



## Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights

By Abdulaziz Sachedina

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### **Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights** By Abdulaziz Sachedina

In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the International Declaration of Human Rights, a document designed to hold both individuals and nations accountable for their treatment of fellow human beings, regardless of religious or cultural affiliations. Since then, the compatibility of Islam and human rights has emerged as a particularly thorny issue of international concern, and has been addressed by Muslim rulers, conservatives, and extremists, as well as Western analysts and policymakers; all have commonly agreed that Islamic theology and human rights cannot coexist.

Abdulaziz Sachedina rejects this informal consensus, arguing instead for the essential compatibility of Islam and human rights. He offers a balanced and incisive critique of Western experts who have ignored or underplayed the importance of religion to the development of human rights, contending that any theory of universal rights necessarily emerges out of particular cultural contexts. At the same time, he re-examines the juridical and theological traditions that form the basis of conservative Muslim objections to human rights, arguing that Islam, like any culture, is open to development and change. Finally, and most importantly, Sachedina articulates a fresh position that argues for a correspondence between Islam and secular notions of human rights.

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## Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights By Abdulaziz Sachedina Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1844189 in Books
- Published on: 2014-03-01
- Released on: 2014-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.10" h x .70" w x 9.20" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

*"Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights* is a reverent, insightful, and truly critical work by Abdulaziz Sachedina, who is the leading Islamic theorist writing in English today. This book is must reading for Muslims who want to be full participants in western moral and political discourse, for Jews and Christians who want voices from the third great monotheistic religion of revelation to become part of their dialogical interaction, and even for secular people who want to engage religious voices in moral and political discourse that is truly inclusive." --David Novak, J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Professor of Jewish Studies, University of Toronto

"A searching investigation questioning the dilemmas facing Muslim thinkers with respect to human rights and a critique of the Western configuration of human rights as universal. Sachedina explores the possibility of an inclusive doctrine of human rights and he does so with passion and sensitivity. This book deepens our appreciation of human rights and also opens new frontiers of inquiry." --Ebrahim Moosa, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Duke University

"Sachedina's book is an excellent and stimulating contribution to the scholarship on the relationship between Islam and human rights and on developing an Islamic human rights system." --Niaz A. Shah, School of Law, University of Hull

"In the current cultural climate with all of its noise and ignorant posturing about Islam and Muslims, Sachedina's voice is invaluable. This work sets forth and begins to make good on an important and timely agenda within Islamic thought; hopefully future work will develop the agenda further." --*The Journal of Religion*

#### **About the Author**

**Abdulaziz Sachedina** is Professor and Endowed IIIT Chair in Islamic Studies at George Mason University.

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