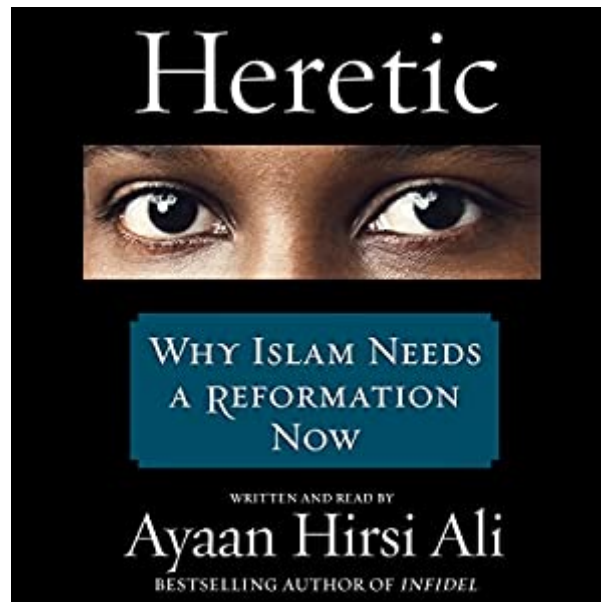




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Heretic



Synopsis

What happened to Islamic reform? Why have al Qaeda and Boko Haram become the faces of contemporary Islam? Why has the Arab Spring devolved into a battle over sharia law? Continuing her personal journey from a deeply religious Islamic upbringing to a post at Harvard and American citizenship, the New York Times best-selling author of *Infidel* and *Nomad* crafts a powerful call for an Islamic reformation as the only way to end the current wave of global violence and repression of women. Today, millions of Muslims are wrapped in a rigid orthodoxy whereby women are denied education, girls as young as nine can be forced into legal marriages, and men are told that their futures lie not in building better, more just societies but in jihad against the infidel. Hopes for a wave of liberalization after the Arab Spring have been replaced by new authoritarianism and efforts to impose sharia law. Twitter, YouTube, and other social media have become aggressive platforms to promote a harsh brand of Islamic fundamentalism, making the clash between secular and Islamic society one of the most important challenges of our time. And yet, contrary to conventional wisdom in the West, Ayaan Hirsi Ali believes that ordinary Muslims throughout the world want wholesale change. Courageously engaging fundamentalists on their own turf - religion itself - she boldly calls for a Muslim reformation, identifying five key amendments to Islamic doctrine that must be made in order to break from seventh-century traditions and fully engage with the 21st century. Interweaving her personal journey, historical parallels, and powerful examples from contemporary Islamic societies and cultures, *Heretic* will forever change the debate over Islam and its future.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours 56 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: March 24, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00S8QXW94

Best Sellers Rank: #37 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > Islam #70 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Middle East #344 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Middle Eastern

Customer Reviews

If there is any single subject that Americans, and every other culture in the world, need to be clear about it is Islam. Americans by nature are inclusive and welcoming of a wide variety of cultures/religions, etc. But in this case one must be very clear as to what is going on and Ayaan Hirsi Ali gives the non Muslims of the world and inside look at what makes the Terrorists Tick! Obama and the intellectually lazy liberals of this country keep throwing out that insulting "Religion of Peace" quote like it means something. It does not! Terrorism and medieval practices are part and parcel of the faith of Islam, and Hirsi Ali points out very clearly that the moderate adherents of that faith who would truly like to see a reformation that would bring them into the current century are keeping silent because otherwise their very lives are in danger. Islam does not allow any criticism or questioning of any kind, so no moderate of Islam will say anything against even the most reprehensible and atrocious event promulgated by their brethren. If you want to understand what the truth about Islam today is, read this and other books by Hirsi Ali.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali has been conducting for some years now one of the most important public debates in our time and facing immense risk to do so. Her clarity of mind and purpose are stunning. For her there are three camps in Islam: Medina, Mecca, and Reform-minded. Her exposition and critique of their values and stances within the Muslim world and toward the non-Muslim world is uniquely insightful and, I hope, influential where it most counts in the Muslim world and among global political leaders, and among the rest of us who are not just along for the ride; we are involved. For me, on the basis of quite different experience from hers, Muslim civilization over the centuries divides differently--between its achievements in literature, visual art and craft, architecture, and spirituality, and the incessant violence and inhumanity of jihad today. Which is the true Islam? The honest answer is both--both the serenely glorious Taj Mahal and the insane massacre in Kenya. Islam is the Thousand and One Nights--among the greatest, funniest, most thought-provoking tales told on this Earth--and the beheadings. It is the fantastic carpets and rugs made by villagers, nomads, and teams of court artisans, and the blood endlessly spilled. It is the inspiring determination of young Malala and the disgusting determination of those who nearly murdered her because she champions education for girls. Ayaan Hirsi Ali wins the argument, in my view: it is time and past time for religious reform in Islam, so that the genius responsible for the books and carpets and supremely great buildings prevails over murderous chaos in the name of religion.

The terrific book by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, "Heretic," should be read by every American. Basically she is

saying we need to wake up and smell the roses when we think of ISLAM. Islam is not a peaceful religion. (My wife just this moment said to me, "if you were a blogger in Bangladesh and said something critical about Islam, they would come to your house, drag you out and hack you to death.") This happened. My interpretation is that this is what we face according to Ali. Having read her book, "Infidel," I was hooked. She is a terrific voice of reason Ostracized because of her views and a victim of political correctness, she more than answers her critics in "Heretic." Even when she was in the Netherlands, with all their chest beating on their great display of tolerance, I didn't think they did such a hot job of supporting Ms. Ali. And then when her good friend (Theo Van Gogh) was killed by a Muslim fanatic, they didn't appear to be very outraged; that incident was brutal. I thought then, "come on to 'Merica' (NASCAR pronunciation). " We are so lucky she did. I was especially happy to see her "call out" those like the President of Brandeis. After inviting her to speak and receive an honorary doctorate, withdrew it. No guts--to let some faculty and students, with very prejudiced views, intimidate him--sad. And, his action proves her point that you can say what you want against most anything/anybody but you better not criticize Islam. Why is it threatening to point out the obvious. And, to accuse her of being an Islamaphobe, whatever that is, stupid for one thing. Having been a former publisher, I watched "Heretic" debut at 8th on the NY Times best seller list only to disappear quickly. Why? My personal belief is that "Heretic," in taking a courageous stance, on "wrong headed" views of Islam, doomed the sales of "Heretic." I don't want this to sound like some conspiracy theory but there is the old American "live and let live" which we think can be extended to Islam. Not so according to Ali, for lots of reasons. According to Ali, there has to be "Reform." And, there is a textbook quality to "Heretic," which enables it to be a reference. Get the book. The Preface and Table of Contents is worth it all. Unfortunately, I think Islam's modus operandi, "convert or you die," dooms Ali's idea of reformation. Here is an example that fascinates and saddens me: Migrants are on a leaky vessel, escaping from tyranny, and yet along the (haven't verified this but there have been several accounts), way on this dangerous journey, the Muslims took time to throw twelve Christians overboard. We are going to be dealing with Islamic fanaticism forever. Do yourself a favor, get "Heretic" and keep it handy.

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