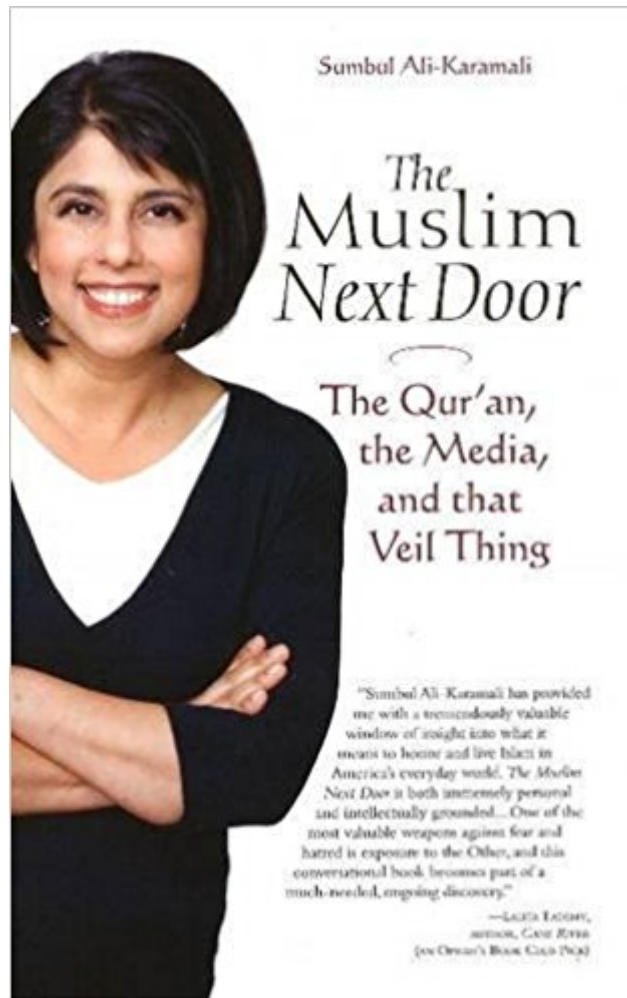




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# The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, The Media, And That Veil Thing



## Synopsis

Bronze Medal Winner of the Independent Publishers Award 2009 Since 9/11, stories about Muslims and the Islamic world have flooded headlines, politics, and water-cooler conversations all across the country. And, although Americans hear about Islam on a daily basis, there remains no clear explanation of Islam or its people. The Muslim Next Door offers easy-to-understand yet academically sound answers to these questions while also dispelling commonly held misconceptions. Written from the point of view of an American Muslim, the book addresses what readers in the Western world are most curious about, beginning with the basics of Islam and how Muslims practice their religion before easing into more complicated issues like jihad, Islamic fundamentalism, and the status of women in Islam. Author Sumbul Ali-Karamali's vivid anecdotes about growing up Muslim and female in the West, along with her sensitive, scholarly overview of Islam, combine for a uniquely insightful look at the world's fastest growing religion.

## Book Information

Paperback: 260 pages

Publisher: White Cloud Press; 1 edition (September 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780974524566

ISBN-13: 978-0974524566

ASIN: 0974524565

Product Dimensions: 9 x 1 x 6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 109 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #192,848 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Rituals & Practice](#) #89 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Islam](#) #9005 in [Books > Textbooks > Education](#)

## Customer Reviews

“Post 9/11 has seen an explosion of publishing on Islam. For many, the question is who do I read if I only have a limited amount of time and want to know what and why Muslims believe what they believe? The Muslim Next Door is an excellent place to start. Sumbul Ali-Karamali presents Islam as a living and lived faith. She combines scholarship with an engaging and accessible style and frank self-criticism that crystallizes the faith and commitment of a majority of mainstream Muslims in its unity and diversity.” — John L. Esposito, University Professor and

