



# **Behind the Veils of Yemen: How an American Woman Risked Her Life, Family, and Faith to Bring Jesus to Muslim Women**

*Audra Grace Shelby*

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When Audra Grace Shelby and her husband felt God calling them to minister in the Middle East, she was fearful--how would she raise her children in the heart of conservative Islam?

Armed with prayers and a faith that always seemed too small, the family made the move to Yemen, enduring deadly illness, uncertainty, and the unnerving experience of being Christians in an Islamic culture.

Yet God was at work, and Audra was invited to see what few Christian women have seen: behind the veils of Muslim women. Here she shares about the friendships she forged, about the opportunities to minister when her new friends' hopes shriveled and their own religion faltered--and how the grace of God touched lives in the midst of an enemy stronghold. With humor, passion, and honesty, she shows readers glimpses of life deep in the heart of Islam and the yearning heart of our loving God.

## **Behind the Veils of Yemen: How an American Woman Risked Her Life, Family, and Faith to Bring Jesus to Muslim Women Details**

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# **From Reader Review Behind the Veils of Yemen: How an American Woman Risked Her Life, Family, and Faith to Bring Jesus to Muslim Women for online ebook**

## **Raine says**

Good Morning folks. Here is another great book for you to add to your list of must reads!

Behind the Veils of Yemen by Audra Grace Shelby is really a book that I looked forward to reading. Why you might ask? Well I was looking forward to the insight of a US missionary going to a foreign country, I wanted to see what she had to experience as well as how she, as well as her family were going to deal with those challenges. I would have to say honestly I was impressed by what I read.

Let me start at the beginning.... Behind the Veils of Yemen is a book written by Audra Grace Shelby. It is just a little glimpse into her life as a missionary to Yemen. Audra goes to Yemen with her husband and her three children, it is a struggle to leave her family and friends in the USA knowing that they were going to a country that is totally foreign, not woman friendly by any means and does not take kindly to Christians.

Audra is very honest in the book when she talks about her struggles as a woman having to be cover-up in public, or as a Christian who has to deal with medical problems that arise with her family in the USA as well as once she is in a foreign country. Struggles for things that we take for granted such as clean water, running water, decent housing, loving husbands and families, even being able to get medical attention when you need it - not later when it could be too late!

It was interesting to see how Audra's faith kicks in and reminds her that God is with her, that she is not alone. She may feel that she is facing the giants by herself but she is always reminded by something that she needs to rely on God and He will get her through it. This does not mean that she never gets upset at the circumstances, or mad at having to go through a situation, it means to stand firm with her God and wait for the results. That no matter how hard those results are God will strengthen her and she will be able to handle it!

I was very impressed with the choices that were made by Audra, she chose to be a missionary and to go to Yemen with her family. She chose to stay true to her God and pray to Him even when others were not supportive and actually thought she was unclean, an infidel. She chose to pick the Yemen woman and their culture over the "American women" that were living in Yemen at the time. Something that had to really be very hard at the time! She chose to live in a country that does not support women, tries to keep them uneducated, covered and dependant on men. She chose to take her children to a country where they might not always be safe but that they would always be able to see God move in their lives as well as others. She

lives by example to the rest of Christians that might be talking the talk but not walking the walk. We are here to do the work of the Lord, no matter how hard or uncomfortable that may be.

Go pick up a copy of this book! I bet you look at things a little differently. I pray that it will prompt you to get out of your comfort zone and into God's zone!

I want to thank Chosen a division of Baker Publishing Group for giving me this book free of charge. All they ask in return from me is to write an honest book review.

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### **Kristina Seleshanko says**

It's rare I call a modern work of nonfiction excellent, but *Behind the Veils of Yemen* is. This is the story of one woman's growth in Christ and her work among Yemen women. But along the way, we get an intimate look at what life is like for the women in Yemen and how different the culture is there. Happily, too, the book is not about listing the number of conversions the author witnessed. It is more about how Christians can truly touch others - whether or not they live in Yemen. I cannot recommend this book enough.

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### **Yiya says**

A missionary woman, responding to God's call to serve in Yemen - that is what this book is about. Audra Grace Shelby sees her faith challenged as she goes through the initial period of her introduction to a country and people who have so many different customs and habits, but who are, just as the rest of us, people with feelings, interest and worries. A wife, a mother, a friend and a witness to God's grace and love for Yemeni women, Audra faces difficult moments that shake her emotions and her different roles, but prays to become the tool that would be able to share Jesus in such a way that Muslims would understand. It is easier said than done. There were many risks involved, but she and her family decided to stay faithful to God. She tells about how even her relationship with Jesus changed; she learned to trust Him completely, even when things did not make sense to her and finds solace in the peace that God gives, as a constant companion through hardships.

