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IN ONE OF THE SADDEST DISPLAYS OF LOGIC DEPRIVATION THAT YOU WILL FIND ANYWHERE ON THE NET, RELIGIOUS HISTORIAN R. JOSEPH HOFFMANN EXPOUNDS ON THE RECENT KORAN BURNING AND THE AFGHAN RESPONSE

THIS POST APPEARED ON HIS WEB SITE, APPROPRIATELY ENOUGH, ON APRIL FOOL'S DAY:

It has been amazing and distressing to me that responses to this blog from a cadre of readers have focused only on the twin lunacies of Islamic extremism and Christian triumphalism. Some of them want to vindicate Terry Jones as a kind of litmus test for their belief that a butterfly is enough to ignite the Muslim world–so why worry about an ox? If there is logic there, it must be part of the initiation ritual.

JOE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE LOGIC. FROM WHAT I HAVE SEEN WHEN I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ENDURE YOUR WRITING, YOU AVOID LOGIC LIKE MOST OF US AVOID TRAFFIC COPS.

Some have even taken the “What would you expect?” line, as though Mr Jones’s actions necessarily excited the “Muslim animals” and renders him, therefore, innocent. From what tank is that slimy conclusion fished?

JOE, HOW CLEVER. WE ARE QUITE THE WORDSMITH, AREN'T WE?

The further logic is that Islam is all about violence anyway, so a a little more (what’s the difference) can hardly be laid at the door of a Florida fundagelical.

JOE, CONCENTRATE. THAT IS NOT LOGIC. FOR RADICAL MUSLIMS ... THAT IS FACT.

Some respondents think that there is a moral equivalence, such that Terry Jones and the Afghan and Pakistani responders are cut from the same cloth.

JOE, THAT RIGHT THERE DEMONSTRATES THE HUGE GAP IN INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN PHARYNGULITES AND THOSE WHO FOLLOW YOUR WEB SITE.

How that renders Jones innocent or raises the dead I am not sure.

JOE, INNOCENT OF WHAT? I'M NOT AWARE OF ANY CRIMINAL CHARGES BEING FILED AGAINST THAT MORON FOR EXERCISING HIS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. PERHAPS YOU COULD ENLIGHTEN US?

LAST TIME I CHECKED, BEING A MORON WAS A GUARANTEED FREEDOM IN AMERICA; WHICH IS SOMETHING *YOU* SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR.

I find that kind of response both uninformed and worrying. Very worrying coming from nonbelievers, and maybe because it raises in my mind questions about whether a certain level of atheism isn’t also an impediment to moral reasoning

JOE, ATHEISM IS THE ABSENCE OF BELIEF IN GOD. IF ONE ATHEIST HAS A STRONGER CONVICTION THAN ANOTHER REGARDING GODS, WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH MORAL REASONING - WHICH IS A COMPLETELY UNRELATED PROCESS?

specifically that kind that finds all religions “naturally” guilty of atrocity and hence no one at fault and no one innocent of crimes.

JOE, WHAT ATROCITIES IS BUDDHISM GUILTY OF?

Yet one wonders if Mr Myers–who also figures in this story–

JOE, MYERS IN NO WAY FIGURES INTO THIS STORY. YOU BROUGHT HIM INTO IT BECAUSE YOU ARE APPARENTLY OBSESSED WITH THE MAN.

had been approached by NSS agents and told that his act of “desecration” would lead to the loss of life, would have gone through with it. Something tells me that the redoubtable Dr Myers would have relented. Because he knew his was a stunt.

Terry Jones’s acts were not a stunt: they were intended to light fires and kill innocent people.

COME ON JOE, NOW YOU ARE CLAIMING SUPERNATURAL MIND READING POWERS. HERE, LET ME GIVE YOU A LINK TO THE JAMES RANDI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION WHERE YOU CAN PICK UP AN EASY 1 MILLION DOLLARS IF YOU CAN BACK UP YOUR CLAIM:

http://www.randi.org/site/index.php/1m-challenge.html

Indeed they were done to prove that innocent people would be killed.

JOE, AND YOUR EVIDENCE FOR THAT CLAIM IS?

“For some of them,” he said, “it [the torching of the Qur'an] could be an awakening.”

