



# Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation

*Tariq Ramadan*

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## **Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation** Tariq Ramadan

Tariq Ramadan has emerged as one of the foremost voices of reformist Islam in the West, notable for urging his fellow Muslims to participate fully in the civil life of the Western societies in which they live. In this new book, Ramadan addresses Muslim societies and communities everywhere with a bold call for radical reform. He challenges those who argue defensively that reform is a dangerous and foreign deviation, and a betrayal of the faith. Authentic reform, he says, has always been grounded in Islam's textual sources, spiritual objectives, and intellectual traditions. But the reformist movements that are based on renewed reading of textual sources while using traditional methodologies and categories have achieved only adaptive responses to the crisis facing a globalizing world. Such readings, Ramadan argues, have reached the limits of their usefulness.

Ramadan calls for a radical reform that goes beyond adaptation to envision bold and creative solutions to transform the present and the future of our societies. This new approach interrogates the historically established sources, categories, higher objectives, tools, and methodologies of Islamic law and jurisprudence, and the authority this traditional geography of knowledge has granted to textual scholars. He proposes a new geography which redefines the sources and the spiritual and ethical objectives of the law creating room for the authority of scholars of the social and hard sciences. This will equip this transformative reform with the spiritual, ethical, social and scientific knowledge necessary to address contemporary challenges. Ramadan argues that radical reform demands not only the equal contributions of scholars of both the text and the context, but the critical engagement and creative imagination of the Muslim masses. This proposal for radical reform dramatically shifts the center of gravity of authority. It is bound to provoke controversy and spark debate among Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

## **Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation Details**

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## **Meδ Reδ?α says**

La question du renouveau des sciences islamiques est au cœur de l'islam contemporain. Les musulmans d'Orient et d'Occident expriment un urgent besoin de repenser le fiqh (droit et jurisprudence). Ils se demandent comment concilier la vie moderne et la foi, souvent devenue secondaire dans les sociétés sécularisées. Il convient pour cela de distinguer ce qui, dans les Textes, est immuable de ce qui est susceptible de changement.

Cette démarche est le produit d'un questionnement sur la nature des crises et des blocages qui paralysent la pensée musulmane contemporaine : pourquoi le recours à l'ijtihâd (lecture critique), depuis si longtemps invoqué, n'a-t-il pas produit le renouveau escompté ? Pourquoi l'esprit novateur des origines a-t-il laissé place à des démarches frileuses qui ne pensent la réforme qu'en termes d'adaptation au monde, et non d'audace et de transformation ? Comment expliquer le fossé immense apparu entre les " sciences islamiques " et les autres disciplines, qui empêche de répondre comme il se doit aux défis du siècle ? Islam, la réforme radicale propose une nouvelle approche méthodologique des sources du droit et de la jurisprudence islamiques, afin d'accompagner les évolutions sociales et scientifiques et d'apporter au progrès humain une contribution éthique et créative.

L'ouvrage se complète d'études de cas pratiques et concrets : médecine, arts et culture, relations hommes-femmes, écologie, religion et politique, etc. Œuvre de réflexion et de propositions, ce plaidoyer offre une synthèse de la pensée critique de Tariq Ramadan.

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## **Meδ Reδ?α says**

The question of the renewal of the Islamic sciences is at the heart of contemporary Islam. Muslims in East and West express an urgent need to rethink fiqh (law and jurisprudence). They wonder how to reconcile modern life and faith, often secondary in secularized societies. For this purpose it is necessary to distinguish between what in the texts is immutable of what is susceptible of change.

This approach is the product of a questioning about the nature of crises and blockages that paralyze contemporary Muslim thought: why has not the use of ijthâd (critical reading), so long invoked, produced the expected renewal? Why has the innovative spirit of origins given way to cautious approaches that think reform only in terms of adaptation to the world, and not boldness and transformation? How to explain the immense gap between the "Islamic sciences" and the other disciplines, which prevents us from answering the challenges of the century as it should? Islam, radical reform proposes a new methodological approach of sources of Islamic law and jurisprudence, in order to accompany social and scientific evolutions and to bring to human progress an ethical and creative contribution.

