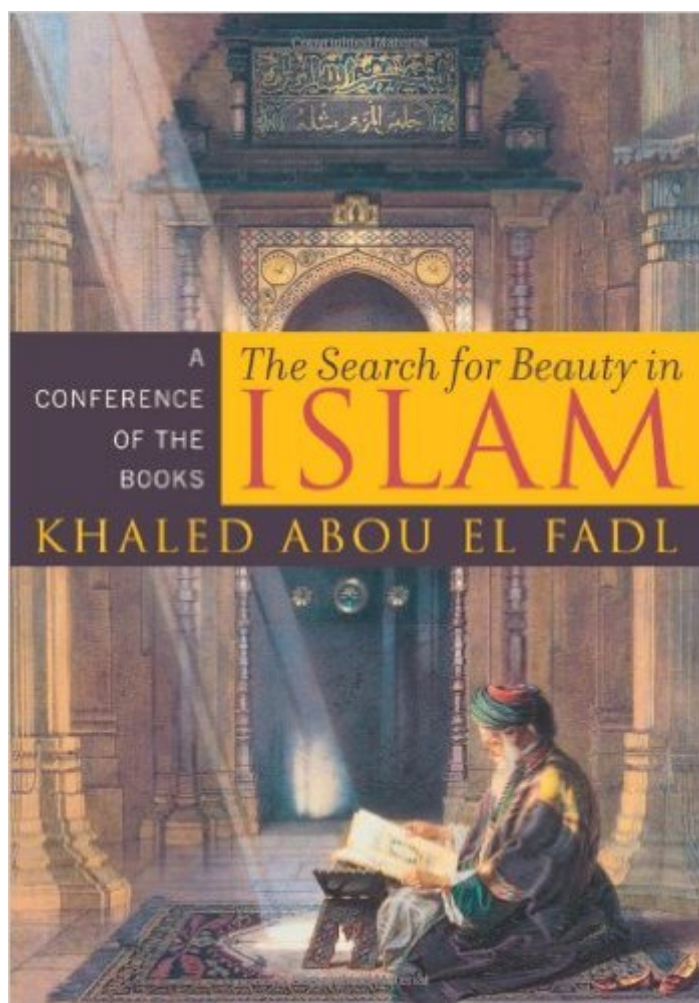


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# The Search For Beauty In Islam: A Conference Of The Books



## Synopsis

Khaled Abou El Fadl is a classically-trained Islamic jurist, an American lawyer and law professor, and one of the most important Islamic thinkers today. In this updated and expanded edition of *The Search for Beauty in Islam*, Abou El Fadl offers eye-opening and enlightening insights into the contemporary realities of the current state of Islam and the West. Through a 'conference of the books,' an imagined conference of Muslim intellectuals from centuries past, Abou El Fadl examines the ugliness that has come to plague Muslim realities and attempts to reclaim what he maintains is a core moral value in Islam—the value of beauty. Does Islamic law allow, or even call for, the gruesome acts of ugliness that have become so commonly associated with Islam today? Has Islam become a religion devoid of beauty, compassion and love? Based on actual cases, this book tackles different issues and problems in each chapter through a post-9/11 lens, discussing such topics as marriage, divorce, parental rights, the position of women, the veil, sexual abuse, wife-beating, terrorism, bigotry, morality, law, and the role of tradition. Abou El Fadl argues that the rekindling of the forgotten value of beauty is essential for Muslims today to take back what has been lost to the fundamentalist forces that have denigrated their religion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For those unfamiliar with Islam, Abou El Fadl cracks open the tradition. You can see Islamic reasoning at work as he compares sources, uses the ancient writers and parses out conclusions. Read especially his deconstruction of alleged authorizations for violence against women in Islam and his defense of the tradition of women scholars. You can also feel his anguish at how much of

Islam has turned its back on reason and the core belief that God commands the just and beautiful in favor of a narrow-minded fundamentalism. Christians struggling to defend against Christian fundamentalism will find an ally here. Even a single chapter on a "fatwa on dogs" shows how real intellectual inquiry operates and how fundamentalists distort it. And, if you love books, you will rejoice in his loving invocation of the conference of books, the collected wisdom of centuries, that swirl around him each night as he studies. It is a beautiful image, of books talking to each other over the years, and of each of us now joining that conversation as we read and think. My only complaint is that I would wish to have had more of this book: more Islamic analysis of issues. Abou El Fadl has been accused of being a 'sympathizer' of terrorists by Pipes; reading this book will show the total absurdity of that claim since his opposition of extremism is woven into his entire world view.

