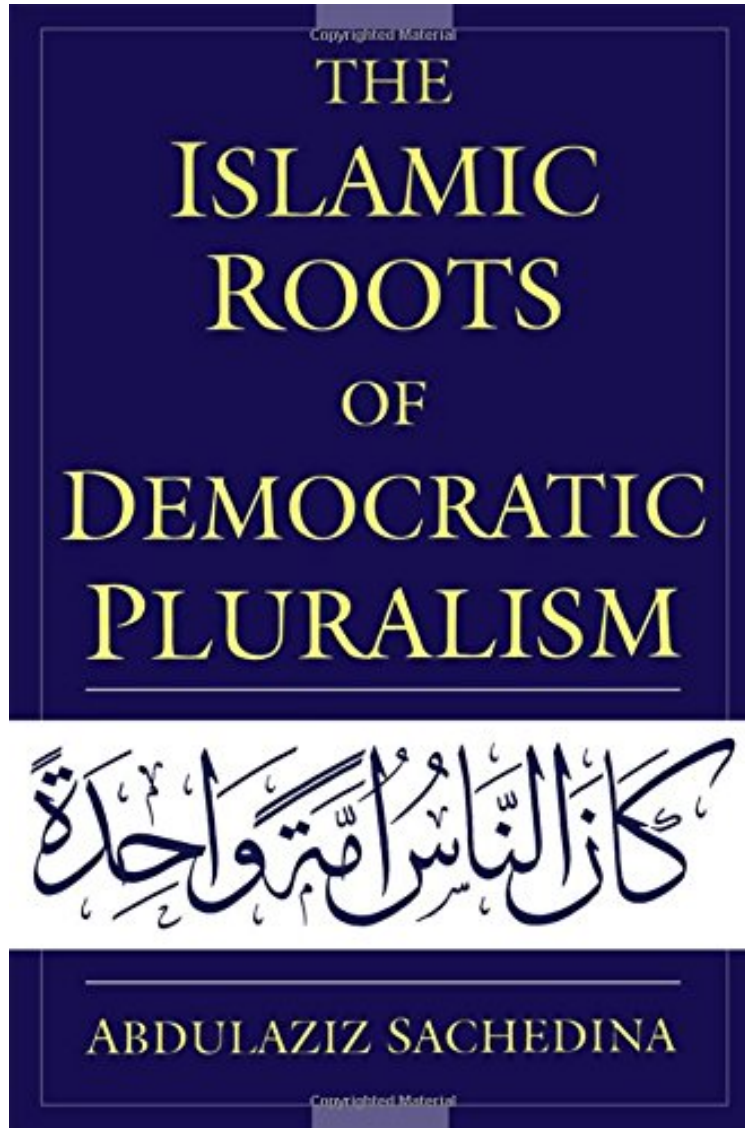


## The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism

*Abdulaziz Sachedina*

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#1598575 in Books Abdulaziz Sachedina 2007-04-16Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.10 x .70 x 9.00l, .68 #File Name: 0195326016192 pagesThe Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism | File size: 20.Mb

**Abdulaziz Sachedina : The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism:

1 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Peaceful Islamic PluralismBy William Garrison Jr."The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism" by A. A. Sachedina (hardback 2001; reprinted not revised as a paperback 2007). The author portrays himself as a `moderate' Muslim, who contends that `early' Islam in the Quran touted that Muslims should live in peaceful coexistence with Christians and Jews - that Muslims should not dominate over the latter. [This book was written about a year before the Islami-kaze attacks upon the NYC Twin Towers on 9/11/2001.] Critics of

