



Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism

By Omid Safi

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Confronting such key contemporary issues as racism, justice, sexuality, and gender, this book offers a revealing insight into the real challenges faced by Muslims of both sexes in Western society.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Safi, a Colgate University professor, assembles a diverse set of essays by and about "progressive" Muslims. The essays vary in topic and in effectiveness, but generally seek to challenge the images of Islam held by both xenophobic Westerners and extremist Muslims. Safi's introduction, though showing insight into many problems today's Muslims face but rarely discuss publicly, is clunky, citing sources from Gandhi to Bob Dylan. Part I offers hard-hitting essays that are sure to be controversial in their discussion of what scholar Tazim Kassam claims is a "curtailment... of civil liberties such as freedom of inquiry and the expression of dissenting opinions" in the U.S. after September 11. There are also some triumphant essays. Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle superbly analyzes Islam's categorization of homosexuality as a sin in an essay that is long overdue and probably the only scholarly work of its kind. Gwendolyn Simmons's piece demands the establishment of feminism as Islamic in a touching essay-cum-memoir that connects her growth as a Muslim female to her experience as a young African-American during the Civil Rights era. The incomparable Amina Wadud offers an excellent article on racial tensions between immigrant and indigenous Muslims, while Marcia Hermansen pens the volume's bravest and most honest contribution, addressing the increasing conservatism of her American Muslim students—a topic previously not discussed outside the Muslim community. This collection is recommended for those who yearn for realistic information about Muslims, and for Muslims who are disgruntled with current Islamic leadership.

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Review

A significant and welcome effort providing an analytic overview by some contemporary progressive Muslim scholars. The book offers a very incisive critique and highlights the compelling need for a wholesome and rational approach to the issues. -- *Islamic Studies Journal*

About the Author

Omid Safi is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at University of North Carolina. He specialises in the study of the Islamic mystical tradition, the pre-modern history of the Islamic world, and contemporary Muslim thought, and has written books and articles on these subjects.

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