The book is complemented by practical and practical case studies: medicine, arts and culture, gender relations, ecology, religion and politics, etc. A work of reflection and proposals, this plea offers a synthesis of Tariq Ramadan's critical thinking.

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## **Elizabeth Moghadam says**

While containing arguments both rational and feasible, I am afraid Tariq Ramadan's intentions for this book will be overshadowed by far right-wing westerners using Ramadan as their token Muslim. Ramadan's mother being the daughter of the founder of The Muslim Brotherhood allows for a very interesting perspective. That's where my praise will end I am afraid. I am confused as to who exactly is Ramadan's target audience. Who is it exactly that must embrace the modern west, it certainly can't be the extremists because they are beyond reasoning, is it the Muslims that fall in-between? Statistically, the Muslims that fall 'in-between' who are violent and archaic in nature belong to low-socioeconomic backgrounds with little to no education outside of Islamic education, resulting in widespread low IQ. Proper education is not a Western phenomenon. It would be my argument that the problem lies within how the education system within Muslim countries favours and benefits Muslims who are wealthy and kicks aside all other Muslims to somehow claw their way to the top. A cultural shift is in need to change, not a reformist religious one, cultures always change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worst, religion simply follows suit. If I am wrong and Islam is in need of reform alone, I must ask that Christianity be reformed thanks to the continued bombing of abortion clinics and Synagogues, the murder of abortion doctors, of gay, lesbian and transgender people, of Jewish people and for the creation of the Ku Klux Klan. I must also ask for reform on Judaism for the continued murder of gay, lesbian and transgender people, for the barbaric murder and the abuse of authority and power on occupied Palestinian land. But I will not, because they are blanket statements that serve no purpose and pushes not progress, but regress.

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## **Idil Osman says**

This is THE book on true and effective reform of the contemporary muslim world and with it Professeur Ramadan has effectively entered the Pantheon of great muslim reformists of the likes of Al Ghazali. I was already a convinced fan of the professeur but this book put my admiration for him over the moon!!

As you can tell, I am an enthusiast of the thought of Dr.Ramadan but I think that his thought has actually evolved along the years: to my great surprise he is actually getting better and better and this book is the culmination of his genius. I have actually read the french version of the book in 2009 since I am a francophone first and I can confidently say that « mon maitre a penser» effectively nailed it! He mastered in depth the theme of transformational reform that he proposed in this book; however, like all great intellectual masterpiece, it might turn off the casual reader who is not interested in in depth historical analysis and scholarly reasoning.

In conclusion, I would say that this book could not be more timely as more and more muslims, just like the rest of humanity, are now faced with the greatest choice of our age: evolve or die.

I would recommend this book to all serious intellectual out there who is looking to comprehend the muslim world and what it is currently going through and why it needs URGENT radical reform.

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## **Fatima says**

The book is the result of more than two decades of thorough research to make a diagnosis of the Muslim's

intellectual crisis and to come up with an alternative approach...worth reading over and over!

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## **Zeina says**

It was such a unique experience to learn from

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## **Yasser Abdulaal says**

Latest, on women:

"A lasting loving marriage cannot be achieved through prescriptive religious reminders, fatawa or lists of duties and rights. Yet unfortunately, Islamic discourse on marriage does mainly amount to just that and men very often make use of this fact: quite often indeed, men who never pay attention to any of Islam's spiritual teachings (regarding daily or married life) insist, when crisis comes, on their islamic rights as husbands, relying on a tradition that they know is favorable to them and they can bend to their wishes. Such formalism, which relies on a religious and cultural tradition to justify it's commands, results in a vicious circle that maintains suffering and nurtures hypocrisy. Whether in traditional societies or in the west, men remind women of their duties and do not hesitate to draw a list of their wn rights to choose, decide (for the couple), or even engage in polygamy without considering women's rights and the social and religious conditions that absolutely must be respected. Fuqaha' very often remain silent and sometimes even share in such hypocritical male deviations.

