**THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM**

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**Fareed Zakaria educates Bill Maher -**

**Intelligence over willful ignorance**

**(by Egberto Willies of the Daily KOS)**

***It is hard to remember Bill Maher being so outclassed in a discussion as he was on today's Real Time panel.***

**Egberto, no it's not. All you have to do is remember back to the show where Maher embarrassed himself with his anti-vaccine nonsense.**

***Fareed Zakaria made so many consecutive intelligent points***

**Egberto, all that means is that you agreed with what Zakaria said.**

***that unlike other guests on the same subject, Bill Maher was unable to interrupt.***

**Egberto, a host with a microphone is not "unable to interrupt." A host with a microphone *chooses* to not interrupt. To criticize someone for not interrupting, demonstrates how biased you are.**

***One must give kudos to Bill Maher however for bringing Fareed Zakaria to the panel after Zakaria intellectually ridiculed the oversimplification and naive interpretation of the state of Islam today by both Maher and Sam Harris in his Washington Post piece “Let’s be honest, Islam has a problem right now.”***

**Egberto, that title has to be the understatement of the century.**

***Bill Maher said "Which get's us back to the idea of Islam is the mother lode of bad ideas. Fareed?"***

***Fareed Zakaria was ready. "As you know Bill, I have written a lot about the problem in Islam. In fact I wrote about them well before you were talking about it because I was focused on that stuff."***

***In other words Bill, you are the new kid on the block.***

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

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeal\_to\_authority**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeal_to_authority)

**When you can't defeat your opponent's facts, always refer to the Appeal to Authority, right Egberto?**

***Zakaria continued. "My problem with the way you approach it is, I don't think you are going to reform a religion by telling 1.6 billion people -- most of whom are just devout people, who get some inspiration from that religion and go about their daily lives -- I don't think you are going to change the religion by saying 'Your religion is the mother lode of bad ideas. It's a terrible thing. Shape it up and change it'."***

**Egberto, what makes Zakaria think Maher wants to reform Islam?**

**Perhaps Maher wants to criticize their religion, and point out some serious problems in their religion, in the dim hope that the followers themselves can reform their religion.**

**And just to be clear Egberto, Islam is the offspring of Christianity, so if Maher is wrong, it is because Christianity is the mother lode of bad ideas, and Islam simply incorporated most of those bad ideas into their new religion when they split from Christianity in the early 7th century.**

***Bill Maher's audience busted out in applause for Fareed Zakaria's statement as he continued.***

**Egberto, you're not really going for the Appeal to Popularity, are you?**

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeal\_to\_popularity**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeal_to_popularity)

**Yes, I believe you just did. Dude, it's pretty obvious that you have never taken a logic class in your entire life. If I am mistaken, and you have, then simply take this essay of yours back to the institution where you matriculated, and show it to them: you should be able to get a full refund for any tuition that you paid.**

***"I think frankly you are going to make a lot of news for yourself and you are going to get a lot of applause lines and joke lines out of it. But if you really want to change those people. If you want to change that religion then what you have to do is push for reform but also with some form of respect for the spiritual values that people take."***

**Egberto, ask Zakaria why. Why does he think they will be more likely to reform their religion if their atrocities are treated with respect?**

***Fareed Zakaria then attempts to teach a form of sophisticated empathy that Bill Maher and many Atheist, Christians, and others lack. "I am not a religious guy.***

**Egberto, if Zakaria had said that in any one of a dozen Muslim countries, do you know what the legal punishment would be?**

**I do.**

***But all I am telling you is that I know that word [SIC] and if you tell everybody 'you suck, your religion sucks, clean it up' then its going to get their backs up against the wall."***

**Egberto, Zakaria just demonstrated the Straw Man logical fallacy:**

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straw\_man**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straw_man)

**Maher has repeated a thousand times that he is NOT telling all Muslims they suck. Yet dishonest little pricks keep ignoring his words and claim he stated exactly the opposite.**

**It's hard to figure which "you people" value less: logic or honesty.**

***Bill Maher comes back with the generalization of Islam's intolerance of women and gays.***

**See Egberto, that's what I mean by dishonesty. Islam's intolerance of women and gays is not a generalization ... it is a provable fact found in their own holy books and in their laws.**

**But when you can't defend your position, what else can you resort to, other than logical fallacies and dishonest misrepresentations?**

