

SHOULD THE MEDIA SHOW THE CARTOONS?

When the Danish cartoons were published a decade ago, the media refused to show them. With the exception of the *Boston Phoenix*, which cited safety concerns, the others either gave no reason or feigned interest in not offending people of faith. But if they really believed in freedom of speech, the cartoons would have been shown.

Why? Because none was offensive: the cartoons never descended to the gutter as some of the more recent *Charlie Hebdo* ones have. Yes, some Muslims object to any portrayal of Muhammad, but many others do not. Moreover, the Koran does not proscribe such imagery. Ergo, these inoffensive cartoons should have been shown.

What about the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons? Some are irreverent without being obscene, so there is no reason not to show them. But in the name of decency, the toilet-speech cartoons should not be shown. To do so would be to intentionally insult not only Muslims, but all those who prefer not to have their sensibilities assaulted with pornographic images.

Reasonable people can disagree as to where we should draw the line; unreasonable people say no line should be drawn. That there are as many unreasonable conservatives as there are unreasonable liberals cannot be denied. Some liberals are so enthralled with the “sacredness” of speech that they have completely lost their moral bearings. Some conservatives hate Muslims so much that no portrayal of Muhammad can be filthy enough to satisfy them.

Bill Donohue admires Jeff Zucker at CNN for having the honesty to say that he wouldn't show the cartoons because he didn't want to endanger his employees. Donohue does not admire Dean

Baquet at the *New York Times* for saying his reason for opting out was because the cartoons constitute “gratuitous insult.” After all, it was his newspaper that printed the offensive dung-on-the-Virgin Mary image (complete with vaginas and anuses) on February 8, 2006, the day after an editorial explained that it wouldn’t publish the Danish cartoons!