

Noah Feldman

Author of *What We Owe Iraq*

THE FALL
AND RISE OF THE
**Islamic
State**

The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State

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The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State Noah Feldman

Perhaps no other Western writer has more deeply probed the bitter struggle in the Muslim world between the forces of religion and law and those of violence and lawlessness as Noah Feldman. His scholarship has defined the stakes in the Middle East today. Now, in this incisive book, Feldman tells the story behind the increasingly popular call for the establishment of the shari'a--the law of the traditional Islamic state--in the modern Muslim world.

Western powers call it a threat to democracy. Islamist movements are winning elections on it. Terrorists use it to justify their crimes. What, then, is the shari'a? Given the severity of some of its provisions, why is it popular among Muslims? Can the Islamic state succeed--should it? Feldman reveals how the classical Islamic constitution governed through and was legitimated by law. He shows how executive power was balanced by the scholars who interpreted and administered the shari'a, and how this balance of power was finally destroyed by the tragically incomplete reforms of the modern era. The result has been the unchecked executive dominance that now distorts politics in so many Muslim states. Feldman argues that a modern Islamic state could provide political and legal justice to today's Muslims, but only if new institutions emerge that restore this constitutional balance of power.

"The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State" gives us the sweeping history of the traditional Islamic constitution--its noble beginnings, its downfall, and the renewed promise it could hold for Muslims and Westerners alike.

The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State Details

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From Reader Review The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State for online ebook

Zafar Iqbal says

Dr. Feldman's book offers a fresh perspective on the working of the classical Islamic state, covering a period from the early days of Islam through the end of nineteenth century.

The book brings to light how the shari'a, as the unwritten Islamic constitution, was instrumental in shaping the Islamic state over the centuries; until the modern "reforms" movements in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire rendered it (the Islamic law) politically and constitutionally irrelevant.

Significantly, Dr. Feldman has presented refreshingly new ideas on the constitutional role historically played by the Islamic scholars, the ulema, in the development and functioning of the classical Islamic state, and the high degree of prestige and respect they commanded.

The book explains how the ulema, the Islamic scholars, as the acknowledged interpreters of shari'a , were able to keep the autocratic rulers of the day beholden to the law/shari'a, and were ,thereby, instrumental in ensuring the supremacy of the rule of law in the classical Islamic state.

Anyone interested in the current movements for the restoration of democracy in Muslim countries, and especially those following the current uprisings in the Arab world will find this book timely, informative and helpful.

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Ammar Alabbasi says

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Najla Hammad says

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Abu Hasan says

Abdullah Alqasir says

Bookish Dervish says

Ahmed says

The best thing I've read on what an "Islamic state" looks like. Beginning with a historic view, it concisely explains in terms of political theory and separation of powers how the original system during the Islamic caliphate worked, with shari'a acting as an unwritten constitution and the scholarly class being an (informal) check on the powers of the executive, from whom the judiciary were appointed. The second part then delves into precisely how this went wrong, leading to the downfall of the Ottoman empire.

In the final part he analyzes the shape of the state which modern Islamist movements advocate, how it would function, and the reasons for its lasting appeal in the Islamic world. It's a refreshing and nuanced analysis lacking in prejudice or fear-mongering, well-researched historically and avoiding the pitfalls most contemporary commentators make when discussing Islamic political movements. I recommend it to anyone who's interested in the convergence of Islam and politics, and its aim for the future.

Mohamed Al-Moslemany says

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Hany says

Very smartly written book. Highly recommended to those who want to understand the political history of Islam.

Mohammed says

This one is an absolute must. It simply warms my heart to know that there exists a professor in America, at one of the highest institutions of learning (Harvard) who is sympathetic to the plight of the scholars of Islam ('ulama). He does a fantastic job of introducing the genius of the scholars, their role in balancing the executive Caliphate power, and their high status in the way of Islam (both as men of religion, and men of the world).

Furthermore, his analysis of how the Caliphate fell once the scholars were removed from their prestigious and important role of balancing the executive power post World War I is simply astonishing. With the onslaught of imperial/colonial law implemented in Muslim lands away from the tradition of the scholars as interpreters of the divine law (Shar'i'a) led to the eventual downfall of the Caliphate, and more importantly for the first time in 1300 years, the fall of the Islamic State.

However, as the title so eloquently demonstrates, this fall in the state is in fact appearing as an anomaly. The people want Shar'i'a law back since autocratic rule has simply not worked for both the countries in the middle east, and their western allies. Hence, the rise of the Islamic state is imminent, and has incredible consequences for the world.

Hence, to be a Muslim in this age is extremely interesting. Because if the Islamic state were to come back, then this age we are living in without an Islamic state (about 100 years out of 1430) will simply be an "accidental mistake" in the history of the Muslims.

Whatever happens, was supposed to happen.

Wa'alhumdulillahi' rubil'alameen