This is an exceptional collection of essays articulating a profound mixture of legal and spiritual inquiry. There are 2 ways to experience being human: male and female, and Khaled Abou el Fadl has a remarkable and attentive regard for the female experience. A main theme presented is the necessity for Muslims, especially now, to recollect and find ways to revive and express their legacy of beauty and refinement. This is a book that can be appreciated by thoughtful people of any faith perspective.

This is the most beautiful, moving and life-changing book. It will open your eyes to an Islam that you have not seen anywhere else. It defies the ugliness that people associate with Islam today and gives you the substance of what beauty is and is supposed to be in Islam--how to seek it, live it and aspire to it.

Rarely have I read a book written in modern times about Islam that is so beautiful and truly delves into the matter that this book talks about. You need not to believe in everything Abou El Fadl believes in nor to even be Muslim to truly grasp the beauty of this book. This book is not a book about the nuances of Sharia or the arguments for or against a certain opinion but rather the author's heartfelt emotions that guide him through his life. After reading this book I promptly bought one myself.

One of the BEST books I have ever read. I normally enjoy fiction much more than functional non-fiction, but this flows in a way that is an engaging tutorial on the intricacies of Islamic jurisprudence and misconceptions. READ IT with an open heart :)

I love this book! I've bought several over the years and given them as gifts. This book is very unique because it's written in a very personal form, almost like a diary, where the author, each evening has philosophical discussions about modern issues with wise muslim scholars of the past. Abou El Fadl whom I actually went to meet after reading the book is a progressive muslim, with many shared views to my own and my upbringing. I feel this book must be required reading for all muslims, for them to truly see the beauty in Islam, and not what they see on tv done by non spiritual people in the name of faith. a true tragedy. This book is divided in to separate chapters, so you don't have to read them sequentially, and you don't have to be an expert in religion (there's no such thing actually) to enjoy this book, just have an open mind and an open heart. His other books are more academic and more for the serious student, but for me, this book, and the book by Elif Shafak called The forty rules of love are beautiful books to truly move you, and to come to the realization that all faiths are the same in essence, and the true practice is kindness and compassion to yourself and others.

**DON'T LET THE "PIRATES OF THE INTELLECT" WIN THE BATTLE!** Based on actual cases, these original essays present an honest and critical evaluation of the problems and challenges that confront Muslims in the contemporary world. Using the Muslim experience in the United States as a lens, the author examines what he identifies as a pervasive alienation suffered by Muslims over their place in history, source of identity, and moral foundations. The author imagines himself sitting in a conference of Islamic books-- the Conference convening to examine the contemporary Muslim condition. Various influential intellectual trends are represented in this Conference, and the author is an active participant who reacts with introspection and critical moral insight, positioning himself on a bridge between the intellectual heritage of Islam and the oppressive Muslim present, arguing that the salvation of one is intricately linked to the other, and attempting to reclaim a core moral value in Islam-- the value of beauty. From "The Pirates of the Intellect" to "On the Beating of Wives" to "Dial-a-Fatwa", these 62 highly readable essays are must reading for anyone with some knowledge of Islam and the present Muslim condition. Rescue this exciting work from obscurity and see why the "pirates of intellect" don't want you to read it! Teachers/Librarians: 9th grade to adult - Pirates of the Intellect are everywhere. . . wield your power and order a copy now!

The title is not normally something I'd be attracted to, because I would assume that the content is boring. However, I had listened to the author online, and found him to be knowledgeable and

intelligent, capable of employing reason as a tool toward finding the truth, while remaining authentic to the sources and consistent in his methodology (or at least as consistent as humans can strive to be). The book was an eye-opener - I knew our discussions on tradition had been far more rich than they are now, but hadn't realized the extent of it. Highly recommended.

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