



Reasoning with God: Reclaiming Shari'ah in the Modern Age

By Khaled Abou El Fadl

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In light of recent concern over Shari'ah, such as proposed laws to prohibit it in the United States and conflict over the role it should play in the new Egyptian constitution, many people are confused about the meaning of Shari'ah in Islam and its role in the world today. In *Reasoning with God*, renowned Islamic scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl explains not only what Shari'ah really means, but also the way it can revitalize and reengage contemporary Islam.

After a prologue that provides an essential overview of Shari'ah, Abou El Fadl explores the moral trajectory of Islam in today's world. Weaving powerful personal stories with broader global examples, he shows the ways that some interpretations of Islam today have undermined its potential in peace and love. Rather than simply outlining challenges, however, the author provides constructive suggestions about how Muslims can reengage the ethical tradition of their faith through Shari'ah.

As the world's second largest religion, Islam remains an important force on the global stage. *Reasoning with God* takes readers—both Muslim and non-Muslim—beyond superficial understandings of Shari'ah to a deeper understanding of its meaning and potential.

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Editorial Review

Review

Islamic law is widely viewed in the West as synonymous with Nazi law; it cannot be reformed or redeemed. In *Reasoning with God*, Khaled Abou El Fadl demonstrates not only how distorted this perception is but also how bigoted it can be as well. Part memoir, part scholarly analysis, and part message to the perplexed, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in the relationship between Islam, Muslims, and modernity. The common leitmotif that runs throughout this volume is Abou El Fadl's unwavering ethical orientation. His survey and critique of the good, the bad, and the ugly within Muslim societies and his prognosis for the future of Islam is both persuasive and morally compelling. (Nader Hashemi)

This book is a personal intellectual journey of a knowledgeable mind. Khaled Abou El Fadl calls for a new methodology in dealing with both the scriptural sources and the world. A much-needed voice, constructively critical and full of hope. (Tariq Ramadan, University of Oxford)

Seldom have courage and vulnerability combined with erudition in as riveting a fashion as displayed in this book. Abou El Fadl is exacting without being abstruse, passionate but never loud. There is much to be debated in this highly informative, critically argued text. And one can only delight in the thought of how much learning and inspiration will come to those who engage it. (Sherman A. Jackson, King Faisal Chair of Islamic Thought and Culture; director, Center for Islamic Thought, Culture, and Practice; professor of Religion and American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California)

In this important new book, Khaled Abou El Fadl solidifies his well-earned reputation as a leading scholar and public voice on Islam by undertaking a bold and thorough exploration of the role of Islamic law and theology in the modern age. The author firmly situates Islam in the modern world and asks piercing questions about what it means to be Muslim. He stakes out a theological path to 'reclaim Shari'ah' by drawing on deep historical knowledge and cross-cultural training, making this a fascinating read regardless of one's personal religious beliefs. (Joel A. Nichols, University of St. Thomas School of Law)

About the Author

Khaled Abou El Fadl is Omar and Azmeralda Alfi Distinguished Professor in Islamic Law at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, where he is also chair of the Islamic Studies program. He was named a Carnegie Scholar in Islamic Law, has served on the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom, and served on the board of directors for Human Rights Watch, among other honors. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Great Theft* and *The Search for Beauty in Islam*.

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