JOE, "AWAKENING" IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF "DYING."

SO YOUR EVIDENCE THAT JONES WANTED TO PROVE THAT INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD BE KILLED IS THAT HE THOUGHT HIS ACT WOULD BE AN "AWAKENING?"

JOE, WHILE YOU WERE AT HARVARD, DIDN'T THEY OFFER YOU ANY ESL CLASSES?

…The world was reminded of the 30-person Christian congregation at Dove World Outreach Center on Friday, when a mob incited by the burning of the Koran attacked a U.N. compound in Mazar-e Sharif, killing seven U.N. employees. On Saturday, related protests in Kandahar left nine dead and more than 90 injured.

Jones, 59, had considered the possibility that burning the text might elicit a violent response and that innocent people might be killed.

JOE, WHEN MUSLIMS BURN THE AMERICAN FLAG, BURN AN EFFIGY OF OUR PRESIDENT, AND CHANT "DEATH TO AMERICA," DO YOU THINK THEY CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEIR ACTIONS MIGHT ELICIT A VIOLENT RESPONSE AND THAT INNOCENT PEOPLE MIGHT BE KILLED?

DO YOU EVEN CARE?

I ASK BECAUSE YOU SEEM TO BE AVOIDING THAT ISSUE.

In his characteristic drawl — a slow-motion delivery that seems incongruous with the church’s fiery rhetoric — the pastor said the church also debated whether to shred the book, shoot it or dunk it in water instead of burning it.

JOE, THESE ARE CHRISTIANS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE. OF COURSE THEIR GOING TO GO WITH WHAT THEY KNOW BEST - BURNING.

But in the end, his desire to shed light on what he calls a “dangerous book” won out.

JOE, YOU'VE GOT TO WONDER HOW HE COULD READ THE BIBLE ... WITHOUT COMING TO THE SAME CONCLUSION.

The Koran was burned in a spectacle streamed live on the Internet. To reach out to Muslims overseas, Jones included Arabic subtitles….”

JOE, HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT WHEN MUSLIMS TORCH OUR SYMBOLS IN AN ATTEMPT TO "REACH OUT" TO AMERICANS, THEY SOMEHOW BECOME IMMEDIATELY FLUENT IN ENGLISH?

As if we needed evidence. That, thankfully is the difference between an atheist Koran hater and a fundamentalist Koran hater: and if ever there were a clear bisection of the “rules” for blasphemy, this should be it–because people are dead as part of the definition.

JOE, SLOW DOWN. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I READ THAT, BY THE TIME I GET TO THE END, MY EYES BUG OUT AND KNOCK OFF MY GLASSES.

Jones now plans to move house so to speak and put Muhammad on trial next month.

JOE, SINCE HE'S BRINGING TO TRIAL DEAD PEDOPHILES I HAVE A SUGGESTION: HE SHOULD SAVE TIME AND COURT COSTS BY TRYING MOHAMMED AND MICHAEL JACKSON AT THE SAME TIME.

To my atheist colleagues, I say: please, before you snipe, try to understand. We are not yet at the point where atheism is the “cure” for anything,

JOE, I CAN GIVE YOU ONE EXAMPLE THAT PROVES YOU WRONG: IT IS A CURE FOR RELIGIOUS DELUSION.

least of all for the kinds of violence these acts have made manifest.

JOE - DEAD WRONG. THOSE VIOLENT ACTS WERE THE DIRECT RESULT OF AN INSANE RELIGIOUS REACTION. THESE "PARTICULAR"ACTS WOULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED IN AN ATHEIST WORLD. OF COURSE MURDERS WOULD STILL OCCUR - THERE WOULD JUST BE ONE LESS EXCUSE TO COMMIT THEM.

I know that it’s tempting to think that unbelief is the silver bullet cure for all the atrocities of religion [Imagine],

JOE, IT ISN'T A SILVER BULLET CURE FOR ALL ATROCITIES, BUT HOW DO YOU FIGURE IT ISN'T A SILVER BULLET CURE FOR RELIGIOUS ATROCITIES?

IN AN ATHEISTIC WORLD THERE COULD BE NO RELIGIOUS ATROCITIES.

and that a world free of it would be world in which neither Terry Jones nor Afghan extremists would hold sway.

