



# New Thinking in Islam: The Jihad for Democracy, Freedom and Women's Rights

By Katajun Amirpur



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In *Rethinking Islam*, Katajun Amirpur argues that the West's impression of Islam as a backward-looking faith, resistant to post-Enlightenment thinking, is misleading and—due to its effects on political discourse—damaging. Introducing readers to key thinkers and activists—such as Abu Zaid, a free-thinking Egyptian Qur'an scholar; Abdolkarim Soroush, an academic and former member of Khomeini's Cultural Revolution Committee; and Amina Wadud, an American feminist who was the first woman to lead the faithful in Friday Prayer—Amirpur reveals a powerful yet lesser-known tradition of inquiry and dissent within Islam, one that is committed to democracy and human rights. By examining these and many other similar figures' ideas, she reveals the many ways they reject fundamentalist assertions and instead call for a diversity of opinion, greater freedom, and equality of the sexes.



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## New Thinking in Islam: The Jihad for Democracy, Freedom and Women's Rights By Katajun Amirpur Bibliography

- Rank: #2812829 in Books
- Published on: 2015-09-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.10" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 256 pages



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“Amirpur’s masterful work on Islamic reform is an excellent exposition of the ideas and intellectual legacy of notable Muslim scholars who have made the Qur'an central to their understanding of Islam and the need for reform. The richness of the diverse concepts and ideas contained in this volume is worthy of exploration for those interested in the study of Islam and the importance of the Qur'an in modern Islamic thought. Amirpur offers a thoughtful and erudite examination of the nexus between modernity, the Western philosophical tradition, and Islam, particularly the Qur'an, within the ideological framework of some of Islam’s most creative modern scholars. Accessible to both scholars and non-specialists, *New Thinking in Islam* is recommended reading for anyone concerned with understanding the context and legacy of critical contemporary Muslim thought and the Muslim intellectual engagement with modernity and reform.”  
(Farid Esack, University of Johannesburg)

“A well-crafted and deeply engaging book that captures the nuances and sophistication of recent reformist Islamic thought. Amirpur offers an insightful and accessible account of the lives and contributions of key intellectuals, focusing on their novel approaches to the Qur'an. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the contemporary Muslim world.”

(Ziba Mir-Hosseini, SOAS, University of London)

#### About the Author

**Katajun Amirpur** is professor of Islamic studies at Hamburg University and the author of *The De-politicization of Islam* and *God Is with the Fearless*.

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