world. It is this resistance that Muhammad calls the Greater Jihad, the struggle within and against oneself.

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Khaled Abou El Fadl (with Jeremy Waldron, John L. Esposito, Noah Feldman, and others), Joshua Cohen and Deborah Chasman, eds, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 136 pp. Pbk. $16.95. ISBN 0-691-11938-4.

Unlike previous works by Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy* is not a lengthy treatise on the historical development of Islamic doctrine. Instead, the volume begins with a modest 10,000-word essay, is followed by eleven scholarly reviews, and ends with El Fadl's response to the concerns of his reviewers. Originally commissioned to appear in a 2003 edition of the *Boston Review*, these essays were written for non-specialists and are an excellent introduction to some of the key issues at stake in the contemporary debate. At the same time, the interdisciplinary and interreligious dialogue that arises in the context of the reviews will be of genuine interest to specialists who are rarely able to read across disciplinary lines.

In his lead essay, El Fadl responds to those who wonder whether Islam is capable of providing theoretical support for democratic liberalism. Unsurprisingly, El Fadl argues that "the tradition of Islamic political thought contains both interpretive and practical possibilities that can be developed into a democratic system" and that Muslims can thus "arrive at the conviction that democracy is an ethical good" without abandoning their religious convictions (5). Yet, unlike many who write about this topic, El Fadl does not gloss over the serious tensions that exist between the two systems. As his title suggests, he takes seriously the "challenges" that democracy presents to traditional Islamic political thought. His task is to explain how these challenges can be overcome.

He begins by noting that a cursory comparison of the two traditions reveals some interesting similarities. More specifically, both seem to emphasize the rule of law and limited government through a process of consultation. Yet, El Fadl recognizes that a genuine theory of democratic liberalism requires more than these two principles. One can imagine, for example, an Islamic theocracy that implements the rule of (divine) law and limits the arbitrary rule of leaders through a process of consultation with religious specialists. If Islam is to provide theoretical support for *liberal* democracy, it must also make the case for two further principles: the sovereignty of the people and the inviolability of individual rights. It is here we find the real "challenge" to Islamic political thought.

El Fadl makes an Islamic argument for individual rights on the basis of man's special status as God's "vicegerent." He notes that "a fundamental Qur'anic idea is that God vested all of humanity with a kind of divinity by making every person

the viceroy of God on this earth" (6). This teaching provides the foundation for individual rights in at least two ways. First, it suggests that human beings were created with a special dignity that cannot be violated. Second, it requires the protection of individual political rights to ensure that each human being is capable of discharging his or her duty as God's vicegerent.

The case for popular sovereignty is more complicated. At the risk of oversimplification, the traditional Islamic argument goes something like this: Justice is defined by God's will. Insofar as God's will is discovered in the divine law (*shari'ah*), the divine law embodies justice. To fulfill our duties as God's vicegerents, we must implement justice. Thus, we must support political systems that implement divine law. Insofar as democracy is based on notions of popular sovereignty, democracy gives priority to human law. This prioritization threatens the cause of justice. To ensure justice, God—not man—must be sovereign.

El Fadl attacks this argument in two ways. First, he challenges the notion that God's will is actually discovered in the s*hari'ah*. He is willing to grant that "*shari'ah*," understood as an ideal and flawless representation of God's will, should be the core value society serves. Yet, he is not willing to accept that the legal texts of the Islamic tradition are a perfect transcription of this ideal. Insofar as all texts require the application of human reason to interpret and implement their ideals, our understanding of God's will is necessarily human and imperfect. God created us with a special ability to discern justice, but this ability is not perfected. Thus, El Fadl can make the forceful argument that any attempt to institutionalize *shari'ah* as a perfect representation of divine law is a form of idolatry—raising what is merely human to the level of the divine.

Second, and perhaps more radically, El Fadl challenges the notion that justice is defined by God's will. Here he asks a version of Euthyphro's famous question: "Does the divine law define justice or does justice define the divine law" (21)? Interestingly, El Fadl supports the latter position. As with most critics of divine command approaches to morality, he seems most worried about the arbitrary implementation of unjust laws. Taking the latter approach requires that all laws be consistent with justice because "whatever justice demands is, in fact, the demand of the divine." El Fadl even argues that it is this criterion of justice that "represents the sovereignty of the divine" (21).

This position provides support for human sovereignty by challenging the notion that revelation is necessarily superior to human deliberation. If God's will is ultimately defined by an independent ideal of justice, accessible to human reason, human deliberation becomes a relatively reliable source for discerning God's will. In fact, there is a sense in which this position implies that human understanding should take *precedence* over revelation. Recognizing that this conclusion requires a paradigm shift within Islam, El Fadl nonetheless argues that "the value of justice ought to control and guide all efforts at interpreting and understanding divine law" (21).

For the specialist, the most interesting aspect of this volume is the last half. In these pages, El Fadl's argument is evaluated by specialists from a diverse range of disciplines and religious traditions. Though space does not allow me to chronicle

these conversations, three are worth mentioning. First, one can learn a great deal about the diversity of approaches within Islamic political theology by attending to the conversations between El Fadl, M. A. Muqtedar Khan, and Mohammad H. Fadel. Second, and particularly significant for readers of this journal, are his conversations with David Novak and Jeremy Waldron about the ways in which the Abrahamic traditions have experienced similar struggles with democracy. Finally, political theorists and social scientists will gain much from the exchanges between El Fadl and his reviewers about the relationship between political theory and political practice.

Although *Challenge* may be too brief to satisfy specialists, the volume will be indispensable for beginners. El Fadl and his respondents have succeeded in summarizing this important debate without glossing over significant tensions or oversimplifying the theoretical arguments.

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Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach, eds, *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security, and the Wisdom of the Cross*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005, 456 pp. Pbk. $16.99. ISBN 0-8361-9308-3.

This collection of twenty-one essays is the fruit of extensive discussions commissioned by the Mennonite Central Committee and conducted over two years. While security and right ordering have long been matters of intra-church concern, members of the Committee confess that "Only too rarely have we struggled theologically with what it means to work for a larger good—for order and safety—in ways consistent with our calling to follow the Prince of Peace" (13). In current, post-9/11 circumstances especially, how should Christians think about and act with regard to matters of security and public order? All readers will benefit from the contributors' honest and nuanced struggle with this question.

With no hope of capturing the rich detail of the essays, I suggest the volume may be discussed under the headings of "lines" and "levels." Christian living is largely a matter of drawing and maintaining lines, and for contributors to this volume a basic question is how to be culturally and politically engaged without crossing the line of accommodation. In this regard, Gerald W. Schlabach's introductory essay articulates a particularly crucial claim regarding lines, namely, that "the 'wisdom of the cross' runs with 'the grain of the universe'" (29). This claim, drawn in part from the writings of John Howard Yoder, whose life's work hovers over the volume and infuses many of its essays, encourages robust engagement of this world and its often imperfect institutions—the kind of engagement identified, for instance, with the "just-peacemaking" efforts of Glenn Stassen and others.

Drawing lines may also be a matter of definitions and distinctions, and here at least two issues stand out. First is the very meaning, theological and other,