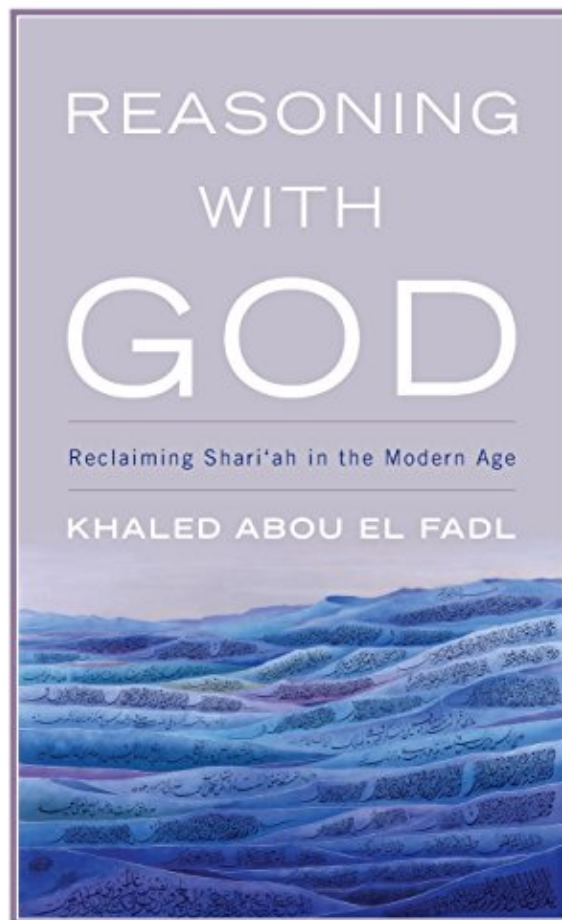


**REASONING WITH GOD: RECLAIMING
SHARI'AH IN THE MODERN AGE BY
KHALED ABOU EL FADL**



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REASONING WITH GOD

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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)

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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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A refreshing and tradition-rooted approach to shari'a

By Lnds

This book presents a complex and nuanced portrayal of the systems and institutions that have comprised the Islamic legal tradition in pre-modernity and especially in modernity. Abou El Fadl provides much insight into the challenges and issues that face Muslims--and their ethical and legal traditions--in the contemporary age. Abou El Fadl grapples honestly with some of the most entrenched and difficult challenges, including: the proper role of law in the lives of Muslims, the relationship and differences between law and ethics, and the role of the conscience, intellect, context, and culture in the practice of Islam and the lives of Muslims. I think this book deserves to be read by all thoughtful Muslims who seek to gain a deeper understanding of Islamic law and the ethical issues that confront us, as well as those Muslims who feel disenchanting with or disconnected from the Islam they see being practiced.

While as another reviewer has noted, the book is on the longer side and is not necessarily easy reading, in my opinion, those who read this book carefully will be amply rewarded by the knowledge, insights, and perspective they gain. The narrative style also makes the book quite engaging; Abou El Fadl artfully combines personal narrative and anecdotes with a more scholarly and historical approach.

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A very good book that should be carefully read by anyone seriously ...

By R. David Coolidge

A very good book that should be carefully read by anyone seriously interested in contemporary Islamic legal discourses. But it could have easily been edited down about 100 pages without losing the force and depth of the main argument.

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