JOE, NEITHER JONES NOR THE EXTREMISTS COULD HOLD SWAY IN A WORLD DEVOID OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF. HOW DO YOU FIGURE THEY COULD?

Arguably that would be a more peaceful, reasonable, less violent world.

That is not the world we live in, so the question of what to do does not only involve the meager 1.6% of the population of America willing to identify as atheists, who have their answer and are sure it’s the right one, but the 1.66 billion Muslims in the world who want to differ.

JOE, ARE WE APPEALING TO POPULARITY? AND ARE WE CREATING A STRAW MAN BY CLAIMING THAT ATHEISTS ARE SURE THEIR ANSWER IS THE RIGHT ONE? YES, IT LOOKS LIKE WE ARE.

YOU HAVE ATTRIBUTED TO ATHEISTS THE MOTIVATION THAT DRIVES THE RELIGIOUS MIND: IT IS BELIEVERS WHO ALREADY HAVE THEIR ANSWERS (FROM THEIR HOLY BOOK) AND THEY HAVE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY IN ITS INFALLIBILITY.

WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS CALLED "PROJECTION" JOE. IT IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE MECHANISM.

JOE, SEEK HELP FROM A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL.

ONCE AGAIN YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED AN APPALLING LACK OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS. I WOULD SUGGEST BRUSHING UP ON THE LOGICAL FALLACIES, BUT THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO YOU SINCE YOU RARELY CONSTRUCT AN ARGUMENT WITHOUT COMMITTING THEM.

The choice, frankly isn’t about No God or Your God; it’s about moving beyond the short-sighted religion-bashing of some atheists to a realistic position where criticism of religion can be effective.

JOE, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EFFECTIVE CRITICISM OF RELIGION AND RELIGION-BASHING? ACCORDING TO BELIEVERS ... THERE IS NONE.

YOU CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE A COMPLETE LACK OF ABILITY TO MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT TRAIN OF THOUGHT. YOU BEGAN THIS ESSAY BY DISCUSSING THE KORAN BURNING / AFGHAN KILLINGS STORY, AND NOW YOU HAVE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO TURN IT INTO AN ATHEIST BASHING ESSAY. ATHEISTS HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS STORY.

NOW I SEE WHAT YOU ARE UP TO, YOU CLEVER LITTLE JOSEPH YOU. YOU CAN'T DEFEND EITHER RELIGION BECAUSE BOTH HAVE ACTED TERRIBLY, SO YOU DISTRACT EVERYONE FROM THAT FACT BY TWISTING THE STORY INSIDE OUT AND ATTACKING ATHEISTS.

WHAT A PATHETIC LITTLE MAN YOU ARE.

AND ... NO, THAT WAS NOT AN AD HOMINEM ATTACK BECAUSE IT WAS NOT USED IN LIEU OF AN ARGUMENT. IT WAS SIMPLY AN OBSERVATION. GRANTED, IT WAS A RATHER RUDE OBSERVATION, BUT, AN EXTREMELY ACCURATE ONE METHINKS.

That is the only business plan worth discussing. Ultimately, the way forward is going to be a matter of tone and technique, not the outcome of the work of a few commando God-bashers writing from the safe haven of first world democracies telling the majority how foolish they are.

JOE, PUT DOWN THE JOINT AND THE BREW AND TRY TO CONCENTRATE ON THIS ESSAY. YOU HAVE GOTTEN COMPLETELY OFF TOPIC. ATHEISTS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS STORY.

OH, AND JOE, ENJOY USING THAT "MAJORITY" AS AN ARGUMENT WHILE YOU CAN BECAUSE CURRENT TRENDS THROUGHOUT THE FIRST WORLD DEMOCRACIES DON'T LOOK TOO GOOD FOR PEOPLE IN YOUR CAREER PATH.

What do Professor P.Z. Myers and the Revd Terry Jones have in common?

WELL JOE, IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY YOU MIGHT NOTICE THAT BOTH MEN SPORT VERY IMPRESSIVE MUSTACHES.

Not very much, except both have desecrated the Koran. Is it important that they did what they did for different reasons, and with different results? Do such distinctions matter when we’re talking about a book that neither man finds particularly–attractive? Yes.