Professor of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University "I wish I could send a copy of *The Muslim Next Door* not just to every Muslim extremist, including Bin Laden and his likes, but also to the President of the United States and his staff, to all policy makers, and also to every single Islamophobe or self-hating Muslim in the world. If they read and understood this book, most certainly our world would become a much better place to live. Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the publishing world has generated a virtual flood of books on Islam and Muslims, and the vast majority of what has been published is no better than pseudo-intellectual drivel. In my view, however, *The Muslim Next Door* is solid intellectual gold! This book easily ranks as one of the best three books published on the Islamic faith in the English language since the tragedy of 9/11. It is a profoundly eloquent, consistently reliable, comprehensive, insightful, and often brilliant testament of what it means to be a Muslim and what the religion of Islam is all about. Refreshing in its honesty, accessibility, and humility, and truly impressive in scope and depth, this is an indispensable book. Indeed this book is a necessary read not just for those who are interested in learning about Islam, but even more so for those who believe that they have learned all there is to know about Islam."

• Khaled Abou El Fadl, J.D., Ph.D., Professor of Immigration, Middle Eastern, and Islamic Law at UCLA School of Law, Author of *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* "There are few books that I would genuinely recommend to everybody I know, and you are holding one of them. Sumbul Ali-Karamali has written a lovely, lyrical and learned book about living Islam. Whether you are an expert in the subject or a novice, a skeptic or a believer, you will find this book a treasure."

• Dr. Eboo Patel, Ph.D., Sociology of Religion, Oxford and Executive Director of Interfaith Youth Core Chicago, IL "Sumbul Ali-Karamali has provided me with a tremendously valuable window of insight into what it means to honor and live Islam in America's everyday world. *The Muslim Next Door* is both immensely personal and intellectually grounded, and it presents an informed dialog I would not normally be privy to. One of the most valuable weapons against fear and hatred is exposure to the Other, and this conversational book becomes part of a much-needed, ongoing discovery."

• Lalita Tademy, Author of *Cane River* (an Oprah's Book Club pick) and *Red River* "A beautiful book. At a time when most Americans are bombarded with misinformation about Islam and, in particular American Muslims, Ali-Karamali has written an elegant corrective to a paean to the faith, practice, values, and beliefs of the world's second largest religious community. For anyone who truly wants to know what Muslims believe, this is the perfect book."

• Reza Aslan author "No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam" "Sumbul Ali-Karamali has produced an intelligent, sensitive and highly readable study of Islam as it is experienced and interpreted by most Muslims. An important work that does an

excellent job contextualizing common misperceptions of Islam, as well as challenging the distorted views of the extremists and the prejudices of the Islamophobes." — Dr. Ali Asani, Professor of the Practice of Indo-Muslim Languages and Cultures at Harvard University; Advisory Board of The Pluralism Project at Harvard University; Board of Directors of the American Islamic Congress, an organization promoting interfaith and interethnic understanding

"Sumbul Ali Karamali has written a book which is gripping, comprehensive and essential. With wit, honesty, and scholarship, she offers an account of what being Muslim means in a polarised world where the faultline is as grave as it is prejudiced. A masterpiece of simplicity that offers a groundbreaking testimony that will find its way to every household, in the US and beyond, for Muslims and non-Muslims alike."

— Chibli Mallat, SJ Quinney College of Law Professor of Law and Politics of the Middle East, University of Utah EU Jean Monnet Chair in European Law, Universite' Saint-Joseph (Beirut) Principal counsel, Mallat Law Offices, Beirut

"Sumbul Ali-Karamali has a gift for explaining the ins and outs of Islam in a language understandable by all. As a practicing Muslim, she puts a human face on a religion that is grossly misunderstood and often feared in America. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn more about Islam from someone who lives it" - Firoozeh Dumas author of "Funny in Farsi" and "Laughing Without an Accent"

"Sumbul Ali-Karamali lives according to her faith, with humor, good grace and brilliance, so when she shares her insights, they ring true. Her book is a classic you will remember because she has bared her soul. Sumbul mixes scholarly insight about Islam with a personal, well-considered perspective on being a mainstream American Muslim. She brings perspective to the words and customs of Islam. Sumbul's charming openness about family life, her honesty about her own questions, her simplicity about living practically, and her down-to earth view of reality make the book really worth reading. I was a Catholic nun in my early life, so took particular interest in this modern, savvy woman's faith, which was, to be frank, a little scary to me. This book is fascinating; I couldn't put it down. I recommend it whole-heartedly to people of good will who are grappling with questions about Islam and Muslim in America today."

