

DEMYSTIFYING SHARIAH

WHAT IT IS,
HOW IT WORKS,
AND WHY IT'S
NOT TAKING OVER
OUR COUNTRY

Sumbul Ali-Karamali
AUTHOR OF THE MUSLIM NEXT DOOR



BEACON PRESS
IGNITING HEARTS & MINDS

- ★ "Highly recommended for readers interested in learning more about Sharia and Muslim American communities."

Library Journal

- ★ "With clarity and wit, [Ali-Karamali] describes shariah's origins, central texts, methodologies, and schools of thought...remarkably nuanced and thought-provoking."

Publishers Weekly

"Refreshingly, she shies away from giving a simple definition, instead characterizing Shariah as a broad and in some ways all-encompassing system of Islamic wisdom."

Ali-Karamali's "explanation of Shariah is a useful counter to the perceptions of many in the West."

"...her book is significant in a time of continued misconceptions about Islam."

Kirkus Reviews

ON SALE 8/11/2020

In the last decade, a growing number of anti-shariah activists rallied to introduce the word "shariah" as a scare word in public discourse. Despite no evidence of imposition of shariah, anti-shariah protests proliferated in towns across the United States and Europe. During the last few election cycles, the Right has pushed Islamophobic narratives specifically about shariah. According to the Arab American Institute, eight states have enacted bans on the use of foreign law (laws enacted and enforced in a foreign state, country, or culture). Fourteen other states are considering legislation to ban foreign law.

In ***Demystifying Shariah***, author Sumbul Ali-Karamali draws on scholarship and her degree in Islamic law to explain how shariah operates in the lives of Muslims and what it means in terms of law. She describes the anti-shariah movement's deliberate misinformation campaign as an appropriation of Islamic academic terms redefined to frighten non-Muslims, alienate Muslim Americans and Europeans, and portray the religion as incompatible with the Constitution. The book is an introduction to the principles, goals, and general developments of shariah—and the relevance of these topics today.

Ali-Karamali includes examples of shariah in daily life, such as the Islamic view of same-sex marriages and what Muslims eat, to give readers a sense of how Muslims engage with their religio-legal tradition. ***Demystifying Shariah*** is a defense against the stereotypes and a relatable discussion about shariah that brings Muslims and non-Muslims alike into a deeper understanding of the term, the religion, and the real people whose lives are influenced by this way of life.

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Endorsements

“An engaging, elegant, and accessible book on a subject everyone needs to understand. With clarity, compassion, and even humor, Sumbul Ali-Karamali explains shariah in a relatable narrative format, far from abstract, and guaranteed to resonate with those interested in separating the truth about shariah from all the myths and tall tales circulating in the public discourse.”

—**Reza Aslan, author of *God: A Human History***

“Sumbul Ali-Karamali's *Demystifying Shariah* is an extraordinary, much-needed book and a great read. It tackles a controversial and misunderstood topic: shariah and its role in Muslim life. Critically, *Demystifying Shariah* is based on the author's expertise in shariah and Islamic law, as well as much of the best scholarship available today. But Ali-Karamali's genius is her ability to tackle a controversial subject and explain it in a clear and engaging style, making the book a pleasure to read not only by policymakers and media but also an educated general public.”

—**John Esposito, author of *The Future of Islam***

“Sumbul Ali-Karamali is able to speak to both Muslims and others about Islam with clarity and expertise. Shariah has been demonized in the United States for nakedly political purposes in a way that Roman Catholic canon law was in the nineteenth century, and in the way that halakhah or Jewish law has been by modern anti-Semites. Ali-Karamali expertly clears away the ideological cobwebs and lays out the facts about shariah and Muslim practice, and manages to make it all a page-turner.”

—**Juan Cole, Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History, University of Michigan, and author of *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace amid the Clash of Empires***