Terry Jones

As readers of this blog will know, I think the use of blasphemy to draw crowds and win followers is probably on a moral par with Jesus’exorcisms in the New Testament: you find something or someone that will grab people’s attention–a man possessed by 6000 demons will do– then you let fly, do the hocus pocus, and hope the nasties will go into the pigs (like the trick requires) and not into the audience. When the pigs go shrieking in agony over the cliff and the “demoniac” is still in one piece, the crowd applauds wildly and proclaims you the messiah. That is sort of what happened for both Myers and Jones. But with different results.

JOE ... NEVERMIND. JUST KEEP GOING. THIS ESSAY COULDN'T POSSIBLY GET ANY MORE BIZARRE ... COULD IT?

Myers, simply an atheist showman, wrote a pretty nifty article about blasphemy on his site in 2008. In it he documented the insidious reverence in which Catholics held to the doctrine of the “real presence of Jesus” in the eucharist in the Middle Ages and the violence shown to disbelievers, especially Jews, who were always getting on the wrong side of Catholics and always being accused of desecrating the communion host, or “cracker” as Myers snarkily likes to call the matzah used at Mass.

JOE, DO I DETECT SOME BITTERNESS BECAUSE MYERS DISRESPECTED YOUR CRACKERS?

“That is the true power of the cracker, this silly symbol of superstition. Fortunately, Catholicism has mellowed with age — the last time a Catholic nation rose up to slaughter its non-Christian citizenry was a whole 70 years ago, after all — but the sentiment still lingers.”

JOE, I KNOW THAT ONE HAD TO HURT. NO WONDER YOU ARE SO PISSED AT MYERS.

Had he performed his oblation a couple of years later after the results of the 2010 Pew Forum Poll on Religious Knowledge in America, he could also have added that 45% of Catholics do not know their Church’s teaching on the Eucharist, though they like the Spaghetti suppers on Friday night.

JOE, WASN'T THAT A STUNNING POLL? ATHEISTS (WHO SHOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE BIBLE) KNEW MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE; THEN CAME JEWS AND MORMONS; NEAR THE BOTTOM WERE THE CATHOLICS; AND AT THE VERY BOTTOM WERE THE MENSA MEMBERS OF THE FAR RIGHT EVANGELICAL MOVEMENT ... THE PROTESTANTS.

Never was there a “mellower” target then than Catholics, who in the main seemed not to care very much when Myers drove a rusty spike through the cracker, some garbage (a banana peel and coffee grounds) and–importantly–pages of the Koran.

JOE, AS SOMEONE WHO HAS DEVOTED HIS ENTIRE CAREER TO ANCIENT FAIRY TALES, MYERS' DESECRATION MUST HAVE MADE YOU WANT TO GO ALL AFGHANISTAN ON HIM, DIDN'T IT?

Of course, as soon as he did this, the eyes of the superstitious religious blind were opened, and the lame man leapt as an hart.

NO JOE, YOU'RE CONFUSING MYERS WITH JESUS.

Crackers and Korans and peels, O My.

JOE, A TAKE-OFF ON THE WIZARD OF OZ. HOW SPECIAL. WE ARE JUST FULL OF FANTASY TODAY AREN'T WE?

Myers’ antics made him the dark darling of full frontal atheists,

JOE, WE ARE ALL INCREDIBLY IMPRESSED WITH YOUR VERBAL DEXTERITY. BUT COULD YOU JUST TONE IT DOWN A BIT AND MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO ACTUALLY EXPRESS A COHERENT THOUGHT INSTEAD OF PUTTING ALL YOUR ENERGY INTO TRYING TO IMPRESS US WITH HOW CLEVER YOU CAN BE?

those who hold to the curious view that the angrier you make people who believe in sacred books and objects, the likelier you are to win over people who hold a weak or no opinion on the subject.

JOE, HOW WOULD ANGERING BELIEVERS WIN OVER AGNOSTICALLY INCLINED PEOPLE. YOUR REASONING ELUDES ME YET AGAIN.

Desecration, confrontation, Yo-mama style insult and blasphemy are tangible blows for reason, the commandos believe.

JOE, THEY ARE NOT MEANT TO BE "BLOWS FOR REASON" - THEY ARE MEANT TO BE EXERCISES OF FREE SPEECH.