Islam contend that the Muslim prophet Muhammad underwent a religious transformation: from being a peacenik-oriented orator when he was a minority spokesman in Mecca, then as he gained military strength in Medina he turned into a despot before seeking to spread his new religion by military force upon Mecca and surrounding communities. Sachedina contends that there was no such transformation; that Muhammad really wasn't another desert bandit but merely persuaded surrounding communities to 'surrender' ['islam'] to Allah through Muhammad's military forces. Sachedina contends that militant, fundamentalist, war-mongering Islamists misunderstand jihad. Sachedina contends that these Islamists believe (in error) that the Medina-ayats abrogated (naskh) the earlier peaceful-era ayats issued in Mecca; Sachedina contends that no verses were ever abrogated (p. 29-30). Mr. Sachedina is a very literate author who presents his "Islam is peace" arguments well - if you can convince yourself that Muhammad [al-insan al-kamil] was really a peacenik. (For a contrarian perspective, I would recommend: "The Truth About Muhammad" by R. Spencer.) Islamo-realists would probably argue that Sachedina is practicing taqiyya/ al-taqiyya. I recommend this short book to Muslims, kuffar and zindiq. 3 of 10 people found the following review helpful. More Islamic Manipulations By Samuel A. Nigro Book Review of The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism by Abdulaziz Sachedina May, 2011 Oxford University Press, 2001 by Center for Strategic and International Studies Samuel A. Nigro, M.D. Having asked The Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy for a list of the Koranic verses and Islamic scripture which support its efforts, I was told that there were likely thousands of such verses and that this was the best book available. The book's pattern is to describe in minimalist fashion many undemocratic anti-pluralist events of Islamic based discrimination, intolerance, hostility and violence consistent with contemporary and historical terrorism over the centuries. But then, for each negative event, it offers contradictory accommodating verses to explain, balance and rebut the need for the undemocratic anti-pluralistic events to have occurred. One is comforted by the fact that Islamic scholars do have open-minded free-conscience based tolerant supporting scriptures from which peaceful, equal co-existence with non-Muslims may occur. Indeed, welcome is the fact that the book is dedicated To those who uphold the quality and dignity of all humans. But the book is tremendously disappointing in that it proves nothing, and the thousands of comforting verses were never forthcoming. Sachedina just offers examples from the Koran and Islamic scripture which can, if one is so inclined, be used by Muslims to talk themselves out of following undemocratic anti-pluralistic writings. Repeatedly, readers will often remember that Islam itself literally means submission euphemistically propagandized as submission to God. But the practical reality is that submission in most Islam and in this book means submission to the religious-political leader in charge i.e., the unelected leader who chooses which verses are to be followed for the time being. To recapitulate, the self-understanding of early Muslims led to a relatively tolerant attitude toward the people of the Book in Islam. From the standpoint of Muslim theology, there is no doctrine in the Koran to suggest that Islam saw itself as the final dispensation in the line of prophetic revelations and hence viewed all the pre-Koranic monotheistic traditions as superceded by its emergence. Quite to the contrary, on the basis of the common belief in one God, a tradition going back to the Prophet confirms the legitimacy of the earlier religions and relates his mission to the missions of all the prophets by declaring: We the prophets are brothers and our religion is one and the same (wahid) (page 68). But then this is all subtly denied in the next paragraph: The function of the prophet Mohammed was to restore the pure monotheism of Abraham, which, according to the Koran, had been distorted by Abraham's earlier heirs, Jews, and Christians. Consequently, Islam, which Mohammed presented to human kind, just as Moses and Jesus had done earlier, had priority over both those communities (Pg. 68). Essentially, this happens time and again through the book. The author acknowledges a democratic right or wrong in Islamic history, but then whatever acknowledged will be minimalized, neutralized and then rationalized by other interpretations from elsewhere in Koranic scripture so that democratic pluralism is converted but untranslated into submission. And, as is usual for books about Islam, love is not even in the index. Basically, the Koran and all Islamic scripture comprise a huge negative word puzzle of copious split thinking, depression, and manic violence. Contrasting Islamic words are less frequent and from when Mohammed was in Mecca the first time (Mecca I); these positive words range from monotheism, pacificism, and monogamy, to other veiled themes of Catholicity which he experienced when originally converted from the paganism into which he was born. Putting all together, Islamic writings comprise a monstrous word salad in which anything can be found and incorporated as one feels or needs, as Sachedina did for this book. It is nice to read some effort to be positive about democracy and pluralism, but no one in all Islam has the authority to permanently clarify which words are to be used, but all should submit, if you know what is good for you, to whomever happens to be the one with the social political power at the time which is probably why I could not find any Arabic translations of this book. Reluctantly, I call the book propaganda because it is a soft sell of Islam by proclaiming the tradition of Koranic pluralism to develop a culture of restoration, of just intrareligious and interreligious relationships in a world of cultural and religious diversity (Pg 138-139). Propaganda is especially appropriate because the book is obviously written for non-Muslims, i.e., it has not been translated into Arabic, when, no doubt, Muslims in Pakistan, Afganistan, Saudi Arabia, et al need this book more than any non-Muslim of the West. If Sachedina and The Center for Study of Islam and Democracy are being sincere and honest in wanting to promote democratic pluralism, the book should be in Arabic and distributed by the millions. But, unfortunately, reading between the lines, it is Islam uber alles with little likely impact of changing Muslims from the unfree, enslaving, child sexualizing, inbreeding, oppressive,

murdering messages from the Koran and Islamic scripture which the book allows but in a nicer voice. Sachedina proclaims that Islam is not monolithic, undemocratic or antipluralistic, but nevertheless, the closing words are Islams overlapping social and religious ideals can inspire the creation of pluralistic, democratic institutions in a best-Muslim global community of the 21st Century. Well, it has not happened in 1400 years and will not happen now, because what Sachedina really means by best-Muslim is really the Shiriaand, as is common with Islamic scholars, the words may be English such as quality and dignity (from the opening dedication statement), but the meanings are different from what is usual and customary. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. SincereBy CEWProfessor Sachedina is my professor at the University of Virginia, and I can honestly say he has a sincere and honest belief in both the ability of Islam to incorporate democracy and the essential nature of human dignity--both of which are important for mutual respect and acknowledgment of the contributions Islam and pluralism can make to the world today. This book is accessible and well planned and thought out, and a must read for anyone who wants a picture of Islam from a deeply religious and pious man, but who is not an exclusivist.

This book tackles the most significant issues facing Muslims today. Sachedina argues that we must reopen the doors of religious interpretation--to correct false interpretations, replace outdated laws, and formulate new doctrines. His book critically analyzes Muslim teachings on such issues as pluralism, civil society, war and peace, and violence and self-sacrifice.

Reasserts Islam's potential as a source of tolerance and pluralism. One can only hope that this wok is translated into Arabic and widely read by Muslims."Middleeast JournalAbout the AuthorAbdulaziz Sachedina is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia.