

## God And Juggernaut Irans Intellectual Encounter With Modernity Modern Intellectual And Political History Of The Middle East

Since President Mohammad Khatami's landslide victory in May 1997, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a study in contradictions. Whilst Khatami condemned his nation's fanatical past, there still remains an opposing faction towards the West. This study analyses Iran's post-revolutionary politics.

Iran's interaction with its neighbours is a topic of wide interest. But while many historical studies of the country concentrate purely on political events and high-profile actors, this book takes the opposite approach: writing history from below, it instead focuses on the role of everyday lives. Modern Iranian historiography has been dominated by ideas of nationalism, modernization, religion, autocracy, revolution and war. *Iran in the Middle East* adds new dimensions to the study of four crucial areas of Iranian history: the events and impact of the Constitutional Revolution, Iran's transnational connections, the social history of Iran and developments in historiography. Featuring eminent scholars such as Ali Ansari, Janet Afary and Erik-Jan Zürcher, this book makes a significant contribution to the understanding of Iran in a transnational context by exploring the key social actors in the constitutional revolution, trade and the role of women. The authors emphasize the role of societal transformations, social movements, class, gender and ethnic identities, analyzing both national and individual identity. What emerges is a concise and unique look at Iranian social history, from both within the country's internal relationships with its social groups, and from its external relations with neighbouring countries. It will prove essential reading to scholars and students of Iran and the wider Middle East region."

The interface between the current Shi'ite landscape and Christian thinking is of the greatest significance for the shifting political and religious dynamics of the Middle East. Sasan Tavassoli here examines Iranian Shi'ite thinkers' encounters with Christian thought since the Islamic revolution of 1979, and provides insight into the cultural and intellectual climate surrounding Christian-Muslim dialogue in contemporary Iran. The literature on Christianity in Iran reveals a wide range of approaches and attitudes, and Tavassoli demonstrates that traditional polemics are giving way to a more descriptive and subjective understanding of Christian thought. He also studies Muslim-Christian dialogue and research conducted and supported by governmental as well as non-governmental organizations, and offers a close examination, with interviews, of the work of three prominent liberal religious intellectuals - Abdol Karim Soroush, Mostafa Malekian and Mojtaba Shabestari. Placing contemporary Shi'ite thought in the broad historical context of pre- and post-revolution Iran, Tavassoli relates concrete religious, cultural and socio-political realities to the themes and orientations in the latest phase of the Shi'i Islam-Christianity encounter, and offers fresh insight into the dynamism of contemporary Islam and the religious complexities of the Muslim world.

Previously published as a special issue of *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, this volume focuses on leading figures within Iran between 1997-2007 and their visions and works that are related to Iranian society. A cross section of opinion is investigated, including the clerical ('Ali Khameneh'i, Muhammad Khatami and Mohsen Kadivar), the dissident (Mohsen Makhmalbaf), and the poetic (Qaysar Aminpour) and cinematic. The past decade has been a traumatic one in Iran, and the essays in this volume testify to the vibrancy of the responses from Iranian thinkers. It may be a surprise to some observers that in some senses, 'Ali Khameneh'i may be considered a 'liberal' whereas Muhammad Khatami's own credentials as an advocate of rapprochement with the West needs to be qualified. Responses to Western culture continue to remain centre-stage, and this is also nowhere more apparent than in the complex relationship between the directors of Iranian films (perhaps Iran's most celebrated export these days) and their audiences, both Iranian and Western. Despite some viewing Iran as a pariah state, it remains firmly connected to the West and to modern technology, typified in the practice of blogging that is enjoyed by so many Iranians, which has provided a new space for expression and thinking.

Vahdat (comparative religion, Tufts U.), in this revised version of his dissertation (in sociology at Brandeis U.), applies a carefully defined theory of modernity to his discussion of Iran from the mid- 19th century to the present. The theories of modernity advanced by Kant, Hegel, Marx, Weber, Adorno, Foucault, and Habermas are discussed at the outset. Subsequent chapters consider the Iranian use of modernity, the role of intellectuals in adopting modernity, and how political events have moderated both. Annotation copyrighted by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

In *Mapping the Role of Intellectuals in Iranian Modern and Contemporary History*, Jahanbegloo and contributors examine the role of Iranian intellectuals in the history of Iranian modernity. They trace the contributions of intellectuals in the construction of national identity and the Iranian democratic debate, analyzing how intellectuals balanced indebtedness to the West with the issue of national identity in Iran. Recognizing how intellectual elites became beholden to political powers, the contributors demonstrate the trend that intellectuals often opted for cultural dissent rather than ideological politics.

