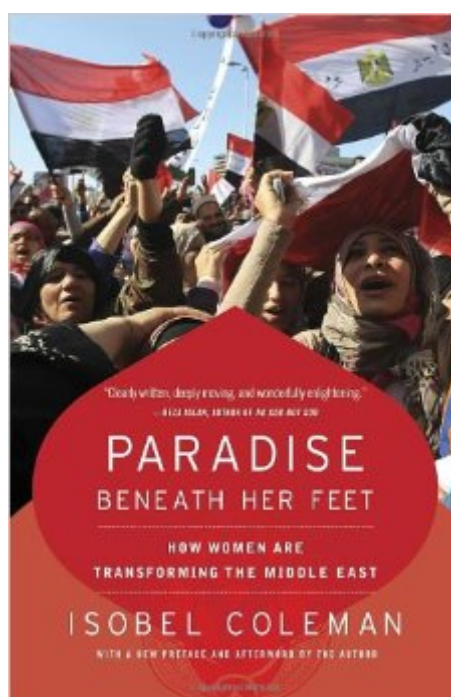


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Paradise Beneath Her Feet: How Women Are Transforming The Middle East (Council On Foreign Relations Books (Random House))



Synopsis

Now with a new Preface and Afterword by the author — “Outstanding . . . [Isobel Coleman] takes us into remote villages and urban bureaucracies to find the brave men and women working to create change in the Middle East.” —Los Angeles Times — In this timely and important book, Isobel Coleman shows how Muslim women and men across the Middle East are working within Islam to fight for women’s rights in a growing movement of Islamic feminism. Journeying through Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Coleman introduces the reader to influential Islamic feminist thinkers and successful grassroots activists working to create economic, political, and educational opportunities for women. Their advocacy for women’s rights based on more progressive interpretations of Islam are critical to bridging the conflict between those championing reform and those seeking to oppress women in the name of religious tradition. Socially, culturally, economically, and politically, the future of the region depends on finding ways to accommodate human rights, and in particular women’s rights, with Islamic law. These reformers — and thousands of others — are the people leading the way forward. — Featuring new material that addresses how the Arab uprisings and other recent events have affected the social and political landscape of the region, *Paradise Beneath Her Feet* offers a message of hope: Change is coming to the Middle East — and more often than not, it is being led by women. — Praise for *Paradise Beneath Her Feet* — “Clearly written, deeply moving, and wonderfully enlightening.” —Reza Aslan, author of *No god but God* — “[An] engrossing portrait of real Muslim women that reveals how Islamic feminists . . . are working with and within the culture, rather than against it . . . to forge a legitimate Islamic alternative to the current repressive system.” — Coleman doesn’t diminish the enormity of the struggle, but she argues convincingly that it might yet rewrite Islam’s future.” —Publishers Weekly (starred review) — “A nuanced view of Islam’s role in public life that is cautiously hopeful.” —The Economist — “Eye-opening . . . Deeply religious, profoundly determined and modern in every way, these are twenty-first-century women bent on change. Hear them roar and see a future being born before our eyes.” —Booklist

Book Information

Series: Council on Foreign Relations Books (Random House)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Random House Trade Paperbacks; Reprint edition (February 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812978552

ISBN-13: 978-0812978551

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #702,837 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #160 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Women in Islam #1333 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies > Feminist Theory #5982 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies

Customer Reviews

From the beginning, it's clear that this book is just a few years old. The foreword even includes that there have been progresses and setbacks since it's initial publication. Still, it's worth reading for anyone concerned about what's happening in the Middle East, worldwide women's rights, worldwide women's movements, or Islamic feminism. For me, the best part was that there is a significant amount of history relayed here that helps the reader understand where some of the issues come in. They are not necessarily the issues of women's rights, but why it's hard to talk about them. She covers how different regimes came to power and how each regime strings along a fight that is often "one step forward and two steps back". She also reminds us that the Christian reformation was no easier on anyone and relied on a similar change in circumstance to change the way it was viewed. It relied on people not only learning how to read, but going back through their religious texts on their own and fighting the laws and practices that were clearly not upheld by the text. Islamic feminists are doing just that now. They are increasing the amount of people who can read in their countries and they are getting the text of the Quran and reading it for themselves. They are fighting for the rights that Islam gives them which are far more than the rights they currently have. This book details the path that they have walked in five countries: Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. If you're on the fence, here are some more notes and highlights that I made while reading it. Perhaps they will pique your interest.

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