontation with Islamism, poses an existential threat to us all – including Muslims.

Indeed, Salafism robs young Muslims of their soul, it turns Western communities against them, and it can end in civil war as Muslims attempt to implement Sharia law in their host countries. A peaceful interpretation of Islam is possible, but the Salafi

establishment is currently blocking moderate theological reform. The civilized world ought to recognize the immense danger that Salafi Islam poses; it must become informed, courageous and united if it is to protect both a generation of young Muslims and the rest of humanity from the disastrous consequences of this militant ideology.

I trust you see, Dear, that this is serious stuff. In the next chapter, I'll show you some proposed actions that I think should be taken – “to protect both a generation of young Muslims and the rest of humanity from the disastrous consequences of this militant ideology.” But before turning to that, Dear, why don't you get some exercise?