Iran, Israel, and the Jews have a relationship that is in the news all the time. But it cannot be understood just in modern terms. Its roots are 2,500 years old. This volume surveys that history through case studies and broad overviews—from the first intensive contacts under Cyrus the Great, through Persian influence on Judaism evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Babylonian Talmud, into the Middle Ages and the flourishing of Judeo-Persian literature and culture, and finally into modern times, when the political, social, and cultural ties are multifaceted and profound. Written by experts in both Iranian and Jewish studies, these essays convey the richness and complexity of a long and tumultuous relationship between two ancient and great civilizations, which continues to shape the world today.

Discusses how contemporary Iranian and Middle Eastern thinkers and artists are forging a new postmodern vision. The insurgent, the poet, the mystic, the sectarian: these are four modes of subjectivity that have emerged amid Middle Eastern thought's attempt to reverse, dethrone, or supersede modernity. Providing a theoretical overview of each of these existential stances, Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh engages the views of thinkers and artists of the last several decades, primarily from Iran, but also from Arab, Turkish, North African, Armenian, Afghani, Chechen, and Kurdish backgrounds. He explores various dimensions of the Middle Eastern experience at the threshold of the postmodern moment, including revolutionary ideology, avant-garde literature, new-wave cinema, and radical-extremist thought. The profound reinvention of concepts characteristic of such work—fatalism, insurrection, disappearance, siege—provide unique interpretations and confrontations with the modern period and its relationship to those who presumably fall outside its boundaries of self-consciousness. Expanding the conversation, Mohaghegh contrasts the impressions of the Middle Eastern figures considered with those of the most incisive Western thinkers of modernity, such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Baudrillard, to offer an original global vision that crosses the East-West divide. "This is a fascinating book that

accomplishes something absolutely unique: it weaves together several theories, it is historically attuned to the region, and it engages politics (local and international). Mohaghegh's work is a genuinely novel contribution." — Farhang Erfani, American University

This timely book explains how recognition and misrecognition have the power to fuel conflict and to initiate reconciliation. Constance Duncombe presents a detailed conceptual and empirical investigation of one of the most significant flashpoints in global politics: the fraught bilateral relations between the US and Iran. Duncombe uses this relationship to explore the importance of representation in shaping the identity of a state, as well as how it is recognised by others on the world stage. In 2015, Iran and the US reached an agreement on the framework for a long-term deal that allows Iran limited nuclear technological capacity in exchange for the lifting of debilitating economic sanctions. In light of decades of animosity between Iran and the US, which previously thwarted attempts on both sides to reach an amicable agreement, this book asks how we can best explain the initial success of this deal given the Trump administration's 2018 US withdrawal from the agreement.

The A to Z of Iran is designed to give the reader a quick and understandable overview of specific events, movements, people, political and social groups, places, and trends. Through its extensive chronology, introduction, bibliography, appendixes, and more than double the number of cross-referenced dictionary entries as in the previous edition, the work allows for considerable exploration of a number of historical and contemporary topics and issues. In particular, the modern period, defined as 1800-present, is covered extensively.

This book presents a cultural history of modern Iran from the point of view of Shiraz, a city famous for its poetry and its traditions of scholarship. Exploring the relationship among history, poetry and politics, the book analyses how Shiraz came to be defined as the country's cultural capital, and explains how Iranians have used the concept of culture as a way of thinking about themselves, their past and their relationship with the rest of the world. Weaving together a theoretical approach with extensive ethnographic research, the book suggests a model to integrate broad concerns with a nuanced analysis of Iran's cultural traditions and practices. The author's interdisciplinary approach sheds light on how contemporary Iranians relate to classical Persian poetry; on the relationship between expressive forms and the political imagination; and on the different ways teachers, professors, cultural managers, poets and scholars think and work. He describes how history and poetry are the two dominant modes to talk about the past, present and future of the town and demonstrates that the question of knowledge is crucial to an understanding of the political and existential dimensions of life in Iran today. This book will be a major contribution to the current effort to move away from nationalist views of Iranian history and culture, and as such will be of great interest to scholars of cultural anthropology, history, Middle Eastern studies and Iranian studies.

