

# THE HOLY PEN

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“THE WORK OF THE  
SWORD WE HAVE  
PERFORMED WITH  
OUR PEN.”  
HADHRAT MIRZA  
GHULAM AHMAD OF  
QADIAN

## FIRST READ: BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC PAKISTAN

QAMAR AHMAD - ATLANTA, GA

In his Opinion piece "Partnering With Pakistan" of Jan 28th 2009 published in the Washington Post, Asif Ali Zardari suggests that religious extremism is on the way out in Pakistan. However, little progress has been made on the home front of institutionalized persecution of religious minorities.

It was disheartening to learn that on January 28th, 1 adult and 4 minors were taken into Police custody on charges of blasphemy. Yet, these charges are without justification as no evidence has been furnished and the Police has yet to launch an investigation. The arrests have been condemned by Asian Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Commission of

Pakistan and United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The minors are students of a private school and remain in custody to this day. Their real crime appears to be that they belong to the minority Ahmadi sect of Islam.

**My advice to Mr. Zardari in the words of President Obama is "...know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy."**

Although Mr. Zardari speaks of the dawn of a new day in a Pakistan free from extremism, it was Zardari's party which concurred with religious extremists in 1974 and ushered in the era of persecution for Ahmadi Muslims. My advice to Mr. Zardari in the words of President Obama is "...know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy." Read President Zardari's Opinion piece [here](#).



## MUHAMMAD PRACTICED, SUPPORTED PLURALISM

OP-ED FINGER LAKES TIMES

ANEES AHMAD - ROCHESTER, NY

JANUARY 30, 2009

Mark Twain once wrote "It were not best that we should all think alike; it is difference of opinion that makes horse races." It is perhaps the most fundamental principle upon which America was realized – that is, recognizing freedom of expression as a fundamental human right. Islam is often criticized as promoting a monolithic socio-political culture. While many of today's Muslims may give weight to this notion, Prophet Muhammad fashioned a State that was pluralistic by any definition.

While pluralism covers many areas of human activity, we will examine freedom of expression as it is at the heart of pluralism. To

begin with, freedom of expression is a legally recognized right in Islam – with Islamic Law protecting both freedom of opinion (Hurriyyat al-Ra'y) and speech (Hurriyyat al-Qawl). Muhammad, in fact, not only protected, but promoted free thought, declaring, "Difference of opinion is blessing in my Ummah" (Baihaqi). Islam further protects and promotes grass-root ideology and activism – as Muhammad indicated, "The greatest Jihad is to speak truth in the face of a tyrant" (Mishkat).

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THE HOLY PEN IS A FORTNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER OF MSQ USA. IT AIMS TO GENERATE AWARENESS OF THE LATEST MEDIA COVERAGE OF ISLAM IN THE AMERICAN PRESS.

## INTERESTING READS

### [Would You Turn Your Cheek to a Terrorist?](#)

The author states that Obama's policy of engaging in dialogue is naive.

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The story of a young Somali living in St. Paul, MN recruited by a local imam to return to Somalia to fight for 'jihad'

### [Muslim in America: a 'voyage of discovery'](#)

American converts to Islam

### [Findings From the Understanding Islam Through Virtual Worlds Project](#)

Islam's presence in the virtual world

### [Islam vs. West: Fact or Fiction?: A brief historical, political, theological, philosophical, and psychological perspective](#)

A new book about the conflict between Islam and the West.

### [Global Food Crisis: A Bowl of Opportunities for Muslim World](#)

While developed countries are directing their attention to the turmoil in the financial sector - far less attention is being paid to the global food price crisis—a crisis that is having a more immediate and life threatening impact on the global masses.



## MUHAMMAD PRACTICED, SUPPORTED PLURALISM

### OP-ED [FINGER LAKES TIMES](#)

JANUARY 30, 2009

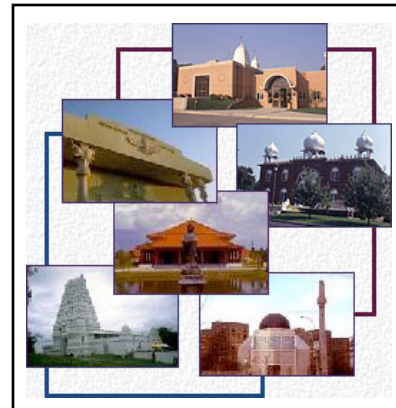
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Perhaps the most effective argument in favor of Islam's pluralistic nature is the existence, to this day, of four recognized schools of religious thought (madh'hab's). Despite all being considered valid, great differences exist between the madh'hab's in matters of mannerisms, prayer, dietary guidelines, etc. Additionally, aside from something being strictly prohibited (haraam), there are four stages of permissible activity. Each madh'hab holds different views as to which activities are to be placed in what stage of permissiveness. Lastly, each madh'hab recognizes that it itself is prone to change through judicial interpretation (ijtihad). Ijtihad can be likened unto the various legal principles employed to interpret the United States Constitution - textualism, realism, structuralism, etc. In effect, the madh'hab's ascribe to a "living constitution" philosophy. As an example, once, following Muhammad's peaceful conquest of Mecca, an Arab named Ikrimah fled the city. Ikrimah had been guilty of various acts of treason and his late father, Abu Jahl, was considered Muhammad's most vehement enemy. During his flight, Ikrimah learned that Muhammad had given virtually every enemy of the State a blanket pardon and permission to follow any way of life, provided they behaved as peaceful Arab citizens.

On another occasion, a dispute arose between a Jew and Muslim, the Jew declaring that Moses occupied a higher spiritual status than Muhammad. Lacking self-control, the Muslim struck the Jew, who then informed Muhammad of the incident. Muhammad immediately took action by reprimanding the Muslim and declaring, "Do not declare my superiority over Moses." It should be noted that Islam does in fact recognize Muhammad

as the Chief of Prophets. Therefore, Muhammad was protecting the ideal that freedom of religion is a universal right, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:257).

**Ultimately, despite how some Muslims practice Islam today, Muhammad set an example 1,400 years ago that would be fully compatible with American socio-political thought.**



Some may object that while Islam claims to protect freedom of expression, Muslims have never tolerated blasphemous speech. Firstly, endless incidents of tolerance towards blasphemy on the part of Muhammad towards non-Muslims exist. The Qur'an, in fact, never permits the punishment of an individual simply because they blasphemed. Secondly, it should be remembered that inflammatory speech, be it secular or religious, cannot jeopardize the individual, or the State's, safety. Punishment, even death, is not only warranted, but mandated for any individual's, irrespective of ideology, if they threaten the state's safety. It is upon this premise alone that blasphemers were punished during Islam's early days. It is on this premise that the Supreme Court of America has also banned the utterance of inflammatory speech (Chaplinsky vs. New Hampshire, 1942). To insist that the execution of one who seeks to create discord in society was due to his being a blasphemer is akin to believing that drunk drivers are punished simply because of their owning a car.

Ultimately, despite how some Muslims practice Islam today, Muhammad set an example 1,400 years ago that would be fully compatible with American socio-political thought. Islamic philosophy, in other words, is inherently pluralistic.