YOU REFER TO FREE SPEECH AS BLASPHEMY. WHAT A COINCIDENCE ... SO DO IMAMS AND PRIESTS.

But, predictably, no one died as a consequence of Mr Myers’ brainstormium.

JOE, I WAS WONDERING HOW LONG YOU COULD GO BEFORE MAKING UP YOUR OWN LITTLE NEW WORD. COUNTING YOUR LAST ESSAY, THAT MAKES 4 NOW. PRETTY SOON YOU'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO PUBLISH YOUR OWN DICTIONARY.

And an unclimaxed Myers was reduced to pasting letters from a few lost souls who wrote almost pathetically of their upset: ”As a Christian it is an insult for anyone to call my beliefs stupid shit. I have respected every religion and every idea for years.”

JOE, THAT MAN IS A LIAR. AS A CHRISTIAN HE DOES NOT RESPECT OTHER RELIGIONS. CHRISTIANITY CLAIMS TO BE MONOTHEISTIC. THEY DO NOT ACCEPT THAT OTHER GODS EXIST. THEREFORE THAT MAN BELIEVES THAT OTHER BELIEVER'S BELIEFS ARE STUPID SHIT. HE SIMPLY ISN'T HONEST ENOUGH TO ADMIT IT.

To which Myers felt obliged to respond in derisive detail, defending himself against a volley of feathers by saying: “They [the pages of the Koran and the Bible] are just paper. Nothing must be held sacred. Question everything. God is not great, Jesus is not your lord, you are not disciples of any charismatic prophet.”

JOE, THAT ALL LOOKS PRETTY GOOD TO ME. SO WHERE ARE YOU SAYING THAT MYERS WENT WRONG?

He observed that in addition to pages of the Koran he also used a few pages of Richard Dawkins’s The God Delusion, which as far as I know is not yet considered sacred scripture by any group, and whose spiking would not likely ignite a revolt–especially since it was well known that the sympathies of the spiker were pro-Dawkins anyway. The point was half-clever, but the whole incident was tasteless, and (as I’ve said before) cowardly: to be effective, try it again, only this time in downtown Lahore after you send the memo.

JOE, WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW OF COURAGE. TO BE AN ATHEIST IN A CHRISTIAN NATION WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY CONSIDER YOU "EVIL" EVEN IF YOU HAVE NEVER BROKEN ANY LAWS - THAT TAKES COURAGE.

TO DO WHAT YOU DO: DEFEND THE VAST MAJORITY AND ATTACK A TINY GROUP OF POWERLESS PEOPLE FROM THE SAFE HAVEN OF YOUR FIRST WORLD DEMOCRACY ... THAT TAKES NONE.

Which brings us roundabout to Pakistan and the Reverend Jones.

CONGRATS JOE, YOU FINALLY GOT YOUR HEAD CLEARED AT LAST; FINALLY GOT ALL THAT ATHEIST HATRED OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM AND NOW YOU'RE READY TO GET BACK TO THE TOPIC? GREAT.

Jones is the intellectual Omega and pastor of the sixty member Dove World Outreach Center in Lake City, Florida, who threatened to burn the Qur’an in August 2010. His reason for doing so was to bring the book to justice for the violence and murder it had perpetrated. Unlike Myers, who began with the view that no book is sacred, Jones is of the opinion that Islam’s holy book and Islam itself is “of the devil.”

JOE, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GROWN-UPS BELIEVE IN INVISIBLE GHOSTS.

AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE THROUGH WITH MYERS AND WERE GOING TO TALK ABOUT PAKISTAN AND JONES?

A jittery National Association of Evangelicals disowned him, local Florida fundagelical groups (some of them militia) distanced themselves from him, and condemned his statements.

WELL, DUH. THEY AREN'T GOING TO PUT THEIR LIVES AND FAMILIES AT RISK. THEY DIDN'T DISOWN HIM OUT OF ANY LOVE FOR MUSLIMS BUT BECAUSE THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF BEING THE NEXT THEO VAN GOGH.