The Iranian Revolution represented to intellectuals and professionals the potential of spiritual values to triumph over the great power of economic imperialism. Yet out of this revolution has emerged an identity crisis that touches Islamic ideological heights and reaches down to the very ground of Islamic practice. The contributors to this collection, experts on Iranian cultural and political history, analyze the 'fragmented self' of today's Iranian, refracted through that country's institutions, market forces, and modern thought. Each essay both deepens our understanding of contemporary Iran and adds to the broader discussion of the relationship between Islam and the West.

Now more than ever the role of icons and monuments in shaping a national identity is a subject of vital importance to scholars of both nationalism and memory studies. While the nation-state undoubtedly has a powerful influence on a society's cultural memory, it cannot necessarily control the ways in which icons are perceived. Once created, national symbols and perceptions of them take on a life of their own. Taking an innovative approach to the study of Iranian nationalism, Merhavy examines the way symbols from Iran's past have played an important role in the struggles between political, religious, and ideological movements over legitimacy in the last five decades. Using a rich variety of primary sources, he traces the process by which these symbols have been appropriated, rejected, and reinterpreted by the Pahlavi state, the Islamic opposition, and finally, the Islamic Republic. In doing so, this volume contributes to our understanding of cultural symbols that survive political upheavals, dramatic and significant as they may be. It also contributes to the growing body of literature that challenges the state centered perspective of much research on modern Iran by exposing the ever growing importance of civil society in the Iranian public sphere from the second half of the twentieth century onward.

This book is a study of overlooked themes in Iran's contemporary political and intellectual history. It investigates the way Iranian Muslim intellectuals have discussed politics and democracy. As a history of Iranian Islamism and its transformation to post-Islamism, this work demonstrates that Muslim intellectuals have enriched the Iranian society epistemologically, aesthetically, ethically, and politically. This book examines the internal conflicts of the Islamist ideology as the intellectual underpinnings of the 1979 Revolution, its contribution to the formation of the post-revolutionary state, and the post-Islamist response to the democratic deficits of the post-revolutionary state. Seeking to overcome the shortcomings of historiographical approaches, this book demonstrates the intellectual and political agency of Muslim intellectuals from the 1960s to the present.

Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, many Western observers of Iran have seen the country caught between Eastern history and 'Western' modernity, between religion and secularity. As a result, analysis of political philosophy preceding the Revolution has become subsumed by this narrative. Here, Afshin Matin-Asgari proposes a revisionist work of intellectual history, challenging many of the dominant paradigms in Iranian and Middle Eastern historiography and offering a new narration. In charting the intellectual construction of Iranian modernity during the twentieth century, Matin-Asgari focuses on broad patterns of influential ideas and their relation to each other. These intellectual trends are studied in a global historical context, leading to the assertion that Iranian modernity has been sustained by at least a century of intense intellectual interaction with global ideologies. Turning many prevailing narratives on their heads, the author concludes that modern Iran can be seen as, culturally and intellectually, both Eastern and Western.

The transition from Qajar rule in Iran (c.1789-1925) to that of rule by the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979) set in motion a number of shifts in the political, social, and cultural realms. Focusing on masculinity in Iran, this book interweaves ideas and perceptions, laws, political movements, and men's practices to spotlight the role men as gendered subjects played in Iranian history. It shows how men under the reign of Reza Shah dressed, acted, spoke, and thought differently from their late Qajar period counterparts. Furthermore, it highlights how the notion of being a "proper Iranian man" changed over these decades. Demonstrating how an emerging elite of western-educated men constructed and promoted a new model of masculinity as part of their struggle for political, social, and cultural hegemony, Balslev shows how this new model reflects wider developments in Iranian society at the time including the rise of Iranian nationalism and the country's modernisation process. Ali Shariati (1933–77) has been called by many the 'ideologue of the Iranian Revolution'. An inspiration to many of the revolutionary generation, Shariati's combination of Islamic political thought and Left-leaning ideology continues to influence both in Iran and across the wider Muslim world. In this book, Siavash Saffari examines Shariati's long-standing legacy, and how new readings of his works by contemporary 'neo-Shariatis' have contributed to a deconstruction of the false binaries of Islam/modernity, Islam/West, and East/West. Saffari argues that through their critique of Eurocentric metanarratives on the one hand, and the essentialist conceptions of Islam on the other, Shariati and neo-Shariatis have carved out a new space in Islamic thought beyond the traps of Orientalism and Occidentalism. This unique perspective will hold great appeal to researchers of the politics and intellectual thought of post-revolutionary Iran and the greater Middle East. Today Iran is once again in the headlines. Reputed to be developing nuclear weapons, the future of Iraq's next-door neighbor is a matter of grave concern both for the stability of the region and for the safety of the global community. President George W. Bush labeled it part of the "Axis of Evil," and rails against the country's authoritarian leadership. Yet as Bush trumpets the spread of democracy throughout the Middle

