The al-Ghazali Enigma and why Shari'a is not Islamic Law

by Haifaa G. Khalafallah

DESCRIPTION:
This book offers a long-overdue intellectual biography of the late Egyptian Shaykh Mohammed al-Ghazali (d.1996). But its main purpose is to shed light on Shari'a, a highly politicized concern of our times. Instead of the standard accounts of Islam emphasizing 'extremists,' 'traditionalists,' 'moderates,' or 'modernists,' the book introduces a multi-layered approach to understanding the contours of Shari'a rulemaking. It highlights the technical and historical trajectory of this rulemaking process, thereby challenging the prevailing academic narrative as well as popular Muslim narratives. In using this contemporary influential Muslim scholar as a reference, the book assesses what so many Sunni Muslims see in Shari'a, at least in this Egyptian context, and how such devotion could hinder or promote genuine reform.

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Haifaa G. Khalafallah founded and presently directs the Sinai Centre for Islamic Mediterranean Studies, SCIMS, a UK based volunteer Muslim educational group. Previously she taught Islamic and Middle East history at Georgetown University, including in its various campuses in Washington DC, Doha, and Alanya.