

## In a Rational Debate, Islam would win

### News:

According to new research from the University of Aarhus in Denmark, the negative attitude towards refugees and immigrants is affected by our immune system. (Subconscious fear of infection may explain skepticism towards immigrants)

### Comment:

The research is conducted in corporation with Professor Kevin Arceneaux from Temple University, USA, and has just been published in the magazine "American Political Science Review". The study is the first comparative exploration of Danish and American level of concern for infection and their political attitude towards immigrants and refugees.

An article on the research states: "The connection between our unconscious skepticism towards immigrants and immune system is that human kind, through evolution, has built a behavioral immune system which motivates us to avoid situations where we can be infected with disease."

"Those, who are very concerned about infection are those who are most reluctant to get into contact with newly arrived", says Lene Aaroe who is a co-writer on the study. Her colleague Michael Petersen continues: "The fear comes from deep, unconscious systems that we cannot control".

Right-wingers have criticized the study for making their racism and Islamophobia a matter of irrational primitive fear for infection instead of accepting and recognizing it as valid and factual. They even said that they do not have a problem with non-Muslim immigrants like Chinese or Japanese, but only with Muslims, so this should invalidate the claim.

A commentator criticizing the right-wing wrote that if we developed a patch test for this "hyper sensitive immune systems", the right-wingers would probably get allergies from a spot of Islam.

The fact is that the rising islamophobia and racism, which washes over the western world, is a product of ideas and concepts nurtured by politicians and main stream media and nothing else.

There are innumerable examples of people changing their views on Muslims when they have Islam presented in a rational and honest way. Even stronger examples are to be found among *the Sahabah*, throughout history and even today, where sworn enemies of Islam suddenly embraced Islam and totally changed their concepts and convictions.

Neither claiming that Islamophobia is rational and fact based nor reducing it to irrational fear of infection is contributing positively to the heated debate about Islam and Muslims in the Western World. The level must be raised and facts and rational arguments have to be the reference.

However, neither the right nor the left wants this because in a rational debate, Islam would win.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
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