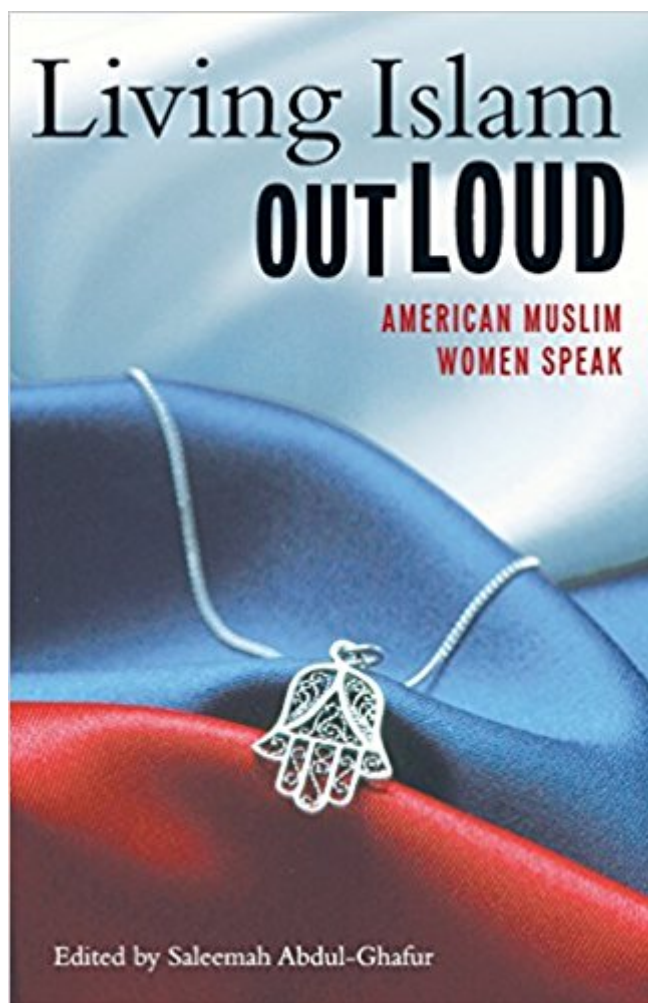


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Living Islam Out Loud: American Muslim Women Speak



Synopsis

Living Islam Out Loud presents the first generation of American Muslim women who have always identified as both American and Muslim. These pioneers have forged new identities for themselves and for future generations, and they speak out about the hijab, relationships, sex and sexuality, activism, spirituality, and much more. Contributors: Su'ad Abdul-Khabeer, Sham-e-Ali al-Jamil, Samina Ali, Sarah Eltantawi, Yousra Y. Fazili, Suheir Hammad, Mohja Kahf, Precious Rasheeda Muhammad, Asra Q. Nomani, Manal Omar, Khalida Saed, Asia Sharif-Clark, Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard, Aroosha Zoq Rana, Inas Younis

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Customer Reviews

Muslim activist Abdul-Ghafur edits this book of essays and poems, all related to the experience of growing up Muslim and female in the United States. Two of the best and most absorbing essays come from African-American women: Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard, who grew up in Harlem and became a successful corporate attorney and public servant, and Precious Rasheeda Muhammad, who describes her childhood in the Nation of Islam as a dynamic, educational experience. But the tone of some of the other contributors can be whiny. Many seem marked by tragedy, varying from things unrelated to Islam (having an autistic child) to tensions arising from ethnic cultures (marrying a non-Muslim, enduring abusive semiarranged marriages). Some of the authors engage in vague spiritual discussions about the omnipresence of God and compare Islam to a forest, with male chauvinism being the weeds in the forest, but their ideas are too abstract to enhance one's

understanding of Islamic spirituality. As with many anthologies, there is some repetition of ideas, not only within the book itself but also echoing themes from the authors' previous writings. Although the contributions are uneven, this anthology opens the door for other writers to explore the important and understudied topic of Muslim American women. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"These are precisely the kinds of women whose voices we need to hear." —Leila Ahmed, Harvard Divinity School "From the Islamic Bill's of Rights for Women in Mosques and in the Bedroom to the call for the Divine Feminine in Islam, this book reveals the diverse, complex, ambiguous, brilliant voices of women who are at once American and Muslim." —Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues* "This anthology presents the best of the new generation of American Muslim women." —Imam Rauf, author of *What's Right with Islam* "A rich mosaic of experiences from passionate women that challenge us to redefine our understanding of Islam in general, and American Muslim women in particular. Grade: A" —Candice Levy, *Girlfriends*

