



CALEM RUMI's
Isiphephelo



Inclusive Mosque, refugees' Shelter
& progressive imam-es training Institute



CALEM | renamed since 2010
20 years of expertise



« *Islamic feminism
& queer liberation theologies* »



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم والصلاة والصلاة على رسول الله النبي الأمي المصطفى
من يهدي الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلل الله فلا هادي له

*Au nom de Dieu, le Clément le Miséricordieux, que la Bénédiction et la Paix
soit sur Mahomet, le prophète illettré, élevé par le Seigneur.*

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
May Blessing and Peace be upon Muhammad ,
the unlettered Prophet, raised by our Lord.



Islamic feminism:

1. Historically



1. For twenty years, remarkable changes: Islamic Liberation theologies.

New Islamic contemporary reformers currents are progressive and inclusive, in the sense that they do not exclude anyone. They have **promoted gender equality** and positively dealt with the issues related to homosexuality and transidentities.

Unlike Wahhabism, more commonly known as "*Salafism*", or ***Takfirism (1)***, more commonly known as "jihadism", which have advocated since the end of last century, at least, stigma, **infrahumanisation (2)** and sometimes even radical dehumanizing of gender or sexual minorities.

These new mobilizations pave the way for contemporary reformism and religious transformations. First, it is common to consider that Islamic feminism appeared in Egypt (early 20th century) then Iran (1970's), and later as an **intellectual movement of religious exegesis**, promoting gender **equality**. If these theologians work on the Prophet's tradition and Muslim law, they rely ultimately on critical **exegesis they elaborate of the Qur'an**.

(1) A group that appeared in the first century of Islam during the first *fitna*, the crisis of leadership after the death of Muhammad. It broke into revolt against the authority of the Caliph Ali, after he agreed to arbitration with his rival, Muawiyah I, to decide the succession to the Caliphate following the Battle of Siffin (657).

(2) Considering some individuals, according to their sexe, gender identity or sexual orientation, as less human than others.



1. For twenty years, remarkable changes: Islamic Liberation theologies.

One of them, Ziba Mir-Hosseini (3), a sociologist teaching in London, thus recalled the necessary distinction between *Shariah* (the way of God revealed to the Prophet in the Qur'an) and *fiqh* (human efforts to translate this spiritual path into legal provisions). FQH, Arabic triliteral root, literally means "**understanding**", or not, divine ethics: the way, the "**sharia**", being absolutely dynamic and contextualized.

Fiqh is the basis of legislations in the Arab and Muslim countries concerning the status of individual rights, with the exception of **Tunisia**, recently, but also **Turkey** which adopted, in 1926, a **secular civil code** inspired by the Swiss code. This semantic, therefore social and political distinction, has repercussions as following: it allows feminist and LGBT Muslim not to avoid the debate of fascist temptation from within **Islam, with a capital "I"**, as it happens in all civilizations.

That **fascist branch of Islam** was embodied, in the early days of the Arab-Muslim civilization, by the sect of the "*takfiri*", who slaughtered all Muslim who did not submit to their dogma. It also permit these reformists to reclaim the ethical dynamics related to **islam, with a minuscule "i"**, as a philosophy of life, a spiritual and immanent human quest.

(3) Free-lance academic, passionately involved in debates on gender equality in law, exposing and criticizing the injustices that these laws continue to inflict on women in some Muslim contexts.



Islamic feminism:

2. Reformed Islamic ethics



2. Ethical production of renewed religious standards?

This feminist and **inclusive return to the absolute ethical “rule” of Qur’an** challenged the Islamic law schools. That deconstruction of dogmatism from within Islam is operated according to a path already charted by Islamic **reformism**, as it was **initiated by Muhammad Abduh (4)**, a thinker of the turn of the century. M. Abduh is often considered the founding father of 20th century reformism, which later on hijacked and evolved into rogue *Salafism*: literally, "homecoming".

These feminist and gay-friendly, renewed exegeses, also **challenged the authority of established institutions**, as well as the issue of the scholarly **consensual** (*ijma'*) production of religious and political **normativity**.

