

ISLAM

THE STRAIGHT PATH



Third Edition

John L. Esposito

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The Iranian revolution, the Gulf War, the World Trade Center bombing, conflicts in Afghanistan, Algeria, and Bosnia—these crises have dominated the headlines and global politics. Yet few of us know anything about Islam, the faith of one billion followers who span the globe from Africa to Asia, from the United States to Europe. Islam and Muslims have often been viewed through a series of stereotypes—as fundamentalists, extremists, radicals—which distort our understanding of the world's second largest religion. Now John L. Esposito offers a timely new edition of *Islam: The Straight Path*, his widely acclaimed guide to Islamic history, faith, culture, and politics.

In *Islam*, Esposito provides a succinct, up-to-date survey of the Islamic experience, an introduction to the faith, belief, and practice of Islam from its origins to its contemporary resurgence. He traces the emergence and development of this dynamic faith and its impact on world history and politics. He discusses the formation of Islamic belief and practice (law, theology, philosophy, and mysticism), chronicling the struggle of Muslims to define and adhere to their Islamic way of life. Equally important is the essential information Esposito provides on the contemporary world of Islam, from Muslim responses to the challenges of colonialism and modernization to the reassertion of Islam in politics and society. This third edition has been updated throughout and is enhanced by new material that more accurately reflects the true diversity of Muslim cultures. Esposito broadens the study of Islam beyond the Middle East to Asia with a new study of Pakistan. Another new section on Islam in the West explores the significance of the Muslim presence in the United States and Europe, and considers the impact of such figures as Malcolm X, Warith Deen Muhammad, and Louis Farrakhan. In the final chapter, Esposito discusses modern Muslim thinking on religious pluralism, democracy, and human rights.

Praise for previous editions of
Islam: The Straight Path

"The best one-volume introduction."

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"A splendid introduction to Islam. Esposito paints over a wide canvas in depicting the emergence of the Muslim community, the varieties of Muslim beliefs and practices, the tensions between tradition and modernity, and the Islamic resurgence of recent years.... A timely gem."

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"Explains in a very cogent manner the religious ramifications of contemporary Islamic society."

—*Booklist*

