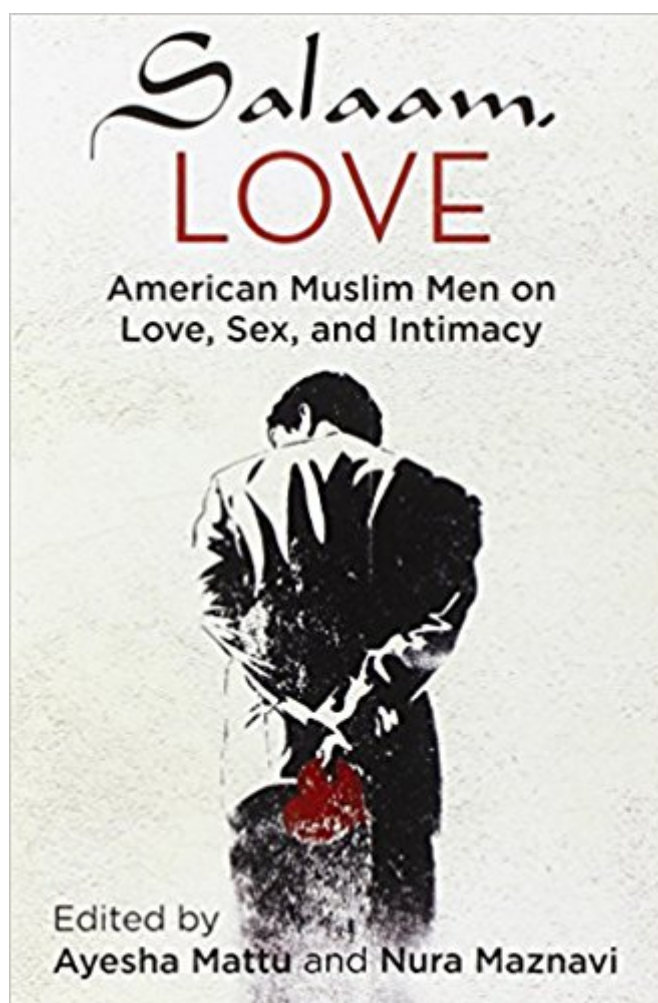


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# Salaam, Love: American Muslim Men On Love, Sex, And Intimacy



## Synopsis

From the editors of the groundbreaking anthology *Love, InshAllah* comes a provocative new exploration of the most intimate parts of Muslim men's lives. Muslim men are stereotyped as either oversexed Casanovas willing to die for seventy-two virgins in heaven or controlling, big-bearded husbands ready to rampage at the hint of dishonor. The truth is, there are millions of Muslim men trying to figure out the complicated terrain of love, sex, and relationships just like any other American man. In *Salaam, Love*, Ayesha Mattu and Nura Maznavi provide a space for American Muslim men to speak openly about their romantic lives, offering frank, funny, and insightful glimpses into their hearts and bedrooms. The twenty-two writers come from a broad spectrum of ethnic, racial, and religious perspectives—including orthodox, cultural, and secular Muslims—reflecting the strength and diversity of their faith community and of America. By raising their voices to share stories of love and heartbreak, loyalty and betrayal, intimacy and insecurity, these Muslim men are leading the way for all men to recognize that being open and honest about their feelings is not only okay—it's intimately connected to their lives and critical to their happiness and well-being.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a magnificent collection. It's all here: love, loss, confusion, sex, and more than sex, that magical quest for intimacy. In short, what it means to be human: seeking, finding, losing, cherishing. A wonderful contribution to American Muslim narratives in their own voices." —Omid Safi, author of *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet*

Matters. “This diverse and humane anthology documents what heartbreak and hilarity goes down (often in silence) in the American-Muslim community. It should also confuse government agents.”

• Ali Eteraz, author of *Children of Dust: A Portrait of a Muslim as a Young Man* “Intimate and compelling, *Salaam, Love* is a glimpse of the emotional balancing act American Muslim men face as they navigate the demands of faith, family and their own hearts. A must-read.”

• G. Willow Wilson, author of *Alif the Unseen* “*Salaam, Love* is an important book because it sheds light on a subject that is unknown and scary to many Americans: Muslim men and their relationship to love, sex, and intimacy. It’s a book that shows how similar we all are, how much we have in common, when there’s so much hate-based propaganda floating around about how different we all are. But beyond being an important book, it’s also a great read. Funny, sad, cool, hot, counterintuitive, and perhaps most importantly, sexy.”