***Again Zakaria reminds him that does not apply to the 1.6 billion Muslims.***

**Egberto, Zakaria did not have to remind him - Maher already stated that himself.**

***He schools Bill Maher on Indonesia, the largest Muslim country which is also very tolerant of minorities and have been as peaceful as any other country.***

**Egberto, before buying into Zakaria's lies, maybe you should actually trouble yourself to research a few easily found facts:**

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East\_timor#History**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_timor%23History)

**Egberto, the Christians in that country might have a few stories to tell your buddy Zakaria about the tolerance of Indonesia.**

***Bill Maher in closing the topic attempted to save face. "Let's not pretend that the things that ISIS believes are not things that many millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of Muslims believe around the world."***

***Fareed Zakaria had to continue Bills's education. "To say that hundreds of millions of people believe what ISIS says, you would have a lot more problems than the number of terrorists events you have now."***

**Egberto, ask Zakaria how he knows that. How does he know there would be a lot more problems? Does he have any data to back up that claim?**

***After a silly interjection by Bill Maher about hundreds of millions of Muslims believing that death should come to you if you speak ill of the prophet,***

**Egberto, you should have researched the subject first, then you might have learned from the Pew poll that was being discussed, that Maher was correct.**

**But that wouldn't have done any good, would it Egberto? Facts do not affect those, who arrive at their conclusions without the need of facts in the first place.**

***Zakaria schooled him again. "I grew up in this world. What people feel. They feel like their religion is being insulted.***

**Egberto, their religion (as well as Christianity) should be insulted. As a black man, you of ALL people, should recoil from any philosophy that promotes human slavery. But you don't. That shows how totally screwed up your thinking is, Egberto.**

***And so if you ask them in a poll. The point is do they go around burning people? Do they go around stoning people in Indonesia, in India? These are places where hundreds of millions of Muslims live."***

**Egberto, that was Zakaria's attempt to dismiss poll results which didn't go very well for his position. Those are poll results you seem unaware of yourself. Educate yourself Egberto; then you can sit at the table.**

**As for people being stoned, we know this is still happening in Islam. People are murdered for religious reasons in Indonesia and India whether by burning, stoning, or other methods.**

***Bill Maher could not have won this one.***

**Egberto, that is correct. Those with completely closed minds (such as youself) cannot be forced to think, so there is no way for Maher to win. People like you think totally backwards: you start with the conclusion and then accept only that evidence which supports your beliefs, while you ignore or dismiss any evidence which contradicts what you desperately want to believe.**

**Egberto, your logic board couldn't be more screwed up if you got it on sale at Radio Shack.**

***Fareed Zakaria lived in the Muslim world, understands the Muslim world, and analyzes the Muslim world.***

**Egberto, as you just stated, there are more than a billion Muslims. Are you claiming they all understand Islam and reach the same conclusions? Is that why the Sunnis and Shia are killing each other all over the world?**

**Zakaria's experiences don't automatically grant his opinions superior status. He needs to support his beliefs with facts just like everyone else.**

***Bill Maher is just another face jumping into a debate superficially and without empathy.***

**Egberto, I would say that you just described yourself, far better than you did Maher.**

***Maher should read the following passages from Zakaria's article that slammed Maher and Sam Harris' ignorance. Harris prides himself on being highly analytical — with a PhD, no less. I learned in graduate school that you can never explain a variable phenomenon with a fixed cause. So, if you are asserting that Islam is inherently violent and intolerant — “the mother lode of bad ideas” — then, since Islam has been around for 14 centuries, we should have seen 14 centuries of this behavior.***

**Egberto, didn't spend a whole lot of time in history class, didja?**

***Harris should read Zachary Karabell’s book “Peace Be Upon You: Fourteen Centuries of Muslim, Christian and Jewish Conflict and Cooperation.” What he would discover is that there have been wars but also many centuries of peace.***

**Egberto, the peaceful periods aren't the problem - it's the periods in between that are the problem. Based upon the fact that those religions claim to be about love and "Thou shalt not kill" there should have been no periods of killing and war - yet there were many.**

***Islam has at times been at the cutting edge of modernity, but like today, it has also been the great laggard. As Karabell explained to me, “If you exclude the last 70 years or so, in general the Islamic world was more tolerant of minorities than the Christian world.***