What must be revised is the whole approach and such teachings about marriage, women and men-scholars, psychologists, social workers- must engage in this together, on the basis of everyday life and in the light of scriptural sources. Couples must be advised and supported by insisting on the right to choose one's spouse based on love which once felt, should be nurtured, maintained and deepened through thoughtfulness, dialogue and the personal fulfillment of each of the partners. We must tackle the sensitive yet essential issue of how difficult it is to be a husband or a wife today..."

Islamic reform is mentioned within the scripture itself.

Reform and Ijtihad:

The Profit asks his messenger to Yemen what he would do if faced with a legal problem that has no reference in the text, Mu'adh -the messenger- replies: then I shall exert myself to the utmost (Ajtahidu) to formulate my own judgment.

This stands in contrast with the literalist method of over exerting the text to extract rules and laws.

Although there has been a trend of Tajdeed (renewal, reform) The author calls it Adaptive Reform, a reform that responds to new issues defensively by rereading the scriptures and coming up with protective solutions to adapt to the invading surrounding.

While the Transformational Reform (what the author is proposing) is a reform that works in a different way; reading the world and applying the core ethic in order to transform it. Rather than trying to protect the top branches, transformational reform heals the the tree. This cannot be done without knowledge of the human context not mere knowledge of the text and language.

As an example, Tariq Ramadan argues that Muslims have tried to adapt to the global financial system by creating protective Islamic banking solutions shielding them within small spheres of Halal (lawful) while they did nothing to change the outside. This transformational reform would require mundane knowledge and ethical grounds. Tearing believes that rereading the text has reached it's boundaries... and it is time to





## **Wael says**

Ce livre m'a usé. Ce n'ai pas sa longueur mais plutôt par l'intensité des informations qui y sont inscrites.

Le livre se divise principalement en trois parties:

1. TR explique le besoin et le pourquoi de la réforme: les adaptations habituelles des fatawa aux questions posées par le contexte actuel ne sont plus acceptés et ne font qu'assombrir le côté lumineux de la religion: à savoir sa capacité à l'adaptation au contexte tout en gardant une certaine fidélité aux Textes.
2. Petit parcours historique sur les écoles de droit et de la jurisprudence islamique en distinguant trois approches principales: approche inductive (hanafites), approche déductive (shafiites), et une approche par les objectifs supérieurs de la Voie (maqasid al chari'a)
3. Développement de l'idée de la réforme: Il propose de revoir les objectifs supérieurs de la Voie, en intégrant des objectifs inspirés par l'Univers. Les sources de droit seront l'Univers et les Textes et non pas les Textes seulement comme tente de nous le faire croire certains courants islamiques. Et pour finir, une étude de cas dans différents domaines, afin de montrer les implications de cette réforme.

4 étoiles car l'auteur semble être des fois trop réconciliant avec la "modernité".

Le livre mérite une seconde lecture ... à suivre !

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**????????? ?????? says**

Nourishes the soul and mind...

Very interesting read

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## **Ibrahim Al-bluwi says**

In this book, Tariq Ramadan calls for a radical reform in Islamic Jurisprudence; a reform at the level of fundamentals rather than at the level of Ahkam. "Transformational reform not adaptation reform" he says.

The main idea he presents is that there are two revealed books not one: The Quran and the book of the universe, and that the second book should be given more weight and its scholars should be on an equal footing with the "scholars of the texts". "The center of gravity" according to Ramadan should be moved from the scholars of the texts to be between them and the scholars of the book of the universe; i.e. the scientists, physicists, sociologists, psychologists, etc.

The book begins with a presentation of how Ramadan thinks reform should occur and then goes into a detailed discussion of "case studies" of issues that badly need reform like education, women, arts, etc.

I found the book interesting and brave. I have always thought that we need a reform at the level of the