East, few note that Iran has one of the longest-running experiences with democracy in the region. In this book, Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr look at the political history of Iran in the modern era, and offer an in-depth analysis of the prospects for democracy to flourish there. After having produced the only successful Islamist challenge to the state, a revolution, and an Islamic Republic, Iran is now poised to produce a genuine and indigenous democratic movement in the Muslim world. Democracy in Iran is neither a sudden development nor a western import, Gheissari and Nasr argue. The concept of democracy in Iran today may appear to be a reaction to authoritarianism, but it is an old idea with a complex history, one that is tightly interwoven with the main forces that have shaped Iranian society and politics, institutions, identities, and interests. Indeed, the demand for democracy first surfaced in Iran a century ago at the end of the Qajar period, and helped produce Iran's surprisingly liberal first constitution in 1906. Gheissari and Nasr seek to understand why democracy failed to grow roots and lost ground to an autocratic Iranian state. Why was democracy absent from the ideological debates of the 1960s and 1970s? Most important, why has it now become a powerful social, political, and intellectual force? How have modernization, social change, economic growth, and the experience of the revolution converged to make this possible?

From antiquity to the Enlightenment, Persian culture has been integral to European history. Interest in all things Persian shaped not just Western views but the self-image of Iranians to the present day. Hamid Dabashi maps the changing geography of these connections, showing that traffic in ideas about Persia did not travel on a one-way street.

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Philosophy in Qajar Iran offers an account of the life, works and philosophical thoughts of major philosophers of Iran between the late eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

In this thoroughly researched account, Mansour Bonakdarian provides an in-depth exploration of the substantial British support for the Iranian constitutional and national struggle of 1906-1911, illuminating the opposition in Britain to Anglo-Russian imperialist intervention in Iran. In painstaking and compelling detail Bonakdarian analyzes, in particular, the role of the Persia Committee, a lobbying group founded in 1908 for the sole purpose of changing Britain's policy toward Iran. This book's strength lies in its coverage of how Sir Edward Grey's policy toward Iran was shaped and the extent to which this policy was affected by sustained criticism from a number of disparate groups including dissenters, radicals, socialists, liberal imperialists, and conservatives. The volume and breadth of primary archival materials used is extensive. Not only have all the standard collections been examined, such as the Foreign Office files and the Cabinet and Grey papers, but also numerous private archives in international libraries have been consulted. Bonakdarian's deep understanding of the Iranian issues yields a rich and balanced approach to the literature in the field. With clear and systematic arguments, he offers an account of diplomatic history that is accessible and persuasive. His scholarship is certain to reinvigorate dialogue on the subject of Anglo-Iranian relations.

Negative portrayals of the West in Iran are often centred around the CIA-engineered coup of 1953, which overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, or the hostage-taking crisis in 1979 following the attack on the US embassy in Tehran. Looking past these iconic events, Ehsan Bakshandeh explores the deeper anti-imperialistic and anti-hegemonic roots of the hostility to Westernism that is evident in the Iranian press. Distinguishing between negative and outright hostile perceptions of the West - which also encompasses Britain, France and Germany - the book traces how the West is represented as the 'Occident' in the country's media. From the Qajar period and the Tobacco protests of the late nineteenth century to the ill-fated Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1919, through to the 1953 coup and 1979 hostage crisis, Bakshandeh highlights the various points in history when misinterpretations and conflicts led to a demonisation of the 'other' in the Iranian media. The major recent source of contention between the West and Iran has of course been the nuclear issue and the resultant regime of sanctions. By examining how this and other issues have been represented by the Iranian press, Bakshandeh offers a crucial and often-overlooked aspect of the key relationship between Iran and the West.