I read this book as part of a class on transnational women's issues. I greatly appreciate the editor and contributors for bringing a wide range of perspectives and experiences into dialogue with each other and within the context of American and Muslim societies. These women have touching, beautiful and heart-wrenching stories to share. Together, they create a truly dynamic portrait of Islam and especially of what it means to be a Muslim-American women in the face of many competing cultural, religious and secular demands. Their activist efforts and memoirs are an inspiration for current young generations of Muslim women who may be reluctant to share and compare their own stories. It speaks also to non-Muslims and encourages them to learn from and appreciate the stories of other women. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in women's issues or Muslim-American identities.

I really liked this book. It talked honestly about the experiences of the women in it and it seems like a progressive book to me. I would definitely recommend this book to others.

I was drawn by the honesty with which each contributor told her story. The stories allow for understanding rather than judgment, because each of these Sisters on the path have reached it - in their own, unique way.

Very good for students - variety of perspectives from contemporary voices.

This is a collection of essays from a liberal feminist point of view, a side of Islam that isn't normally represented in mainstream media. The women represented are mostly involved in change, whether it be of their religion or society around them (as liberals often are). This is an important book for those who think all Muslims think the same way to read. Whether you agree with what the women say or not--and I imagine many people will not--at the very least it can show you that there are different views of Islam just like there are of Christianity and Judaism. Just like Christian liberals who think the church must change for its own good, these liberals talk a lot about how their love for Islam makes them want to shape it for the modern age. You don't have to agree with them, but you can feel their devotion to their religion and have to admire their strength. *Living Islam Out Loud* is a challenge to pretty much everything--from conservative Islam to the prejudice facing Muslims from mainstream America. Love it or hate it, you can't ignore it, and that is a place to start from.

I wanted to find out how Muslim women in the USA live their religion. For me, therefore, I didn't want to only hear from Muslim feminists rallying for their cause. I wanted to also hear from American Muslim women who were satisfied with the way they lived their religion here in the USA and what they liked about their religion and why Christianity didn't seem fitting for them. I didn't get that. And many of the chapters simply seemed like "rah, rah, let's change this and that!" It was like going to a political rally for one side. I didn't feel like I learned a heck of a lot.

Essays and poems by women born in America and raised as Muslims. Telling their stories and how they are forging a current identity as Muslims in a modern western secular setting. Many thoughtful ideas on viable Islamic adaptations that reject traditional cultural limitations and abuse of women found in some Islamic cultures. Patriotic, spiritual and dynamic women dealing with the realities facing them, and their positive interpretations of Quranic faith as a liberating force in their lives. This volume will provide rewarding insights into Islam. These essays are not somebody's unconsidered opinion about Islam and how it affects women. This is a set of personal testimonies of Muslim Women. This is the real deal - not just the negative, but the positive. See and learn of here of personal faith, not about a religion.

This book is very inspiring and motivational in its depictions of several Muslim American women activists and feminists and the obstacles they've had to overcome in voicing opinions that are often

unheard or, worse, intentionally ignored by chauvinistic Muslims. I'm glad they came out with a book like this, especially one that is more reflective of the progressive outlook which many Muslims (myself included) would like to see more of. However, I do think readers should be aware much of the content described in the book probably isn't reflective of the opinions held by most Muslim American women. As another reviewer noted, most of the women in the book are activists working for a change in their communities in the face of what they see as oppressive or patriarchal attitudes. The positions taken by some on women prayer leaders in mixed congregations, segregation in mosques, sexuality and homosexuality, and even women in leadership roles are not issues many religious Muslim American women see as a 'problem' or anti-female and in need of reinterpretation. Many would most likely disagree with these authors' solutions, as I'm sure some of them might probably disagree on certain issues amongst themselves. Hopefully with more honest and open-minded literature by Muslims like this book, Muslim men and women alike will at least be better aware of the 'reality' of Islam in America which we must deal with, whether one agrees with others' viewpoints or not. Hearing everyone's voice is the most important idea to take from this book.

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