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The Opinion Pages | LETTERS

The Campaign to Ban Islamic Law

AUG. 5, 2011

To the Editor:

If David Yerushalmi (“Behind an Anti-Shariah Push,” front page, July 31) really wants to know “what is Shariah,” he should consider the full range of its practice. Those of us who have spent decades studying Islamic courts find that women win their cases the vast majority of times, that courts have always been open to change and that looking to (but not adopting) Islamic law in American courts has sometimes secured financial justice for immigrant Muslim women.

If we are to have a proper discussion of Islamic law in the real world, a far more open forum is required than Mr. Yerushalmi and many legislators seem willing to entertain.

LAWRENCE ROSEN

Princeton, N.J., July 31, 2011

The writer teaches anthropology at Princeton and law at Columbia and is the author of “The Justice of Islam” and “The Culture of Islam.”

To the Editor:

Contrary to David Yerushalmi's claims, America has nothing to fear from Shariah.

Islam requires that people must voluntarily abide by Shariah in order for it to be applied.

The example of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA — the oldest and longest established Islamic-American organization — is telling. When its missionary, Muhammad Sadiq, arrived in New York in 1920, he declared that he would not preach polygamy because American law deemed polygamy illegal and that obeying the rule of law was itself a policy of Shariah.

Concocting stories regarding Shariah — now that is something to be feared.

SARDAR ANEES AHMAD

Chairman

Muslim Writers Guild of America

Waterloo, N.Y., July 31, 2011

To the Editor:

An interesting juxtaposition of two front-page articles on Shariah law: the first reporting on what some feel is the “menace of Islamic law in the United States,” and the second highlighting the imprisonment of a young couple in Afghanistan whose romance has brought shame to their families and has probably earned them a horrific death sentence (“Afghans Rage at Young Lovers; A Father Says Kill Them Both”).

One does not have to be an Islamophobe to see that the brutal, antiquated practices of Shariah law in Islamic countries like Afghanistan serve to strengthen the argument that there is no place for its inclusion in the courts of the United States.

PIETRO ALLAR

New York, July 31, 2011

To the Editor:

There has been a vigorous human rights mobilization against the virulent anti-Muslim campaign now under way in Tennessee and across the country.

As reported, the organized anti-Islam assault is overwhelming the politics of many state legislatures. Tennessee, however, is also a case in point for the rise of an effective national mobilization against this wave of anti-Muslim hysteria. During the 2011 state legislative session, several hundred Muslims traveled to the State Capitol, urging legislators to oppose a bill that would have undermined constitutional protections for Muslims.

Joined by civil liberties and civil rights groups and clergy of many faiths, they succeeded in stripping the original bill of its most egregious provisions. This emerging human rights coalition inspires the continuing struggle to maintain our open and democratic society.

HEDY WEINBERG

Executive Director, American
Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee
Nashville, July 31, 2011

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