Since one effect of the **fascistic and virilist re-Islamization** of the Arab-Muslim societies, since the 1970s, as well as Diaspora communities since the 1990s, especially in Europe, has been religious knowledge **authority's proliferation**, engaged in **intense competition**.

(4) An Egyptian Islamic jurist, religious scholar and liberal reformer, regarded as one of the key founding figures of Islamic Modernism, sometimes called Neo-Mu'tazilism after the medieval Islamic school of theology based on rationalism.



2. Ethical production of renewed religious standards?

This process of re-Islamization policy, *de facade*, is produced concomitantly to a "**third way**" **pan-Arabism**, thoroughly using Islam as a puritanical facade to nationalists in search of consistent historiography.

This proliferation has **encouraged the emergence of feminist** theologians who have engaged in an intellectual competition, to create new religious points of support, **and recently gay friendly interpretations** of the Qur'an.

These theologians of a new kind are in a process of Islamic scriptures appropriations, which reflects upon individualization of the relationship to religion, according to the following aim: "**We are Islam**". Indeed, as the French anthropologist Dounia Bouzar (5) says, "**Mr. Islam does not exist**" (6).

She explains why is it mandatory to give back **freedom of speech** to each and every Muslim, and how the use of a reified, personified Islam, actually deprives Muslims of their potential **access to identity self-definition**, thereby forbidding them any agentivity.

(5) French anthropologist born in 1964, founder in 2014 of the Center for prevention against radical Islam

(6) Bouzar, D. (2004). « "*Monsieur Islam*" n'existe pas: pour une désislamisation des débats ». Hachette, Paris.



Islamic feminism:

3. Reformed Islamic ethics



3. Post "*Arab spring*" renewed gender identity representations

The Malaysian Zainah Anwar (7), founder in 1988 of Islamic feminists avant-garde group, ***Sisters in Islam***, is pioneer in the field. Her stance diffused in post "Arab Spring" transitional contexts, through discussions about how could be used the **resources of Islamic feminism**.

Since 2000, Islamic feminism, just as the queer Muslim movement, entered a **second phase**. On the one hand, their hermeneutic has become **more radical**, based on the spirit of the Qur'an, current conditions of **social relations**, and **contemporary understandings** of justice and equality. On the other hand, these texts appropriation allows more **open discussions concerning gender and sexual** standards.

This is a first in Islam, **since European colonization** during the nineteenth century which resulted, among other things, in the **reinforcement of warlike Arab-Muslim identity representations**: macho, misogynist, homophobic, and transphobic.

(7) A prominent Malaysian non-governmental organization leader, activist and Muslim feminist, she was the head of Sisters in Islam for over two decades before stepping down.



3. Post "*Arab spring*" renewed gender identity representations

This revolution, a "Jihad for Love" as it is called by homosexual imam Muhsinh Hendricks in the Parvez Sharma's (8) documentary (2007), led **Amina Wadud** (9), African-American convert to Islam, to develop **a unique dialectic** between Islamic feminism and **LGBT representatives** within Islam.

In her second book entitled *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (2006), A. Wadud **refuted polygamy** or human violence vis-à-vis wives mentioned in the Qur'an, in verses that **she previously tried to rather contextualize**.

A. Wadud elaborates her **Liberation Theology** (10) on the basis of a "**Tawhid paradigm**": the oneness of humanity mirroring that of the Divine, **without intermediary** between God and human beings. A. Wadud thus took a clear stand **for gay marriage** and against discrimination towards **HIV positive individuals**.

(8) A New York-based Indian filmmaker and writer, Sharma is best known for his two films *A Jihad for Love* and *A Sinner in Mecca*. The first film documented the lives of gay and lesbian Muslims, and for which he received the 2009 GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Documentary amongst seven other international awards.

(9) An American scholar of Islam with a progressive focus on Qur'an exegesis (interpretation of the holy text).

(10) A branch of *Islamic Liberation Theologies*, also called *Tawhidic paradigm*.



Islamic feminism:

4. A fast spreading movement



4. A fast spreading movement

Moreover, **these interpretations are spreading**. A transnational movement has emerged, disseminating the contributions of these feminist exegeses.