**Egberto, that follows from what I said earlier. However, being the lesser of two evils ... is nothing to brag about.**

***That’s why there were more than a million Jews living in the Arab world until the early 1950s — nearly 200,000 in Iraq alone.”***

**Egberto, there were millions of Africans living in the Deep South.**

**See the point, Egberto?**

**No. I didn't think you would. Your mind is shut tighter than a clam being attacked by a giant squid.**

***If there were periods when the Islamic world was open, modern, tolerant and peaceful, this suggests that the problem is not in the religion’s essence and that things can change once more.***

**Egberto, that's a big "if" and based mainly on your own ignorance of history.**

***So why is Maher making these comments?***

**Egberto, because those who dare to make those comments in Muslim countries suffer horrible fates. Maher risks his own safety in an effort to help those who cannot help themselves. But his efforts are diluted by devout Muslims and their idiotic enablers (yes, I'm looking at you, Egberto).**

***I understand that as a public intellectual he feels the need to speak what he sees as the unvarnished truth (though his “truth” is simplified and exaggerated).***

**Egberto, you've proven that you wouldn't know truth if it bit you in the ass. "You people" intentionally misrepresent his position because you have no arguements against his accusations. If you did, you wouldn't have to resort to dishonesty.**

***But surely there is another task for public intellectuals as well — to try to change the world for good.***

**Egberto, lying about Maher's position is not making it any easier for him to do that.**

***It is obvious that Bill Maher will not allow himself to be convinced of the truth. He is simply wrong.***

**Egberto, that is the exact statement that I would use to describe you. You are now demonstrating the psychological defense mechanism known as "projection."**

***What is great is Fareed Zakaria got his point across to Bill's large audienc, those that received tacit approval from Bill Maher to be willful bigots.***

**Egberto, calling people bigots because they disagree with you seems to be a favorite tactic of Daily KOS writers. But bigotry is well defined by Mr. Webster, and disagreeing with dishonest idealogues like yourself ... is not one of the definitions.**

[**http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/04/11/1377032/-Fareed-Zakaria-educates-Bill-Maher-Intelligence-over-willful-ignorance?detail=email**](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/04/11/1377032/-Fareed-Zakaria-educates-Bill-Maher-Intelligence-over-willful-ignorance?detail=email)

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Smoking thins a vital part of the brain**

**New evidence shows that long-term smoking could cause thinning of the brain's cortex. The cortex is the outer layer of the brain in which critical cognitive functions such as memory, language, and perception take place. Interestingly, the findings also suggest that stopping smoking helps to restore at least part of the cortex's thickness.**

**The test group included current smokers, ex-smokers, and non-smokers. All of the subjects were examined as children in 1947 as part of the Scottish Mental Survey. Researchers used health data gathered during recent personal interviews with the subjects, and also analyzed data from MRI scans showing the current state of the subjects' brain cortices.**

**Researchers found that current and ex-smokers had, at age 73, many areas of thinner brain cortex than those who never smoked. Subjects who stopped smoking seem to partially recover their cortical thickness for each year without smoking. The apparent recovery process is slow, however, and incomplete. Heavy ex-smokers in the study who had given up smoking for more than 25 years still had a thinner cortex.**

**Although the cortex grows thinner with normal aging, the study found that smoking appears to accelerate the thinning process. A thinner brain cortex is associated with adult cognitive decline.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Abul ʿAla Al-Maʿarri**

**(973–1058) 85 years**

**He was a blind Arab philosopher, poet, and writer. He was a controversial rationalist in his time, attacking the dogmas of religion and rejecting the claim that Islam or any other religion possessed the truths they claimed, and considered the speech of prophets as lies. He was equally sarcastic towards the religions of Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Al-Maʿarri was a strict Vegetarian who argued for animal rights. At his deathbed, he was ordered by the physician to take some chicken soup. When served, the blind Al-Ma'arri burst into tears, reciting a heart-wrenching requiem to the slaughtered bird, adding that he felt easier dying than eating the broken body of the luckless creature.**

**In 2013, almost a thousand years after his death, the al-Nusra Front, a branch of al-Qaeda, beheaded the statue of Al-Maʿarri during the conflict in Syria. The motive behind the beheading is disputed, theories range from the fact that he was a heretic, to the fact that he is believed by some to be related to the Assad family. Al-Maʿarri is often cited by new atheists across the Islamic world.**

**"The world holds two classes of men –**

**intelligent men without religion,**

**and religious men without intelligence."**