Political upheaval has marked Iran's history throughout the twentieth century. Wars, revolutions, coups and the impact of modernism have shaped Iran's historiography, as they have the country's history. Originally based on oral and written sources, which underpinned traditional genealogical and dynastic history, Iran's historiography was transformed in the early 20th century with the development of a 'new' school of presenting history. Here emphasis shifted from the anecdotal story-telling genre to social, political, economic, cultural and religious history-writing. A new understanding of the nation state and the importance of identity and foreign relations in defining Iran's place in the modern world all served to transform the perspective of Iranian historiography. Touraj Atabaki here brings together a range of rich contributions from international scholars who cover the leading themes of the historiography of 20th-century Iran, including constitutional reform and revolution, literature and architecture, identity, women and gender, nationalism, modernism, Orientalism, Marxism and Islamism.

From popular and 'New Wave' pre-revolutionary films of Fereydoon Goleh and Abbas Kiarostami to post-revolutionary films of Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the Iranian cinema has produced a range of films and directors that have garnered international fame and earned a global following. Golbarg Rekabtalaei takes a unique look at Iranian cosmopolitanism and how it transformed in the Iranian imagination through the cinematic lens. By examining the development of Iranian cinema from the early twentieth century to the revolution, Rekabtalaei locates discussions of modernity in Iranian cinema as rooted within local experiences, rather than being primarily concerned with Western ideals or industrialisation. Her research further illustrates how the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of Iran's citizenry shaped a heterogeneous culture and a cosmopolitan cinema that was part and parcel of Iran's experience of modernity. In turn, this cosmopolitanism fed into an assertion of sovereignty and national identity in a modernising Iran in the decades leading up to the revolution.

The protests unleashed by Iran's disputed presidential election in June 2009 brought the Islamic Republic's vigorous cyber culture to the world's attention. Iran has an estimated 700,000 bloggers, and new media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were thought to have played a key role in spreading news of the protests. The internet is often celebrated as an agent of social change in countries like Iran, but most literature on the subject has struggled to grasp what this new phenomenon actually means. How is it different from print culture? Is it really a new public sphere? Will the Iranian blogosphere create a culture of dissidence, which eventually overpowers the Islamist regime? In this groundbreaking work, the authors give a flavour of contemporary internet culture in Iran and analyse how this new form of communication is affecting the social and political life of the country. Although they warn against stereotyping bloggers as dissidents, they argue that the internet is changing things in ways which neither the government nor the democracy movement could have anticipated. "Blogistan" offers both a new reading of Iranian politics and a new conceptual framework for understanding the politics of the internet, with implications for the wider Middle East, China and beyond.

The drama that shaped today's Iran, from the Revolution to the present day. In 1979, seemingly overnight—moving at a clip some thirty years faster than the rest of the world—Iran became the first revolutionary theocracy in modern times. Since then, the country has been largely a black box to the West, a sinister presence looming over the horizon. But inside Iran, a breathtaking drama has unfolded since then, as religious thinkers, political operatives, poets, journalists, and activists have imagined and reimagined what Iran should be. They have drawn as deeply on the traditions of the West as of the East and have acted upon their beliefs with urgency and passion, frequently staking their lives for them. With more than a decade of experience reporting on, researching, and writing about Iran, Laura Secor narrates this unprecedented history as a story of individuals caught up in the slipstream of their time, seizing and wielding ideas powerful enough to shift its course as they wrestle with their country's apparatus of violent repression as well as its rich and often tragic history. Essential reading at this moment when the fates of our countries have never been more entwined, *Children of Paradise* will stand as a classic of political reporting; an indelible portrait of a nation and its people striving for change.