During the years of her life described in the book, we learn how she befriends Fatima, a woman who teaches her Arabic and the ways of the culture, and introduces Audra to her family (mainly women relatives) and closest circle of friends. She gets a peculiar glimpse at the women behind the veils, who slowly come to accept her (some just agreed to put up with her). The more and more familiar she got with Fatima and the others, the more Audra becomes aware of the heavy burden that restricts Muslim women, going way beyond their clothes; it comes to the fact that they are not even allowed to learn how to read or write, so their faith

and ways are a result of what they are told, either by men or by older women who were also just told about the Muslim ways. This fact also translates into further abuse, like not being given the right change when buying groceries in the market (they just do not know how to count), or cheated out of estate ownership or inheritance.

Little by little, Audra becomes a living testimony of how interested God is in having a relationship with us, and bravely does and acts Christian in a society that rejects her and her family. For example, she describes the prayer ritual and how meaningful it is for Muslims to wash before praying. When she asks if she could pray and does not wash, the women around her are shocked, but that allows Audra to explain that Jesus is not interested in how clean our outside is, but is rather interested in the cleanliness of our heart. With precious moments like this one, she is able to tick the women who have been in such a need of love and acceptance.

Her story does not talk much about her husband's ministry, about which I often wondered; however, don't let that hinder you from reading this book. It is a treasure. Personally, it has reminded me of how blessed we are to live in a time and place where we are free to learn and study the Bible in so many different ways. It gives a wonderful picture of what the personal life of a missionary is - a fact that would help us pray for those who have been sent and their specific needs. Also, it is a challenge for Christians, to love and see people more the way God does, and not the way we do, taking away prejudice and preconceived notions, and just loving them the way they are - after all, Jesus died for all of us, equally and with no distinction.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Bethany House Publishers in exchange for an honest review. In no way has this influenced my opinion on the book or on the author.

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### **Melissa Lindsey says**

An honest portrayal of what it is like to do mission work in the Muslim World. Shelby is not afraid to share her doubts, fears, and frustrations with adjusting to a new culture and a new way of thinking. For people who are interested in the mindset of a family that is passionate and dedicated to missions work, this would be a good read.

I felt frustrated at times by what I considered to be rather trite references to prayer. I recognize that this was her experience and that God answers her seemingly little prayers (like for a crate to arrive one week late) in a way that caused her faith to grow, my own experience spending time on pediatric cancer wards indicates that God does not always give us what we pray for. The references to prayer in the book were filled with answers to prayer and I think this holds out an unrealistic view of what prayer is for. Might I have prayed for a crate to arrive late -- certainly -- because I do believe God cares about such things. But sharing this view of prayer in a missionary biography sets up the expectation for some readers that God acted like this because he cared so much for the Shelby family and when he doesn't answer in the same way for families like those I have met on the Pediatric Oncology Ward, the tendency is for people to believe that for some reason God doesn't care about them. I found myself so distracted by these vending machine type answers to prayer that I couldn't fully appreciate the book.

Some readers expressed annoyance at her lack of cultural understanding -- and at times I felt the same way. But in the end, I appreciated her honesty with regard to these things. The fact is that moving to a new place, especially a place where cultural norms are so different, is extraordinarily difficult. We spend years being socialized to the right way of doing things and then suddenly being told that one's way is wrong can be very disorienting. I'm glad she didn't sugarcoat her adjustment woes.

Overall, for fans of missionary biographies, this is probably a worthwhile addition to the genre. She provides great description of the place and insight into the cultural norms from her perspective. She also gives a great look into the adjustment that is required for those who move to another culture. I wouldn't recommend it outside of those types of readers as I think it would be very problematic for people who don't have the same understanding of Christian missions as Shelby and her family.

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### **Laura says**

Didn't finish it, so shouldn't have clicked "read," but honestly couldn't get past the missionary focus of the writing in the first quarter of the book (not sure if it continues all the way through, but...); it was enough to turn me off from reading further.

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### **Alexia says**

I felt the author was very truthful about how she felt about everything she went through. I could really relate to her and respect her. I liked how the book wasn't shocking in its imagery. It was worth the read. I never read non-fiction books and I'm happy I read this. It kept my attention and I was truly interested about their life in Yemen. I learned a lot about what is truly behind the veils of Muslim women and their struggles. Please keep this people group in your prayers.

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### **Alisabs says**

This book was extremely disappointing and reminds me why any religious zealotry, regardless of its source, is so dangerous.

Shelby didn't go to Yemen to help improve the life of the people there; she went to convert them. She didn't provide medical care, clean drinking water, or help build schools like other missionaries. Her goal was only to infiltrate communities and convince them that her viewpoint was superior.

Obviously the Yemeni women do not enjoy the same freedoms that we do in the U.S., but they still believe what they believe and have a right to do so. For Shelby to learn so little from this experience is a shame.

I expected the author to show some kind of growth or understanding and come to realize that she wasn't so different from the Muslim women she met. Instead, she failed to see that they believe in their god for the same reasons she believes in hers. She based her success on the number of people who bought into Christianity, not the lives she could improve.

