

[In this Issue](#)

[Recent Events](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Law and Leadership Summer Program 2013](#)

[Quick Links](#)

[Featured Video](#)

[Alumna Spotlight: Atiya Aftab](#)



[Help make KARAMAH's work possible](#)

Summer 2013 Newsletter

Assalamu Alaykum!

So much has happened around the world and at KARAMAH since our last newsletter. The "Arab Spring," which has affected the lives of millions of women and men continues to unveil its consequences. Until a few days ago, another war was imminent, and now the 12th anniversary of September 11. Has it really been that long since our world was turned upside down by these horrific events? When will it all end? When will the world heal and regain its sanity?

On the phone today, my mother told me: "even the Prophet Muhammad had moments of frustration. When he felt that way, what did God tell him? He revealed the verse in the Qur'an 'Fa inna ma'al 'usri yusra, Inna ma'al 'usri yusra--Verily, along with every hardship is relief. Verily, along with every hardship is relief.'" (Qur'an 94:5-6).

With this incredible reminder from one amazing woman, our fervor to advocate for women and men worldwide is renewed. Indeed, KARAMAH continues to advocate for the civil rights of American Muslims at home, and for human rights worldwide. To advance this commitment, a bright young lawyer, Awais Khaleel, has joined the KARAMAH team as the Associate Director of Civil Rights Law and Programs. Through his efforts, we hope to continue the critical civil rights advocacy we have been engaged in for the past 20 years.

At the same time, we are also feverishly advocating for gender equity and against domestic violence in our homes. There is a connection, often unmade, between family law and our civil rights. Many judges, lawyers, imams and leaders are unfamiliar with Islamic law, and confuse it with cultural customs. As a result, many questionable patriarchal practices and views are being attributed to our faith, thus contributing to a serious legal and cultural misunderstanding. We at KARAMAH see an important role for us to play in educating our community and the larger society about Islam. Join us as we continue to educate on Islamic and civil law from traditional and authentic perspectives. Please see our upcoming events below.

Yours,

Aisha Rahman, Esq.
Executive Director
Summer 2013

Policy Briefing: How Comprehensive Immigration Reform will Affect Muslim Communities



Comprehensive Immigration Reform is an issue on everyone's mind as the current bill moves has passed in the Senate and is up for vote in the House. KARAMAH is committed to advocating for the civil liberties and civil rights of all, particularly those of the Muslim community. Therefore, KARAMAH has a keen interest in any immigration bill that will likely significantly impact the Muslim community. KARAMAH featured Manar Waheed, policy director at South Asian Americans Leading Together, at a policy briefing on the proposed bill on June 11.

For years, immigration reform has been the topic of much debate and concern. After several failed attempts at finding "the right" solution, reform provisions have finally been passed by the Senate that hold tremendous promise of eventually becoming law. However, though the document has several positive aspects, there also exist many negative ones. Waheed addressed these issues at the KARAMAH briefing—a holistic approach to immigration reform proves to be not only necessary but also incredibly insightful to the situation at hand. [Read more.](#)

"Addressing Violence in the American Muslim Community" in Atlanta, Georgia



For the past several years, KARAMAH has partnered with the Department of Justice to educate service providers on how best to serve survivors of domestic violence and abuse in the Muslim community. One part of this project is conducting in-person trainings for lawyers, judges, advocates, therapists and other service providers. This summer, KARAMAH traveled to Atlanta, GA to conduct this training. At times, the southeast which has a large population of Muslims and Muslim immigrants, is underserved in training, education and awareness. KARAMAH conducted the training from May 29th to May 31st in Atlanta, KARAMAH partnering with Raksha, Inc. During the three days, KARAMAH spoke with, trained and did interactive exercises with lawyers, interfaith leaders, and advocates from around the country on cultural sensitivity, Islamic family law, and U.S. family law. Executive Director, Aisha Rahman, head of KARAMAH's Family Law Department

and a litigator, discussed common misconceptions about Islam and Islamic law, legal remedies for immigrant victims, as well as practical skills for service providers to assess the services and barriers for Muslim victims. The training aimed at building the knowledge and skills of these advocates to serve survivors and victims of domestic violence in Muslim communities. For more information on this project and to attend a training near you, click [here](#).

Strong Voices, Strong Communities--2013 LLSP Participants Address Muslim Women's Leadership

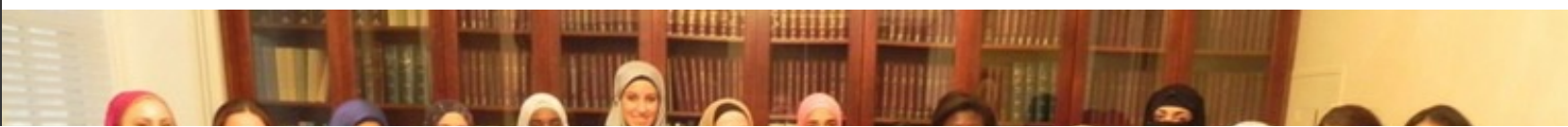


In a loud and clear voice, Zainab Ramahi, a law student from Canada and a KARAMAH LLSP 2013 participant boomed, "I will wear hijab and I will take my body back, swimming against the overwhelming tide of established patriarchy. Stop telling me what and who I need to look like, be like. I will not let my thoughts be limited to my limited role as a limited woman in Western society or Eastern society. Neither will I be reduced to a hyper-sexualized Orientalized version of who you think I am!"

