

The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of  
Fear in an Anxious Age by Martha C. Nussbaum.  
The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012.

The cover shows veiled Muslim women and girls, the book is dedicated to the late Arnold Wolf, an outstanding American Rabbi, and the author is Jewish. The influences on Professor Nussbaum of the University of Chicago may be considerable but her dispassion is admirable.

The New Religious Intolerance is divided into seven chapters: Religion: A Time of Anxiety and Suspicion; Fear: A Narcissistic Emotion; First Principles: Equal Respect for Conscience; The Mote in My Brother's Eye: Impartiality and the Examined Life; Inner Eyes: Respect and the Sympathetic Imagination; The Case of Park51; Overcoming the Politics of Fear.

Martha Nussbaum's approach to her subject is to consider specifics first, then to analyse in minute detail three key issues - equal respect for conscience, impartiality and its necessary introspection, and respect and the sympathetic imagination. She then applies the knowledge and ideas drawn from this analysis to the specific issue of the proposed Islamic Centre in New York known to its detractors as the 'Ground Zero Mosque'.

In a book every part of which is of equal importance and quality it is hard to single anything out as being *primus inter pares*, but were I to do so I would choose the chapter entitled Inner Eyes: Respect and the Sympathetic Imagination which is a model of both clarity and erudition.

*The New Religious Intolerance* should be essential reading for all faith professionals, especially those active at the cutting edge of inter- and intra-faith dialogue.

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