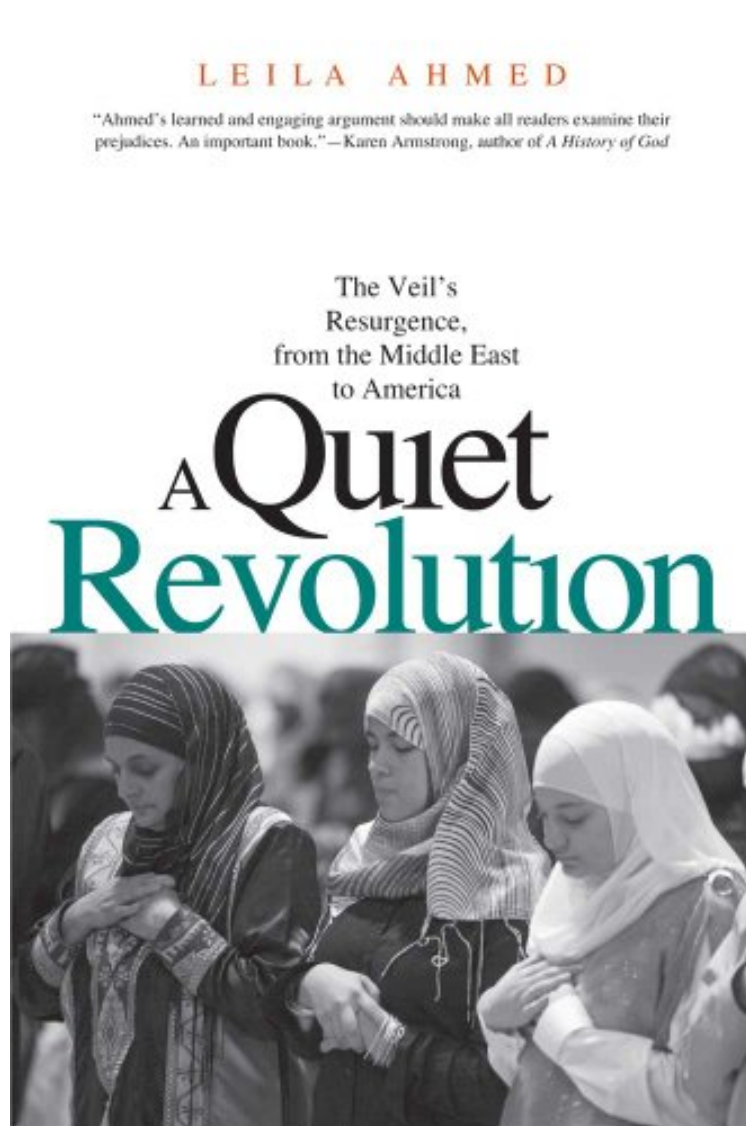


A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America

Leila Ahmed

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#416470 in Books Yale University Press 2012-06-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 6.00 x 1.251, 1.00 #File Name: 0300181434360 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Leila Ahmed : A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great if perhaps mistitled book By Customer As other reviewers have noted, veiling gets less attention in this book than might be surmised from the title. Ahmed began the research that led

to this book as a study of veiling, but the final product is really a book about modern Islamic socio-political activism, which Ahmed calls "Islamism" in keeping with academic usage, and of which veiling had been a typical manifestation. Ahmed traces its emergence in Egypt with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, its transmigration onto US soil and its eventual transformation into a distinctly American brand of civic-minded Islam. What I found particularly compelling is the internal plot of Ahmed's changing perceptions. She starts by intimating the us-vs-them attitude toward Islamists prevalent in the cultural milieu to which she belongs. She doesn't romanticize this movement along the way, but as she shares with the reader new things she learns about it, her surprise is sometimes palpable on the page. When the book ends with a sort of tribute to the Muslim American activists who are heirs to the Islamist tradition, one can't help being impressed both by the happy ironies of history and by Ahmed's remarkably open mind.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.
timelyBy Whitney S. BodmanThe focus of this book is on modern Egypt and then America. That makes it very timely. In some ways the modern history of Egypt overwhelms the focus on the veil, but that is appropriate. The veil should not be the primary focus, since it is a sign and representation of a larger political context. that is the point. In the latter part of the book the focus shifts to America. Here again the veil is put in the context of a much larger development of Muslim society in America - if one can speak of "a" Muslim society. My one concern with this book is that she refers to the leadership of the largest Muslim organizations in America, generically, as Muslim Brotherhood. I see the point that she is making. The form of Islam that has become normative in the Islamic Society of North America has an intentional piety that might be associated with the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt. I question how accurate it is to carry that description over to America, as if somehow various American Muslim organizations are extensions of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. They are not, even if some of the practices look similar. This book is rigorous in its research but at the same time personal and sensitive.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Very well done bookBy MEPchIII was curious about the issue of women choosing to wear the veil particularly in Egypt in the 1070's and this book did a very good job illuminating the circumstances where women made the shocking-at-the-time choice to adopt the veil. This is a very quick and easy read.

In Cairo in the 1940s, Leila Ahmed was raised by a generation of women who never dressed in the veils and headscarves their mothers and grandmothers had worn. To them, these coverings seemed irrelevant to both modern life and Islamic piety. Today, however, the majority of Muslim women throughout the Islamic world again wear the veil. Why, Ahmed asks, did this change take root so swiftly, and what does this shift mean for women, Islam, and the West? When she began her study, Ahmed assumed that the veil's return indicated a backward step for Muslim women worldwide. What she discovered, however, in the stories of British colonial officials, young Muslim feminists, Arab nationalists, pious Islamic daughters, American Muslim immigrants, violent jihadists, and peaceful Islamic activists, confounded her expectations. Ahmed observed that Islamism, with its commitments to activism in the service of the poor and in pursuit of social justice, is the strain of Islam most easily and naturally merging with western democracies' own tradition of activism in the cause of justice and social change. It is often Islamists, even more than secular Muslims, who are at the forefront of such contemporary activist struggles as civil rights and women's rights. Ahmed's surprising conclusions represent a near reversal of her thinking on this topic. Richly insightful, intricately drawn, and passionately argued, this absorbing story of the veil's resurgence, from Egypt through Saudi Arabia and into the West, suggests a dramatically new portrait of contemporary Islam.

"Ms. Ahmed gives us a fascinating portrait of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially of its 'unsung mother,' Zainab al-Ghazali." Mira Sethi, Wall Street Journal