Ms. Ramahi was one of eight, incredible, diverse Muslim women who on July 3rd told their stories of struggle, success and perseverance. They, along with the entire 24 person class of KARAMAH's Law and Leadership Summer Program hope to better their communities and affect change worldwide.

For the past 11 years KARAMAH has trained women from all over the world to be better thinkers. To analyze the arguments that they are presented way in a disciplined, methodical fashion. Armed with Islamic law taught by preeminent scholars of Islam, geared with leadership skills, and trained to be effective mediators in times of conflict, LLSP alumnae are changing the world. This year, KARAMAH celebrated women speaking in their own voice about their lives and issues that they are facing. Honing in on their public speaking skills, many of the participants spoke about the importance of education, highlighting their own personal achievements and goals for the future. The power of the personal narrative was felt in the crowded Busboys and Poets cafe--these women not only changed minds but affected hearts.

KARAMAH Successfully Completes its 11th Law and Leadership Summer Program!





Dr. Azizah al-Hibri and Aisha Rahman, Esq. Advocate for Healthy Families in Dearborn



"Where, besides in verse 4:34, does the word 'daraba' appear in the Qur'an?" This is the question that Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, Chair and Founder of KARAMAH posed to a group of 20 imams in Dearborn, MI last month. Both Dr. al-Hibri and KARAMAH's Executive Director and Director of Family Law Aisha Rahman, traveled to Dearborn to train three separate and specialized sessions: one for imams, one for judges, and the third for service providers to survivors of domestic violence.

Dr. al-Hibri, in her training both with the imams and with judges, explained that the Qur'an is a seamless web of ideas. Each concept, if not understandable in one place, is explained by other areas of the Qur'an. It is this logical reasoning that has defined scholarship and research at KARAMAH for the past twenty years and continues to echo in our training sessions. KARAMAH trains both on Islamic Law and U.S. Civil Law. We combine our knowledge and expertise to ensure that the Islamic jurisprudence is understood from a scholarly perspective and how these laws are prevalent in the lives of Muslim Americans today.

The Dearborn trainings were hosted by ACCESS, a Michigan-based nonprofit agency committed to advocating for and empowering individuals, families, and communities.

[Watch now!](#)

Want to learn more about Women's Rights. Islamic Law. and U.S. Civil Law?

Click the image below to watch the video from our spring lecture "Islamic Law and U.S. Civil Law: Women's Rights from a Comparative Legal Perspective"



Alumna Spotlight: Atiya Aftab

Atiya Aftab Esq., a graduate of KARAMAH's 2011 Law and Leadership Summer program (LLSP), graduated from Rutgers College majoring in political science and minoring in Arabic in 1988 and completed her law degree from Rutgers Law School in 1991. She held a clerkship with the Hon. James H. Coleman, Jr., retired Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. Atiya was an associate at Robinson, St. John & Wayne and was also a former Deputy Attorney General. She currently maintains her own practice providing pro bono representation to non-profit corporations.

Atiya was a member of Attorney General Peter Harvey's Arab and Muslim Advisory Committee and has been a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns since 2002. She is also Co-Chair of the South Brunswick Women's Commission and is involved in organizing its yearly leadership conference.

Atiya is an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers University, Department of Political Science, Center for Middle Eastern Studies. After her LLSP experience, Atiya was encouraged to continue her studies in Arabic and Islamic jurisprudence and law by taking private classes. LLSP also inspired Atiya to accept other leadership positions. She just ended her term as the first woman Chair of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey's (ISCJ) Board of Trustees. Atiya has served on the ISCJ's Board of Trustees for over 15 years. Atiya is also a co-founder of the New Jersey Muslim Lawyer's Association.

LLSP also inspired Atiya to co-found an interfaith group with Muslim and Jewish women the "Sisterhood of Salaam/Shalom." This group is currently sponsoring the Besa (Albanian Muslims who saved Jews from the Holocaust), film and exhibit at the local public library.

Atiya feels that the knowledge, friendship and connections that were an outgrowth of LLSP are so important in her life. She hopes to continue her current work and pursuing her goals, including helping to improve the conditions for women in the masjid.

-Upcoming Events-

October

KARAMAH is also looking forward to hosting unique programming during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For information on next month's "Love like the Prophet" series, email Awais Khaleel at akhaleel@karamah.org.

Interfaith Series

Look out for more information on KARAMAH's upcoming Interfaith Series later this year. We will have three lectures celebrating the legacies of Hawa (Eve), Sarah and Hajar (Hagar), and Mariam (Mary) from Christian, Jewish and Muslim perspectives.

Online CLE trainings

KARAMAH will be providing online CLE trainings in the fall. Look out for more information on our website at www.karamah.org or in our future newsletters.

Contribute to our Continued Growth Today!

[Donate](#) today to help make KARAMAH's work possible.