New networks have appeared, such as the **global movement demanding equal rights within the family** (*Musawah*), the **transnational advisory committee of intellectuals and theologians** (*Global Women's Shura Council*), **I.F. Congress** presented by the organization of Spanish Muslims citizen (*Junta islamica*) in Barcelona, or the **Confederation of LGBT associations, euro-African or Muslim associations** (CALEM).

From within Islamic societies, Islamic feminists are making their way **within existing institutions**.





4. A fast spreading movement

In Morocco, **Asma Lamrabet** (11), who chairs the International Study Group of reflection on women in Islam (*Gierfi*), **was associated in 2008 to an influential religious Moroccan institution**, the *Rabita Mohammadia of Ulemas* (Morocco).

In Indonesia, **Aalimat Muti Musdah Muliyat**, member of the national theological council, has publicly taken a stand to **reform the Islamic code relating to marriage** and for the recognition of strict equality between men and women, as well as for gay marriage.

In Turkey, the proofreading of *hadiths* (Prophetic traditions) by the theologian **Hidayet Tuksal** (12) has been integrated into a broad government site to **remove the misogynist hadiths from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' publications**, which oversees the country's mosques.

(11) Born and currently resides in Rabat, Morocco. She considers her education to be occidental; she is fifty-four years old and married with one child.

(12) A Turkish human rights activist, Islamic feminist and columnist. She lectures in theology at Mardin Artuklu University.



Islamic feminism:

5. *Tawhid* inclusive Mosque



5. Islamic alternative liberation theologies

Islamic women & minorities “**disidentification**” is inherently linked to the **Christian liberation theology (Gustavo Gutierrez)**, itself epistemologically related to the naturalistic theology; that latest replaced the “**dependency theory**”, rooting from centers of power, while the original postulate of liberation theologies is precisely to grant a **preferential option to “the poorest, the weakest”, minorities at the periphery** of traditional power grammars, through what Christian theologians called “**metanoia**”.

Thus, for **Ali Shariati** - historical figure of the Islamic liberation theology - tackling **injustice and inequality in the world is a religious duty**, rooting his understanding of faith from the Islamic *tawhid* which put forward that all human beings are fundamentally, by essence, equal in front of the uniqueness of their Creator.

This is, according to **Asma Lamrabet**, the **Khalifat**, the mission of human beings on Earth.

I can also quote the South African **Farid Esack** who tells us more about progressive Islam and **Islamic liberation through accepting diversity** (...)

(13) A female professor has become the first woman to lead a mixed congregation in Islamic prayer in Britain. Available online - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/oxfordshire/7676239.stm

Unity of humanity, through pluralism, under the oneness of God.

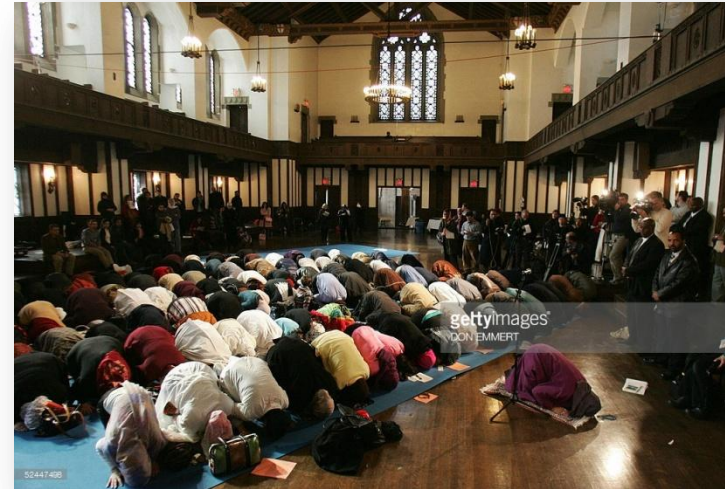
(14) Symbol of humanity's Unity, through pluralism, under the oneness of God.



