

December, 2008

Assalāmu ‘Alaykum (Peace be with you),

Welcome to this interactive space. I hope that you will find these papers both agreeable and informative. They evolved either out of community discussions, or were designed with community discussion in mind. The first is on the topic of women Imams, and developed out a lengthy dialogue with community leaders, mainly Mubin Shaykh, the Imam of the Noor mosque in Toronto. The paper was posted on several other websites in a modified form and received many responses.

The second paper, ““Shari‘a” Tribunals,” developed in the aftermath of faith-based arbitration, when it became increasingly clear that there was a need for more internal dialogue between the various groups and individuals that comprise the Muslim community in Ontario. It was put up for discussion in a forum, which we called GTA forum. However, due to technical and other difficulties, we were unable to keep up with the email, and it was discontinued on the new CCMW website.

The third and fourth papers were also posted on the GTA discussion forum, the third, “Long-Term Strategies,” was written in the aftermath of the Toronto Seventeen, which shocked many people within the Muslim community and without. I presented a very brief summary of it at an event organized by the Canadian Islamic Congress. The fourth paper was written with the 2006 WISE conference in New York in mind, in which I also presented very briefly. It builds on the ““Shari‘a” Tribunals” paper and some of the responses I received for the “Women Imams” paper, particularly those of Hina Azam and Imam Zayd, which were well written and argued. The paper is entitled “How “Islamic” is “Shari‘a” law in relation to women?: Three cases in which the Qur’ān was overruled by Sunna, Ijmā‘ or Qiyās .”

As I am intending to further develop some of the ideas in these papers, they should be considered “work in progress.” For now, I hope they serve to stimulate some interesting discussions and hope that you will post your feedback on the webpage.

Nevin Reda