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### **Patrick Belair says**

I'm sure that some people might enjoy this book. But I found the title very miss leading. Maybe I expected to much from it. This story was about the authors own personal faith more than preaching the word to women in Yemen.

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**Beate says**

One of the worst books I have ever read, I would give it zero stars.. Amazing how it's accepted to be disrespectful of other is because their belief system is different! There are different ways to empower women in different cultures!

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**DD says**

A real glimpse into the life of Yemen women and such an encouragement of faith from a godly woman. She is real and honest about her doubts and God is real in the way he answers each.

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**Natalie McNee says**

The book started off really well and I was so intrigued to learn about the lives of Muslim women raised in Yemen. My heart went out the author's family during their trials and I was ecstatic to see God bring healing and deliverance to her family. The book opened my eyes to the culture of Muslim women and how they are treated and I hope this has given me a deeper compassion and respect towards them.

I was however disappointed as the book progressed as there was no in-depth revelations of what God did for the families/communities where the author visited. It would have been more exciting to read about the transformation of the Muslim women's lives as I believe according to the biography the author started to teach them sewing skills. Maybe she is planning a sequel? Overall it was still an enjoyable book.

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**Jimschow1 says**

Like a lot of holier than thou Christians, the author strikes me as being incredibly unChristian in a blind way.

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**Jan says**

Well written. I felt like I had a good visit in Yemen -- Audra does a lovely job of describing what life was like. Also appreciated that she used Arabic terms (defined for us) in the conversations. What God calls us to do....and I really liked (?) her phrase -- "Do you trust me enough to not know why?" (Not an exact paraphrase, but it resonated.... That's a real question -- do I trust God enough to not have to know why....

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## **Wanda says**

Behind the Veils of Yemen  
By Audra Grace Shelby

### Trusting God Must be Enough

Well, I always knew I wasn't missionary material and reading this book confirmed it! I can love people but I have a hard time with dirt, germs and foreign food. However that does not keep me from wanting to see people reached for God, and I guess that is why I love to read a good missionary story.

This is one woman's narrative of going into the Islamic community and blending in with the women there so that she could show them Jesus. She did literally become like one of them; learning their customs, mode of dress, and language. She made deep friendships with these women and saw a side of Islam that we never hear about. She also gave great insight into the heart and mind of a missionary and how they can leave it all behind to go to a foreign culture. Written in a beautiful and captivating style, this book is sure to capture the attention of any person who reads it. I read my copy in one sitting.

I always hope to walk away from a good book having learned something that applies directly to my life—wanting it to touch me in a positive way. This book did that but not in the way I expected. Although the story of the missionaries' lives and the people they ministered to was touching, that is not where God met me. Instead He used this book and author to speak to me about a struggle I have been going through in my own life. God asked me personally, "Do you trust me enough without having to know why?" and I realized that I need to work on that one. This is a book that I will not soon forget. Read it—you will not be disappointed.

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I received this complimentary copy from Bethany House Publishers for this review. A positive review was not required and the opinions expressed here are my own.

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## **Sunflower says**

"Behind the Veils of Yemen" by Audra Grace Shelby, is a fascinating and eloquent true story, of Audra's and her family, personal experience, when they relocated to Yemen, to begin work there as missionaries.

Filled with rich details of the Yemeni culture from meals to wedding traditions to basic phrases that are customary to greet each other, what makes, "Behind the Veils of Yemen" stand out, is that this isn't about just the women of Yemen, that Audra encountered and ministered, but how her and her family life there, were transformed and their faith in God was strengthened by their personal experiences.

The stories she shares are haunting and presents a look, "Behind the Veils of Yemen" , that those in the States often don't hear or maybe only hear very brief glimpses of and the way, Audra, writes, is a story that is filled with strength and hope, in and through our Father in Heaven.

I felt that the ending of the book was a bit rushed and yearned to find out more about what happen after the events in Yemen, but the rest of the book, is a powerful testimony to the spirit of faith, hope and persistence.

The reader will find themselves hanging on to the detail of daily life of the Yemeni culture as shared by Audra and the complicated interactions she find, living as a foreigner among the Yemeni people.

Her experiences are both eye-opening, heart breaking, convicting and live readers asking, how strong are they to be able to do the same as Audra and her family.

Although the book shares about the Muslim women that Audra encountered and befriended, if you are expecting a "missionary book" about conversions, Audra doesn't focus on that; Instead, she focuses on the real life struggles and experiences of being a missionary family in the Middle East, learning both the languages and customs, sharing personal insights into the culture and on the trials that her and her family personally endure of times of sickness that they had encountered and how as Christians, sharing the Gospel with other faiths and culture.

This isn't really a book that focuses a lot on the Yemen women or culture, but rather is more like a personal biography of one missionary families experience, but it is still a compelling and fascinating read to look into.

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\*\*\*This book has been provided courtesy of Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group.\*\*\*