5. Tawhid inclusive mosques

A mediated and **subversive prayer** led by Amina Wadud in New York, 2005, has been emulated and led to the **recognition of the women imamat** by certain groups in South Africa, North America & Europe, where, for example, in England, the ***Muslim Educational Centre of Oxford*** organizes mixed prayers, a sermon is delivered by a woman imam (13).

The network of ***Tawhid Mosques*** (14), created in the US by the Muslim for Progressive Values association (MPV), **founded in 2006 by a female Indonesian imam, Ani Zonneveld**, has spread in Canada, France and Europe, even in South and North Africa recently, and now also in Berlin with **Turkish-German radical feminist imama Seyran Atesh** (2017).



(13) A female professor has become the first woman to lead a mixed congregation in Islamic prayer in Britain. Available online - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/oxfordshire/7676239.stm

Unity of humanity, through pluralism, under the oneness of God.

(14) Symbol of humanity's Unity, through pluralism, under the oneness of God.



Islamic feminism:

6. Primary sources of warlike identities



Déterminisme de l'expression du bien-être (motivation au quotidien, collaboration, projection dans l'avenir) ou de la violence individuelle, communautaire et collective (préjugés envers autrui, phobies paranoïaques diverses, voire meurtre sadique, lutte armée ou terrorisme) :

LA RELIGIOSITE, FACTEURS PREMIERS ET SECONDAIRES :





Déterminisme de l'expression du bien-être (motivation au quotidien, collaboration, projection dans l'avenir) ou de la violence (préjugés envers autrui, phobies paranoïaques diverses, voire meurtre sadique, lutte armée ou terrorisme) individuelle, communautaire et collective,

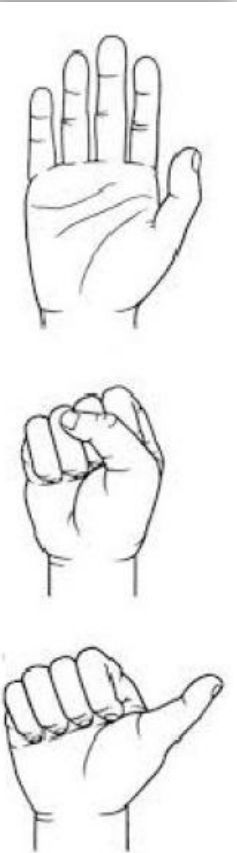
L'EXEMPLE DE « LA MAIN OUVERTE », LA CAUSALITE PREMIERE :

En sociologie, afin d'illustrer la difficulté à identifier les réelles causes d'une problématique donnée, on donne l'exemple de la paume de la main (facteur essentiel de la motricité, qui stimule le reste de la main) et des doigts (facteurs secondaires sans lesquels la main continuerait de se mouvoir) :

1 / Lorsque la main est ouverte, la paume de la main (facteur déterminant dans la motricité) est aisément identifiable, visible au premier regard. On voit tout de suite que c'est la paume de la main qui fait bouger le reste (*situation où les dynamiques sociales sont apaisées, sans crispation identitaires et politiques majeures*).

2 / Lorsque la main est fermée, la paume de la main (facteur déterminant) devient difficilement identifiable, n'est plus visible au premier regard. Le profane pense que ce sont les doigts qui se crispent par eux-mêmes, qui seraient les facteurs déterminants et non pas périphériques, identifiés non plus comme secondaires mais comme visibles au premier regard (*situation de crispation sociale et politique*).

3 / Lorsque la main est fermée et qu'un seul doigt pointe, la paume de la main reste difficilement identifiable, n'est. Le profane fait sortir du lot un seul doigt : pourtant facteurs secondaires, aggravant ou émancipateur en temps de crise, mais sans déterminisme premier dans la genèse de la crise à affronter (*situation de discrimination d'une communauté identifiée comme responsables de la crise, mais de couper ce « doigt » ne résoudra en rien la crise, elle s'en trouvera même aggravée, et la main continuera de se mouvoir, pour le pire ou le meilleur*).





