



Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity (Sunny Series in Medieval Middle East History)

Marion Holmes Katz

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Reconstructs the formative debates concerning ritual purity in Islamic law and practice.

Ritual purity is one of the least understood aspects of Islamic law and practice, yet it enjoys a prominent place in traditional legal texts and permeates the daily life of ordinary believers. *Body of Text* examines the emergence and crystallization of the law of ritual purity, using early sources to reconstruct the formative debates among Muslim scholars. The lively interaction among legal theorizing, caliphal politics, and popular practice illustrates the formation of the law, because as scholars strove for synthesis, they advanced competing understandings of the underlying structure and meaning of ritual purity. Katz demonstrates that no single theory can adequately interpret the diversity of opinion within the tradition.

“...recommend[ed] ... for those who are looking for a path into the sources of and the debates about formative Islam and law.” — *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

“For too long Islamic law has been seen by academics as a body of esoteric lore discernible only to the initiated. Katz masterfully positions a detailed and technical subject—early Islamic ritual law—within the broader context of comparative religions. This book will be the starting point for any future work on the subject.” — Paul M. Cobb, University of Notre Dame, author of *White Banners: Contention in 'Abbasid Syria, 750–880*

“Katz breaks new ground in the field of Islamic law. This is the first book to thoroughly examine the classical Islamic-law works as well as the works of Western anthropologists on matters of ritual purity.” — Farhat J. Ziadeh, author of *Property Law in the Arab World*

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