



# Psychoanalysis and the Challenge of Islam

*Fethi Benslama*

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## **Psychoanalysis and the Challenge of Islam** Fethi Benslama

Fethi Benslama is a psychoanalyst who, although a secular thinker, identifies himself as a person of Muslim culture who rejects ready-made explanations for Islamic fundamentalism. In that spirit, Benslama demythifies both Islam and Western ideas of the religion by addressing the psychoanalytic root causes of the Muslim world's clash with modernity and subsequent turn to fundamentalism.

Tracing this ideological strain to its origins, Benslama shows that contemporary Islam consists of a fairly recent hybridization of Arab nationalism, theocracy, and an attempt (both naïve and deadly) to ground science in faith. Combining textual analysis and Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalysis, he examines Islam's foundation, providing fresh readings of the book of Genesis, the Koran, *The Arabian Nights*, and the work of medieval Islamic philosophers.

Refreshingly, Benslama writes without ideological bias and undoes the simplistic, Western view of Islam while refusing to romanticize terrorism or Muslim extremism. This is a penetrating work that reveals an alternate history of the Islamic religion and opens new possibilities for its future development.

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