Islamic feminism:

7. Theoretical recap.



Fatima Mernissi (b. 1940)

- close reading of the hadith against women
- Abu Hurayra vs. A'isha
- Cultural context of the time of the prophet shaped the hadith
- Essential equality of women in Islam





Malak Hifni Nasif (d. 1918)

- the importance of education for women
- the historical presence of women scholars
- The danger of Westernization
- The importance of meeting one's husband before marriage





Qasim Amin (d. 1908)

- friend of Afghani and Abduh, author of *The Liberation of Woman* and *The New Woman*
- *shari'a* favors justice, equality; women's rights not Western
- education of women advances the nation
- divorce and polygamy





Amina Wadud (b. 1952)

- Close reading of the Qur'an on women
- Rejection of tafsir literature
- Context determines meaning of text
- Q2:228, men have a *daraja* above women
- -> context of divorce
- Q4:34, narrowly read



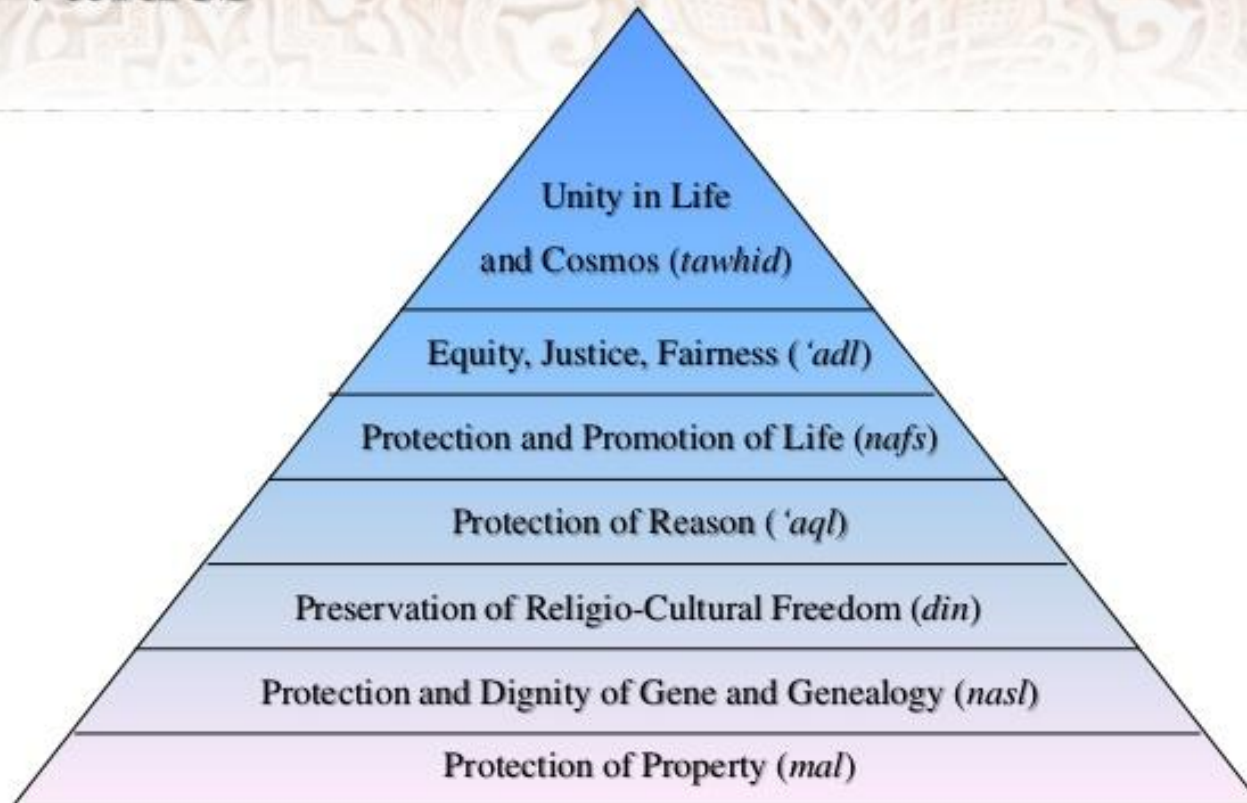


Q4:34 (Wadud)

Men are [*qawwamuna 'ala*] women [on the basis] of what God has [preferred] (*faddala*) some of them over others, and [on the basis] of what they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are [*qanitat*], guarding in secret that which God has guarded. As for those from whom you fear [*nushuz*], admonish them, banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then, if they obey you, seek not a way against them.



