



The Logic of Law Making in Islam: Women and Prayer in the Legal Tradition (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization)

By Behnam Sadeghi

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This pioneering study examines the process of reasoning in Islamic law. Some of the key questions addressed here include whether sacred law operates differently from secular law, why laws change or stay the same, and how different cultural and historical settings impact the development of legal rulings. In order to explore these questions, the author examines the decisions of thirty jurists from the largest legal tradition in Islam: the Hanafi school of law. He traces their rulings on the question of women and communal prayer across a very broad period of time - from the eighth to the eighteenth century - to demonstrate how jurists interpreted the law and reconciled their decisions with the scripture and the sayings of the Prophet. The result is a fascinating overview of how Islamic law has evolved and the thinking behind individual rulings.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Sadeghi's work is significant. His detailed analysis of a focused set of legal debates is illuminating in its own right, and his sophisticated discussion of the nature of legal change and justification should make the work a touchstone for any future thinking about this issue. Sadeghi's overall conclusion - that the business of the typical pre-modern Muslim jurist was focused not on the canon but on the precedent embodied in his school's doctrine - is certainly true and important, but his elucidation of the logic of change internal to Islamic legal discourse is even more interesting and original."

Ahmed El Shamsy, Marginalia

About the Author

Behnam Sadeghi has been an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University since 2006. His research spans Islamic thought and law in the early and post-formative periods. In addition, he has made groundbreaking contributions to the history of the Qur'an and the hadith literature in a series of published essays.

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