• David Henry Sterry, author of *Chicken: Self-Portrait of a Young Man for Rent* “While many of the tales end in marriage, none ignore the flaws and difficulties presented by romantic relationships. Throughout, there are men who lost love, lost themselves and found things they weren’t looking for, as well as those still searching. Whether read all together or in single doses, faith and love abound, and there is no shortage of entertainment. In the introduction, the editors write, “There’s nothing like a good love story to connect us to one another and also help satisfy our curiosity about the lives of others.” This collection proves the honesty in that assertion.

• Kirkus Reviews “Simultaneously lighthearted entertainment and an important addition to public discourse around the place of Islam in America. | Indeed, the entire collection seeks to offer as much variety as possible, with stories reflecting a broad range of sexuality, ethnicity, religiosity, and romantic success. In this way, it pushes back against common cultural stereotypes of both Muslims and men, showing Muslims with a full range of ordinary American life experiences and showing men with tender and heartfelt emotions that they articulate beautifully. For insiders to the community, this work will prompt joyful recognition as well as thoughtful exploration of different experiences; for outsiders, it will counter one-dimensional negative images about American Muslims. For everyone it will be an insightful, thoroughly charming read.”

• Publishers Weekly

Ayesha Mattu is a writer and international development consultant. She lives in San Francisco. Nura Maznavi is a civil rights attorney, writer, and Fulbright scholar. She lives in Chicago.

This book is a very quick and easy read. I recommend it for young adults and all ages above. It presents great conversation pieces for spouses/partners, friends & family, and community discussions, not to mention classrooms. If you like this book, do not miss the opportunity to read the editors' original anthology, 'Love, InshAllah' which can also be found on (kindle and paperback). A few things about this book were particularly powerful for me: -The diversity, inclusiveness, and realness of experiences: people who were raised Muslim, converts, immigrants and non-immigrants, and people of various racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, degrees of religious practice, etc. -This book challenges very core understandings and constructions of masculinity that in turn are used to justify patriarchy. I hope the 50+ stories presented in both of these anthologies helps to challenge the monolithic narrative created and perpetuated around/about/by Muslims.

Such a gift to read these stories that are kept really hush-hush in our communities. I really appreciate that the editors curated a diverse set of stories, because this could have easily read as the same story over-and-over. Masha Allah to all the editors and contributors, because it takes gall to publish something like this! As a Muslim woman, I have a totally new and intimate perspective of an interesting set of Muslim men. My favorite story is "A Pair of Photos".

I think it was a good idea to continue the project with stories from the man's side. It is difficult to review the collection because all the authors were different. Although most literature in the world has been written by men, I nonetheless felt like I gained more insight into the male mind. Some of the stories were also sensitive and some stayed in my mind. One main thing that stayed in my mind after reading it was how much unspoken social privilege the men had, compared to the social pressures many Muslim women face. For instance, a young man loses his virginity accidentally and feels bad about it, but it doesn't have any ramifications on his life, reputation, or chances of starting a family. Another man cheats on his wife but gets to keep his wife, and the only one who loses out is the girlfriend. (I found that story particularly one sided - she is basically demonized for seducing him, whereas last time I checked, adultery is a two-way street, and he speaks about what drove him away from his wife but not about what he must have been doing to push her away. A breakdown of a marriage is usually a two way street as well.) Most of them wrote about deciding that they wanted a certain woman, and getting her. The only one who really seemed to lack social privilege was the black man living in Japan who was rejected on account of his race, but even he didn't have a raging father to deal with afterwards like the girl did. It would have been nice if there was more

self-awareness of the privilege that the men experienced, although of course it is an individual thing for an author to note. As with the book about women...one critique, as a Muslim, is that practising Muslims generally believe that it is out of bounds to have any physical contact with someone of the opposite gender unless they are a male relative or husband. Most of the people in the stories (males and females) did not abide by that, and that meant I couldn't relate to them. The other thing that struck me was that some of the stories seemed immature. I don't mean to be harsh because I understand these are autobiographies, and I don't mean it for all of them. However it makes me wonder if in the eschelon of society that some of the authors in, or perhaps their generation, had some sort of social mechanism that discouraged maturity. (After all, 30 is the new 20 now.) Of course, I would reiterate this is not the case for all of them, but it was another impression. Anyway I do think it was a good idea to put the book together and it gave me food for thought.

This book is like a breath of fresh air, finally bringing us the stories of Muslim men in America we so rarely hear. Some of the stories may start to sound a little repetitive, but overall I found them all interesting and engaging. Some of them quite deep and thoughtful, as well as heartfelt.

I loved the different authors and their experiences . This was a novel approach. Well diversified . Something which has not been written about the Muslim experience in the west.

Simply an excellent sequel to Love, Inshallah. I especially like how there are darker stories and not every one ends on a positive note.

It is a well written and authentic account. I found it the accounts personal yet relatable to many of my friends in the Muslim community.

Every story has been wonderful.

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