**THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM**

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**Reza Aslan defends Islam**

**in one of the most bigoted segments on CNN**

**by Egberto Willies**

***Over the last few weeks Bill Maher has been on an Islamaphobic* [SIC] *campaign. This is regretful because Bill Maher, while profoundly caustically funny, generally gets real time politics right.***

**Egberto, so when you agree with Maher, he's caustically funny and "gets it right," but when he doesn't march in lockstep to your ideology ... then he's Islamophobic.**

***His attack on Islam comes from the same shallow thinking he generally accuses the average American population of engaging in.***

**Egberto, but if he agreed with you ... then it would be "deep thinking," wouldn't it?**

***Last week he ended his New Rules with a rant that while filled with good points about Liberals dropping the ball on criticizing certain Muslim practices in certain countries, made bigoted generalizations. The problem is that Bill Maher generalized those who practice Islam.***

**Egberto, so where's the quote?**

***CNN took on Bill Maher's statement. They brought on Reza Aslan, an Iranian American writer & scholar on religions to discuss it. It was obvious from the beginning that CNN's Don Lemon and Alisyn Camerota bought into Bill Maher's flawed narrative on Islam.***

**Egberto, I expect entertainment newscasters to be dim-witted. I am more disturbed by how dim-witted you are, by buying into Reza Aslan's lies and distortions.**

***What made this more painful is that Don Lemon as a gay black man should understand how generalizations lead to mischaracterization destructing empathy.***

**Egberto, why bring race and sexual orientation into a discussion about religion?**

**Try to stay focused Egberto. You are displaying enough difficulty with this subject without dropping a bucketload of red herrings into the discussion.**

***They are outright bigoted.***

**Egberto, I've endured enough of your essays to draw the very same conclusion ... about you.**

***CNN should have known that they needed to have their intellectual house in order if they were going to discuss this subject with Reza Aslan. This man authored the books "Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth", "Beyond Fundamentalism: Confronting Religious Extremism in the Age of Globalization", and "No god but God (Updated Edition): The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam." This man is not only read in Islam but in most world religions.***

**Egberto, nice "Appeal to Authority."**

**But none of that changes the evidence which proves that he is nothing more than the typical, lying, religious sack of shit.**

***It was evident that the two CNN lightweights were no match and instead of using Reza Aslan's words as a learning experience, they attempted challenges that fell flat.***

**Egberto, what exactly do you think you can learn from a Ghost Worshiper ... other than lies?**

***This week Bill Maher continued his attack on Islam along with his guest Sam Harris. They continued their generalization of Islam.***

**Egberto, quotes please. Without them, it is just another of your baseless assertions.**

***Both Ben Affleck and journalist Nicholas Kristof failed to get both Bill Maher and Sam Harris to see how bigoted their mischaracterizations and generalizations were.***

**Egberto, Ben Affleck should focus more on learning his lines for Batman, and leave the cerebral activities to those more suited for it. Affleck interrupted Harris' interview continually and made himself look like an ignorant asshole.**

**If you want to talk about mischaracterizations, you should email Affleck and ask him to explain to you why he referred to Islam as a race.**

**Our new Batman ... is a moron.**

***Reza Aslan pointed out that it is rather silly to generalize the treatment of women in Muslim countries. After all, many have been lead by women (Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, Pakistan Benazir Bhutto, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, Bangladeshi Prime Ministers Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed). The most powerful western country, America, is yet to elect one.***

**See Egberto, here's where your laziness and refusal to do research comes back to bite you in the ass. Had you actually put in some effort to get more information instead of just accepting what you wanted to hear because it fits into your prejudices, you might have come across information like this, which could have explained to you how you were the one being misled:**

[**http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2014/10/05/reza-aslan-is-wrong-about-islam-and-this-is-why/**](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2014/10/05/reza-aslan-is-wrong-about-islam-and-this-is-why/)

**Like all apologists, whether Christian, Muslim, or other ...**

**Aslan is devoid of even a hint of honesty.**

***Reza Aslan also pointed out that the generalization of genital mutilation is not a Muslim problem but an African ritual.***