In the War Zone, General David Petraeus explained that soldiers ”will be killed if this event happens.” Jones demured, hedged, tried to stretch out his fifteen minutes to thirty six hours of fame (longer than a news cycle), then “postponed ” the trial and burning of the book while he “negotiated with the planners of the Ground Zero Mosque.”

The media being a fickle lover, lost interest in the story and almost missed more recent developments when Jones announced that the trial and sentencing would take place on March 20, 2011. The trial was held, the sentence rendered by a Jury of 12 church elders, and a Dallas imam, according to reports, acted as a defense attorney. The book was soaked in kerosene for two hours,and was then ignited by Jones’s assistant pastor Wayne Sapp. Further events are planned for Good Friday (April 22, 2011) in Michigan.

Reaction has been slow, because media attention has been erratic, but in Afghanistan, thousands of outraged protesters stormed a U.N. compound killing at least 20 people, including eight foreigners–this at a critical moment in the Afghan war when America is trying to “win hearts and minds.”

JOE, WHY IS THIS MOMENT ANY MORE CRITICAL THAN DURING THE PAST 8 YEARS?

The demonstration in Mazar-i-Sharif turned violent when some protesters grabbed weapons from the U.N. guards and opened fire, then mobbed buildings and set fires on the compound. Demonstrators were also massed in Kabul and the western city of Herat.

So far, three attempts to burn churches have been thwarted by Pakistani security forces, but it is just a matter of time before death and destruction, related to the imbecility of a small-time Christian publicity whore, rears its snake-maned head.

JOE, I NOTICE THAT YOU PUT ALL THE BLAME ON THE MORON. YOUR COMMENT ABOVE DESCRIBES "MURDERERS" AS "PROTESTERS" AND AVOIDS MENTIONING KILLING BUT INSTEAD USES A EUPHEMISM "OPENED FIRE." THEN YOU SAY THEY SET FIRES BUT DON'T MENTION THE BEHEADINGS. NOR DO YOU MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT THE VICTIMS NOT BEING IN ANY WAY ASSOCIATED WITH THE KORAN BURNING.

BUT NONE OF THAT IS SURPRISING; IT JUST PROVES THAT YOU ARE ABOUT AS BALANCED AS FOX NEWS.

Predictable but terrifying right-wing approval for Jones’s action is also beginning its viral crawl across the internet.

JOE, I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS MORE VILE: THOSE RIGHT-WING IDIOTS OR RADICAL MUSLIM APOLOGISTS LIKE YOURSELF.

BOTH OF YOU MAKE ME WANT TO PUKE.

As to Myers,

JOE, COME ON. CAN'T YOU FORGET ABOUT MYERS FOR MORE THAN A FEW SENTENCES? WE "GET" THAT YOU HAVE A 2" BONER FOR ATHEISTS. HOW ABOUT STICKIN' TO THE STORY?

despite the development of a blasphemy fan club and admiration for the cowardly use of free expression rights in the safe haven of Morris, Minnesota,

JOE, THE FREE EXPRESSION OF AN UNPOPULAR POSITION (ATHEISM) IS ANYTHING BUT COWARDLY.

YOUR CONTINUAL PERSONAL ATTACKS ON MYERS ONLY SHOW THAT HE HAS GOTTEN UNDER YOUR SKIN SO BAD THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN WRITE AN ESSAY ON AN UNRELATED TOPIC WITHOUT OBSESSIVELY VILIFYING HIM. JUDGING BY THE AMOUNT OF STRESS THAT MYERS APPARENTLY CAUSES YOU, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU INSTALL A SET OF WALL-MOUNTED HEART PADDLES OUTSIDE YOUR OFFICE. IF THEY FAIL TO REVIVE YOU, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR HEIRS WILL HAVE A GOOD CASE AGAINST MYERS FOR WRONGFUL DEATH.

BUT WHY DO YOU CALL MORRIS, MINNESOTA A "SAFE HAVEN?" HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF AUTOMOBILES? TRAINS? BUSSES? AIRPLANES?

ARE YOU REALLY SO NAIVE THAT YOU THINK ANYONE IS SAFE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD FROM VIOLENT RELIGIOUS IDIOTS?

YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE AS NAIVE AND IGNORANT AS YOU ARE PRETENDING TO BE.

the only serious “threat” came from Catholic League president Bill Donahue.

