

Scholars of Islam / Muslims

Amina Wadud

Amina Wadud (born September 25, 1952) is an American scholar of Islam with a progressive focus on Qur'an exegesis (interpretation of the holy text).

Wadud was born as Mary Teasley to an Afro-American Family in Bethesda, Maryland. Her father was a Methodist minister. She received her Bachelor of Science from the University of Pennsylvania, between 1970 and 1975. In 1972 she pronounced the *shahadah*, that is, accepted Islam. By 1974 she had changed her name officially to Amina Wadud, to reflect her chosen religion. She received her M.A. in Near Eastern Studies and her Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan in 1988. During graduate school, she studied in Egypt, including advanced Arabic at the American University in Cairo, Qur'anic studies and *tafsir* (exegesis or religious interpretation) at Cairo University, and philosophy at Al-Azhar University.

Work

Wadud's research specialities include gender and Qur'anic studies. From 1989 to 1992 she worked as an assistant professor in Quranic Studies at the International Islamic University Malaysia. While there, she published her dissertation *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* and co-founded the non-governmental organization Sisters in Islam. The book is still used by the NGO as a basic text for activists and academics, but it is banned in the United Arab Emirates.

In 1992 Wadud accepted a position as Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University. She retired in 2008, and took up a position as a visiting professor at the Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Wadud has spoken at universities, grass roots level, government and non-government forums at various gatherings throughout the United States, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. Some of her speaking engagements have included the keynote address "Islam, Justice, and Gender" at the 2008 international conference *Understanding Conflicts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, held at Aarhus University, Denmark; a paper titled "Islam

Beyond Patriarchy through Gender Inclusive Qur'anic Analysis” at the 2009 *Musawah - Equality and Justice in the Family* conference; the Regional Conference on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Muslim Societies, hosted by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Centre for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP) in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March 2009; a workshop on "Sharia and Human Rights" at the University of Bergen, Norway in late November 2009; a public lecture titled "Muslim Women and Gender Justice: Methods, Motivation and Means" to the Faculty of Arts, Asia Institute, at the University of Melbourne, Australia in February 2010; a lecture on “Tawhid and Spiritual Development for Social Action” at Muslims for Progressive Values at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California in July 2011.

Wadud has also openly advocated "pluralism" and "equality" as an endorsement of a LGBT lifestyle.

Books

Her first book, titled "*Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*", published in March 1999, contributes a gender-inclusive reading to one of the most fundamental disciplines in Islamic thought, Qu'ranic exegesis.

Her latest book, "*Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*", was published in 2006. She not only continues her Qur'anic analysis but also provides extensive details about her experiences as a Muslim, wife, mother, sister, scholar, and activist.

(Courtesy : *Wikipedia*)