**Egberto, Aslan will have a strong point once he can prove that Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Iraq ... are African nations.**

***After all, two Christian countries, Ethiopia and Eritrea have north of 70% genital mutilations on women.***

**Egberto, no one is saying that it is *only* a Muslim problem, but that it is *primarily* a Muslim problem.**

***When asked if Islam is a violent religion he rightfully pointed out that no religion is violent or peaceful.***

**Egberto, when the holy book, upon which a religion is based, tells its followers to kill outsiders, then it IS a violent religion. Let me know if you can produce any verses from Buddhist texts that advocate murdering non-Buddhists.**

**(crickets ... crickets ... crickets)**

***He pointed out a violent sect of Buddhism.***

**Egberto, people who follow Buddhism aren't immune to violence. The point was that Buddhism is not where they got their violence from, whereas Christianity and Islam direct their followers to kill; and for the past 2,000 years ... that is one thing they have done quite well.**

***It depends on what those practicing the religion bring to it.***

**Egberto, you are completely ignoring what the religion teaches. How convenient. I think you may have the makings of an apologist yourself.**

***Reza Aslan continued to decimate Don Lemon and Alisyn Camerota.***

**Egberto, it's not difficult for an experienced apologist to beat up on two pretty faces. His bullshit wouldn't survive against Maher or Harris.**

***When Alisyn Camerota asked one of the most silly questions as she generalized the criminal justice system in 'Muslim Countries' Reza Aslan could not help but be frank.***

**Egberto, Aslan doesn't know the meaning of the word "frank": he's an apologist. That means he is a professional liar. It's what he does. It's all he does.**

**And against empty-headed newscasters, and prejudiced people like you, Egberto, he meets absolutely no resistance at all.**

**As bad as those newscasters looked, they didn't embarrass themselves half as bad as you have Egberto, as you have gobbled up every lie that Aslan spit out. Had you been at that news desk, you would have looked like a mindless bobblehead doll.**

***Reza Aslan asked "Did you hear what you just said? You said in Muslim countries. I just told you that Indonesian women are absolutely one hundred percent equal to men.***

**Egberto, there is no country on Earth where that statement is even remotely true, yet because it was what you wanted to hear, you bought it hook, line, and sinker.**

**You ideologues are sooo easy.**

***In Turkey they have had more female representatives, more heads of states than we have had in the United States.***

**Egberto, remind Aslan that Turkey has a secular constitution.**

***Stop saying things like Muslim countries.***

**Egberto, you should listen to Aslan on that one. A few paragraphs back you said "two Christian countries." Let's let Aslan continue and he will explain to you why you need to stop doing that.**

 ***… To say Muslim countries as though Pakistan and Turkey are the same, as though Indonesia or Saudi Arabia are the same, as though somehow what is happening in the most extreme forms of these repressive countries, autocratic countries as representative of what's happening in every other Muslim country, is frankly and I use this word seriously, stupid."***

**Well Egberto, Aslan just called you stupid.**

**Ethiopia and Eritrea are not the same simply because the majority of their citizens are Christians. So they are not Christian nations ... they are nations with Christian majorities.**

***Chris Cuomo appeared with Don Lemon and Alisyn Camerota a few days later. After taking a lot of flak for the intellectual dishonesty of the segment, they attempted to put lipstick on a pig. Unfortunately Chris Cuomo made it worse with one statement. Chris Cuomo said of Reza Aslan "His tone was angry. He wound up kind of demonstrating what people are fearful about when they think of the faith in the first place, which is the hostility of it.”***

**Egberto, when people can't stand up to debate they will always resort to personal attack. If Cuomo had the facts, like I just provided to you in this essay, he would not have needed to resort to such a pathetic rebuttal.**

***Has Chris Cuomo ever characterized the Christian screaming zealots in America this way.***

**Egberto, questions usually end with question marks. But few Americans would dare because Christians in America dominate our society, controlling 100% of all political power even though they only represent 75% of the population.**

***It is the characteristic chant, the angry black man, the angry black woman, the angry woman, the angry feminist, or the angry Muslim when a strong emphatic defense is made against the norm.***