The League (like B’nai B’rith) was founded as an anti-defamation society at a time when discrimination against Catholic immigrants was on a par with discrimination against Jews.

WELL THERE YOU GO JOE. YOU WERE ASKING EARLIER ABOUT WHAT AN ATHEISTIC SOCIETY WOULD BE LIKE. FOR STARTERS, NEITHER OF THOSE 2 ORGANIZATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN NECESSARY.

BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY THAT FRIGHTENS YOU - BECAUSE THEN YOU WOULD HAVE TO GO OUT AND FIND A REAL JOB.

Donahue filed a complaint with the University of Minnesota Board of Regents, offering that Myers’ actions violated the University’s anti-discrimination policy: ‘Expressions of disrespectful bias, hate, harassment or hostility against an individual, group or their property because of the individual or group’s actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion…can be forms of discrimination. Expressions vary, and can be in the form of language, words, signs, symbols, threats, or actions that could potentially cause alarm, anger, fear, or resentment against others.”

JOE, THAT IS WHY CHRISTIANS SUPPORT MUSLIM CLAIMS FOR HATE SPEECH LAWS. THERE IS NO BIGGER ENEMY OF ANY RELIGION THAN FREEDOM OF SPEECH. THAT IS WHY ALL RELIGIONS DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO PREVENT IT. THAT WAS WHY CHRISTIANS HAD, AND MUSLIMS STILL HAVE, BLASPHEMY LAWS.

TO KEY TO CURING THE CANCER OF RELIGION THAT INFECTS HUMANITY IS FREEDOM OF SPEECH. BY FORCING RELIGION TO EXPLAIN AND DEFEND ITSELF, THE TRUE PURPOSE OF ALL RELIGIONS WILL BE EXPOSED: DOMINATION AND CONTROL.

It was a far-fetched complaint both in terms of accusation and in terms of consequences;

JOE, IT ALSO VIOLATED THE FIRST AMENDMENT - THE GREATEST ENEMY CHRISTIANITY HAS EVER KNOWN.

Myers’ action only succeeded in cementing his hard-crafted persona as a jerk.

JOE, CHILDISH NAME-CALLING ONLY SHOWS THAT YOUR ARGUMENTS ARE BANKRUPT. BY THE WAY, DID YOU GET THOSE HEART PADDLES UP YET?

And even as a one-off expression of jerkiness, the actions of 2008 did not rise to the standard of blasphemy, which is usually understood as an interreligious act designed to malign or humiliate a religious opposite. Secular “blasphemy” against religion is more problematical, and Myers’ showpiece proved it.

JOE, YOU DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING VERY BASIC HERE: YOU KEEP USING THE WORD BLASPHEMY AS IF IT WERE A CRIME TO SPEAK AGAINST RELIGION. IT IS NOT. YOU LOST THAT BATTLE YEARS AGO JUST AS YOU HAVE LOST NEARLY EVERY COURT BATTLE SINCE.

That is because there was no real conviction behind the act. ”Religion is sooooooo stupid” is not an impressive bumper sticker.

OKAY JOE, NOW I GET IT. MYERS IS SLAMMING YOUR CAREER CHOICE AND FOR THAT I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR INTENSE ANGER. UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE TO AGREE WITH HIM. SO IF IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, GO AHEAD AND SEND ME A DEATH THREAT. I'LL ADD IT TO MY COLLECTION.

The defense of free speech is only relevant and brave when free speech is actually abridged, not when threats to its exercise are manufactured.

JOE, THE THREATS AGAINST FREEDOM OF SPEECH ARE NOT MANUFACTURED, THEY ARE QUITE REAL - AND MOST, IF NOT ALL OF THEM COME FROM RELIGION.

Jones is a different story. A more dangerous one. He is the ugly Id unchained from the soul of an America I’d hoped had died.

WELL JOE, IT HASN'T. THE UGLY FACE OF RELIGION IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE AND KICKING; AND IT KEEPS YOU WELL FED AND FINELY DRESSED. BUT IF CURRENT TRENDS ARE ANY INDICATION, YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO PASS YOUR SKILLS ON TO YOUR CHILDREN (DID I SAY SKILLS?).