— Ann McCormick, Ph.D., Founder of the Learning Company

"An engaging and enlightening work. The author has provided an indispensable vade mecum for anyone interested in a sensitive and feminist perspective on Islam, free of the rhetoric and exaggerations common in contemporary public discourse. The book is conversational in tone and very readable and, although the subject is serious, the author has a gift for applying a lighter touch and humor at just the right moments. It should be read by everyone."

— Robert W. Hillman, Professor of Law, University of California, Davis

"Sumbul Ali-Karamali provides refreshing insight into an impressive range of issues concerning

Islam. Her book is the journey of an American Muslim woman struggling with her identity, her tradition, and most importantly, her desire to simultaneously fit in with American culture while preserving her faith. Through the use of both personal anecdotes and extensive evidence from the Islamic tradition, she provides easy-to-read, credible, and thought-provoking analysis. Intended primarily for non-Muslims seeking to understand their Muslim neighbor, Muslims will also see much value in Ali-Karamali's book." • Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, author of *What's Right with Islam* "The Muslim Next Door provides a timely, candid and sensitive insight into the experience of growing up Muslim in a post-9/11 America, along with a much-needed and impeccably researched explanation of the historical and cultural contexts of today's Muslim world and the religion of Islam. I look forward to my students making good use of this book in my undergraduate classes, and I look forward to its soon being read by a much wider and general audience of all ages in both this country and abroad." • Peter L. Hoag, Ph.D., Faculty member, Department of Human Development, Department of Geography, California State University East Bay

Sumbul Ali-Karamali grew up in California, balancing her South Asian, Muslim, and American identities. Often the only Muslim her acquaintances knew, she had ample practice answering questions about Islam and Muslims. ("What do you mean you can't go to the prom because of your religion?") While working as a corporate lawyer, she was repeatedly asked to recommend books on Islam, so she decided to write a book that was both academically reliable and entertaining to read. Consequently, she moved to London and earned her L.L.M. in Islamic Law from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. She served as a teaching assistant in Islamic Law at SOAS and a research associate at the Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law in London, and then she wrote *The Muslim Next Door* for everyone who ever asked - or wanted to ask - a question about Islam.

My wife and I saw this author interviewed on TV so purchased her book. I wish more people could read this book so that so many of the half, quarter and no truths that catch on the media could be counter balanced. This is good information and I recommend more people to read this book!

This is such a wonderful book and especially important right now. Written in a very warm, personal and sometimes humorous style, *The Muslim Next Door* educates about Muslims and Islam without being lecturey and is a good read for both those familiar and unfamiliar with the faith. Ms.

Ali-Karamali's prose flows very nicely and makes the book one of those "just one more chapter before I put it down for the night" books. This would be a very good book to have on a syllabus for courses related to cultural awareness/sensitivity or even in a world religions course. I thoroughly enjoyed it and highly recommend it.

I bought this after hearing Ms. Ali-Karamali speak at a local college and found her very friendly and open when fielding questions on the Muslim faith. She stayed behind after for those I suspect had questions but didn't want to speak up in a room full of people. As my headline reads, This was great for those with no or little familiarity with the Muslim faith as well as for Muslims who are looking for a way to help explain it to others. I'm in the 40 and my parents are in their 70's and we all enjoyed and were fascinated by this book (from what I understand she has another version for younger readers). My father, who has really been trying for a few years to grasp an overall understanding and particular aspects of the religion, especially enjoyed it. The book has a few pop-culture references to help us feel relatable to the author, this really wasn't surprising after hearing her speak. I have a couple Muslim friends, who use the simple way it breaks down the fundamentals of the religion to explain it to others.

I learned much, and now at least have some appreciation of Muslim culture and the fact that they should not all be condemned as enemies. Communication is the foundation understanding, which is the foundation of peace.

A necessary read for people who desire to learn more about our Muslim neighbors and the faith that they practice. Like the rest of our neighbors, they come from complicated cultures and families. A fun and serious read.

I bought this book for my mom for Christmas and she really enjoyed it. My Nana also wanted to read it!

Good book to read. Thank you

An informative and educational book that is a must read in this day and age.

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