***With all the air time that could be filled with learning and dispelling myths and preconceived notions our media continues to fail. Our people are misled because we have a derelict media.***

**Egberto, as a writer you are part of that media. The main tactic you have employed in this essay is to use the "Straw Man" logical fallacy. You are trying to misrepresent those who expose the horrors of Islam by claiming that they are referring to all Muslims. You, and others of your "ilk" do this, in spite of the fact that those with whom you disagree, specifically state that they are not referring to all Muslims. But you intentionally choose to ignore that fact and promote your Straw Man argument anyway.**

**You are a dishonest man, Egberto ... like so many others in the media.**

[**http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/10/06/1334660/-Reza-Aslan-defends-Islam-in-one-of-the-most-bigoted-segments-on-CNN?detail=email**](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/10/06/1334660/-Reza-Aslan-defends-Islam-in-one-of-the-most-bigoted-segments-on-CNN?detail=email)

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Taking short walking breaks was found to reverse**

**the negative effects of prolonged sitting**

**Researchers have found that 3 easy, slow 5-minute walks can reverse the harm caused to leg arteries during 3 hours of prolonged sitting.**

**Sitting for long periods of time, like many people do daily at their jobs, is associated with risk factors such as higher cholesterol levels, and greater waist circumference, that can lead to cardiovascular and metabolic disease. When people sit, slack muscles do not contract to effectively pump blood to the heart. Blood can pool in the legs and affect the endothelial function of arteries, or the ability of blood vessels to expand from increased blood flow.**

**There is plenty of epidemiological evidence linking sitting time to various chronic diseases; and linking breaking sitting time to beneficial cardiovascular effects, but until now, there was very little experimental evidence. Scientists have shown that prolonged sitting impairs endothelial function, which is an early marker of cardiovascular disease, and that breaking sitting time prevents the decline in that function.**

**The researchers were able to demonstrate that during a 3-hour period, the flow-mediated dilation, or the expansion of the arteries as a result of increased blood flow, of the main artery in the legs was impaired by as much as 50 percent after just one hour. The study participants who walked for 5 minutes after each hour of sitting saw their arterial function stay the same -- it did not drop throughout the 3-hour period. It is likely that the increase in muscle activity and blood flow accounts for this.**

**The study involved 11 non-obese, healthy men between the ages of 20-35 who participated in two randomized trials. In one trial they sat for three hours without moving their legs. Researchers used a blood pressure cuff and ultrasound technology to measure the functionality of the femoral artery at baseline and again at the one-, two- and three-hour marks.**

**In the second trial, the men sat during a 3-hour period but also walked on a treadmill for 5 minutes at a speed of 2 mph at the 30-minute mark, 1.5-hour mark and 2.5-hour mark. Researchers measured the functionality of the femoral artery at the same intervals as in the other trial.**

**American adults sit for approximately 8 hours a day. The impairment in endothelial function is significant after just one hour of sitting. It is interesting to see that light physical activity can help in preventing this impairment.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Hypatia (350 – 370; killed by Christians in 415)**

**She was a Greek philosopher in Egypt. As head of the Platonist school at Alexandria, she taught philosophy and astronomy.**

**She belonged to the mathematic tradition of the Academy of Athens; she was of the intellectual school of the 3rd century thinker Plotinus, which encouraged logic and mathematical study in place of empirical enquiry and strongly encouraged law in place of nature. For followers of Plotinus the life of reason had, as its ultimate goal, mystical union with the divine.**

**Hypatia was murdered by a Christian mob after being accused of exacerbating a conflict between two prominent figures in Alexandria: the governor Orestes and the Bishop of Alexandria. Hellenistic philosophy continued to flourish in the 5th and 6th centuries, and perhaps until the age of Justinian.**

**“Fables should be taught as fables, myths as myths,**

**and miracles as poetic fantasies.**

**To teach superstitions as truths is a most terrible thing.**

**The child mind accepts and believes them,**

**and only through great pain and perhaps tragedy**

**can he be in later years relieved of them.”**