It is moronic, armed, and dangerous. It does not question the ontological correctness of its religious and political views. It burns a book in Lake City, Florida, and Muslims (and others) die in Afghanistan and soon Pakistan and elsewhere.

JOE, NOW YOU HAVE COMMITTED THE LOGICAL FALLACY OF ARGUMENT FROM CONSEQUENCES. HERE'S THE LINK - LOOK IT UP:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument\_from\_consequences

AN ARGUMENT BASED ON A LOGICAL FALLACY IS INVALID. GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD JOE, AND CONSTRUCT A LOGICALLY VALID ARGUMENT AND THEN COME BACK AND WE'LL SEE WHERE ELSE YOU WENT WRONG.

Jones does this knowing they will die,

JOE, NO ONE KNOWS THAT. OH YEAH, I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT YOUR MIND READING POWERS.

praying to his defective God

JOE, FINALLY - SOMETHING WE AGREE ON. WELL, ALMOST. TO BE DEFECTIVE, HE WOULD FIRST HAVE TO EXIST, AND WE HAVE YET TO SEE ANY EVIDENCE OF THAT.

that they will die, in order to prove his belief that the devil is with us. He is with us, and he needs to be charged with and convicted of murder. His name is Terry Jones.

JOE, YOU HAVE JUST SHOWN EVERYONE WHY SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IS SO IMPORTANT. YOU WOULD CONVICT A MAN OF MURDER FOR BURNING A BOOK, BASED ON YOUR INABILITY TO COMPREHEND YOUR OWN LOGICAL FALLACIES. THAT IS WHY CLERGY (THAT IS YOU) SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF POSITIONS OF POWER, AND INSTEAD BE GIVEN BUSYWORK (LIKE SPENDING YOUR LIFE STUDYING ANCIENT FAIRY TALES) UNTIL YOU DIE.

JOE, YOU COVERED A LOT OF TOPICS IN THIS ESSAY, BUT THE ONE THING THAT DID NOT DRAW YOUR ATTENTION OR YOUR BUBBLING HATRED ...

WERE THE KILLERS.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

COMING SOON: GAS STATION FOR SATELLITES

IT WILL DELIVER FUEL AND PERFORM REPAIRS TO KEEP THEM IN ORBIT LONGER

WHAT'S BEING DESCRIBED BY SPACE.COM AS THE WORLD'S FIRST "FLYING SATELLITE GAS STATION" IS EXPECTED TO LAUNCH IN 2015. THE SPACE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICING VEHICLE, AS CANADA'S MDA CORPORATION CALLS IT, WILL ZIP AROUND AND REFUEL SATELLITES TO EXTEND THEIR LIVES, PERFORM REPAIRS, AND USE ROBOTIC ARMS TO NUDGE INACTIVE CRAFT INTO THE "GRAVEYARD ORBIT," WHERE THEY WON'T POSE A RISK TO WORKING SATELLITES. THAT SHOULD HELP CUT DOWN ON SPACE JUNK.

BUT IT'S THE POTENTIAL FOR REFUELING THAT'S THE BIGGEST FACTOR FOR INTELSAT, A BELGIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE FIRM THAT SIGNED A $280 MILLION DEAL TO BE MDA'S FIRST CLIENT. IT'S CLEARLY MUCH CHEAPER TO KEEP CURRENT SATELLITES IN ORBIT BY GIVING THEM MORE FUEL THAN TO BUILD AND LAUNCH NEW ONES.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

ANATOLE FRANCE (1844 –1924) 80 YEARS.

HE WAS A FRENCH POET, JOURNALIST, AND NOVELIST WITH SEVERAL BEST-SELLERS. IRONIC AND SKEPTICAL, HE WAS CONSIDERED IN HIS DAY THE IDEAL FRENCH MAN OF LETTERS. HE WON THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE.

“MEN ARE GIVEN TO WORSHIPPING MALEVOLENT GODS,

AND THAT WHICH IS NOT CRUEL SEEMS TO THEM NOT WORTH THEIR ADORATION.”

"AN EDUCATION ISN'T HOW MUCH YOU HAVE COMMITTED TO MEMORY,

OR EVEN HOW MUCH YOU KNOW.

IT'S BEING ABLE TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN WHAT YOU DO KNOW

AND WHAT YOU DON'T."