3. Islamic Universal Ethical Values

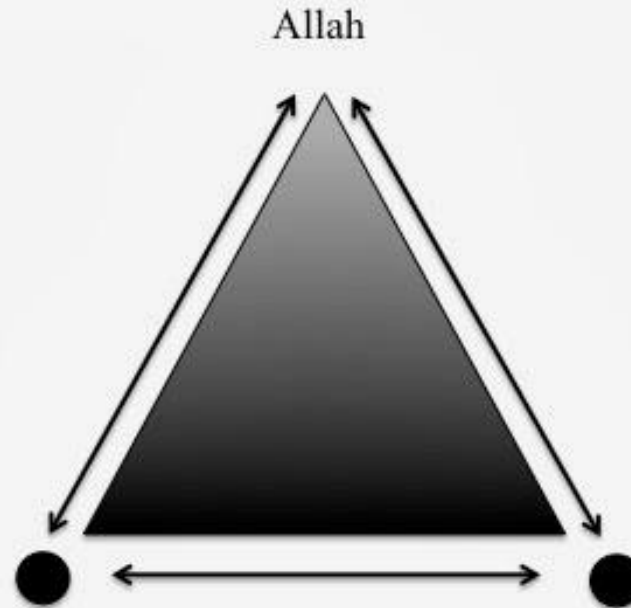




Patriarchal Model:



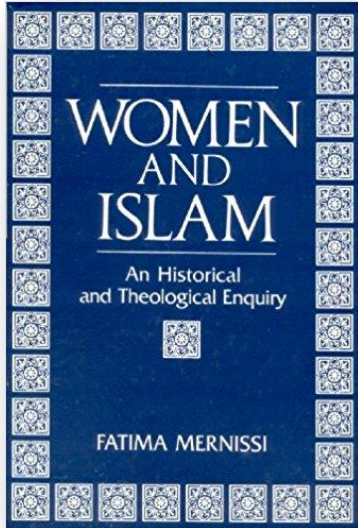
Tawhid Model:





Islamic feminism:

8. Some publications

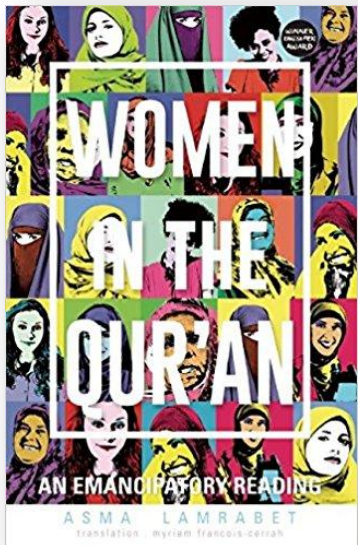


Fatima Mernissi

“Women and Islam“

(“Le harem politique, le Prophète et les femmes”)

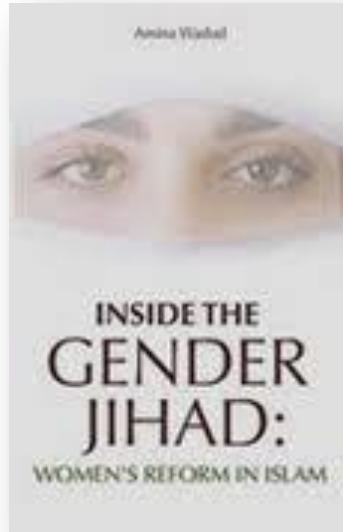
THE pioneer in Islamic feminist exegesis of the Quran and the Prophet’s tradition from women’s perspectives.



Asma Lamrabet

« Women in the Qur'an »

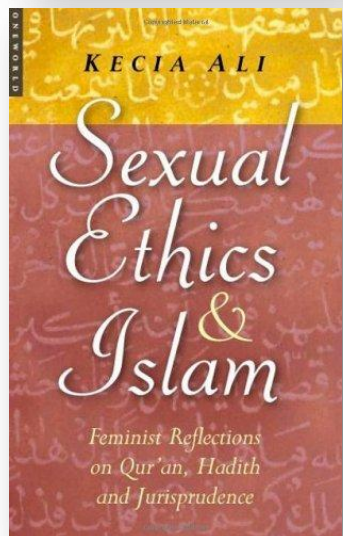
Women in the Qur'an by Asma Lamrabet translated by Myriam Francois-Cerrah is a VERY bold read. This book of 177 pages is divided in an introductory section, a part one that deals with 'When the Qur'an speaks OF women' and a part two 'When the Qur'an speaks TO women.'



Amina Wadud

“Inside the gender Jihad”

The author traces his personal experience in a search for a third way, between misogyny, Islamophobia and sharing the imamate.



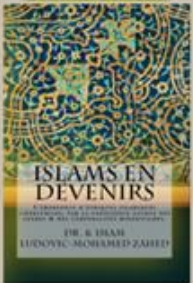







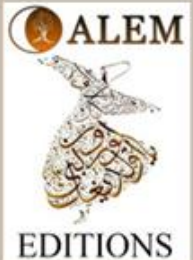







Kecia Ali

« Sexual ethics & Islam »

Dr Kecia Ali is Assistant Professor of Religion at Boston University. She previously held research and teaching fellowships at Brandeis University and Harvard Divinity School.



All our publications on the topic (in Tunisia, Algeria, post Arab-Spring contexts),
are available in PDF for our trainees for free: info@calem.eu

<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>Thèse d'anthropologie du fait religieux - EHESS (2015 / 736 p.)</p> <p>Prix éditeur Paypal - 26,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>17 mai : journée mondiale contre l'homophobie (2017 / 70 p.)</p> <p>Prix éditeur Paypal - 13,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	<p>Learn more here</p>  <p>Second version (2016 / 200 p.)</p> <p>Special price, Paypal - 25 USD (free delivery in Europe)</p> <p>Buy Now</p>	<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>Seconde édition (2016 / 200 p.)</p> <p>Prix éditeur, Paypal - 26,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>Autobiographie autorisée (2016 / 200 p.)</p> <p>Prix éditeur Paypal - 17,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	 <p>(GIN, 2016)</p>  <p>Des Ténébres vers la Lumière! 2011 & 2017 : contribution aux rapports annuels de SOS Homophobie)</p>	 <p>L'Hermétisme & l'Observatoire Des Transidentité, 2016.</p>  <p>(REVUE MIRROR / MIROIRS N°8)</p>	 <p>(DARUT & IDEM, 2015)</p>  <p>(2018 - Autografía, Rio de Janeiro)</p>
 <p>Essai sur le féminisme islamique en France et ailleurs (2017, à paraître)</p>	<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>Etude de terrains comparative (2017, à paraître)</p> <p>Prix éditeur Paypal - 19,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	<p>Saber más</p>  <p>(200 p., autobiografía en Español, CALEM - 2017)</p> <p>Precio del editor, Paypal - 17,90€ (envío gratis en Europa)</p> <p>Comprar ahora</p>	<p>Bientôt disponible</p>  <p>Autobiographie d'un "trans boy" musulman, d'origine algérienne et congolaise (CALEM - 2018, 1er janvier)</p>	<p>En savoir plus ici</p>  <p>Seconde édition (2017 / 500 p.)</p> <p>Prix éditeur Paypal - 26,90€ (livraison gratuite)</p> <p>Acheter</p>	 <p>2016 - PLUS, Mannheim Germany, (German, Arabic, English & Turkish)</p>	 <p>(2016 - Karama, IRAC)</p>  <p>Autobiographie du Dr. et Imam Lubovic-Mohamed Zahed (2012 - Max Milo)</p>	 <p>2018 - Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme - Université de Montréal</p>

Merci

Thank you

بارك الله فيك

www.calem.eu



CALEM RUMI's
Isiphephelo



Inclusive Mosque, refugees' Shelter
& progressive imam-es training Institute