What do the occult sciences, séances with the souls of the dead, and appeals to saintly powers have to do with rationality? Since the late nineteenth century, modernizing intellectuals, religious leaders, and statesmen in Iran have attempted to curtail many such practices as "superstitious," instead encouraging the development of rational religious sensibilities and dispositions. However, far from diminishing the diverse methods through which Iranians engage with the immaterial realm, these rationalizing processes have multiplied the possibilities for metaphysical experimentation. The Iranian Metaphysicals examines these experiments and their transformations over the past century. Drawing on years of ethnographic and archival research, Alireza Doostdar shows that metaphysical experimentation lies at the center of some of the most influential intellectual and religious movements in modern Iran. These forms of exploration have not only produced a plurality of rational orientations toward metaphysical phenomena but have also fundamentally shaped what is understood as orthodox Shi'i Islam, including the forms of Islamic rationality at the heart of projects for building and sustaining an Islamic Republic. Delving into frequently neglected aspects of Iranian spirituality, politics, and intellectual inquiry, *The Iranian Metaphysicals* challenges widely held assumptions about Islam, rationality, and the relationship between science and religion.

In Iran, since the mid-nineteenth century, one issue has been a common concern: how should Iran become modern? More than a century of struggle for or against modernity has constituted much of the social, political, and cultural history of the country. In the decades since the 1979 Revolution, the question has become even more critical. In *Modernity, Sexuality, and Ideology in Iran*, Talattof finds that the process of modernity never truly unfolded, due in large part to Iran's reluctance to embrace the seminal subjects of gender and sexuality. Talattof's approach reflects a unique look at modernity as not only advances in industry and economy but also advances toward an open, intellectual discourse on sexuality. Exploring the life and times of Shahrzad, a dancer, actress, filmmaker, and poet, Talattof illuminates the country's struggle with modernity and the ideological, traditional, and religious resistance against it. Born in 1946, she performed in several theater productions, became an acclaimed film star in the 1970s, and pursued a career as a journalist and poet. Following the revolution, she was imprisoned and eventually became homeless on the streets of Tehran. Her success and eventual decline as a female artist and entertainer illustrate the conflict between modernity and tradition and Iran's failure to embrace an overt expression of sexuality. Talattof also profiles several other female artists of the 1970s, analyzing their lives and work as windows through which to examine what Iranian culture allowed and what it repudiated.

"Here, finally, the collection we've been waiting for--thoughtful and lively essays on the relevance of liberalism for this new century, by some of its keenest observers."--Robert B. Reich, Professor of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution was the twentieth century's first such political movement in the Middle East. It represented a landmark in Iranian history because of the unlikely support it received from Shi'ite clerics who historically viewed Western concepts with suspicion, some claiming constitutionalism to be anti-Islamic. Leading the support was Muhammad Kazim Khurasani, the renowned Shi'ite jurist who conceived of a supporting role for the clergy in a modern Iranian political system. Drawing on extensive analysis of religious texts, fatwas, and articles written by Khurasani and other pro- and anti-constitutionalists, Farzaneh provides a comprehensive and illuminating interpretation of Khurasani's religious pragmatism. Despite some opposition from his peers, Khurasani used a form of jurisprudential reasoning when creating shari'a that was based on human intellect to justify his support of not only the Iranian parliament but also the political powers of clerics. He had a reputation across the Shi'ite community as a masterful religious scholar, a skillful teacher, and a committed humanitarian who heeded the people's socioeconomic and political grievances and took action to address them. Khurasani's push for progressive reforms helped to inaugurate a new era of clerical involvement in constitutionalism in the Middle East.

This Handbook is a current, comprehensive single-volume history of Iranian civilization. The authors, all leaders in their fields, emphasize the large-scale continuities of Iranian history while also describing the important patterns of transformation that have characterized Iran's past. Each of the chapters focuses on a specific epoch of Iranian history and surveys the general political, social, cultural, and economic issues of that era. The ancient period begins with chapters considering the anthropological evidence of the prehistoric era, through to the early settled civilizations of the Iranian plateau, and continuing to the rise of the ancient Persian empires. The medieval section first considers the Arab-Muslim conquest of the seventh century, and then moves on to discuss the growing Turkish influence filtering in from Central Asia beginning in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The last third of the book covers Iran in the modern era by considering the rise of the Safavid state and its accompanying policy of centralization, the introduction of Shi'ism, the problems of reform and modernization in the Qajar and Pahlavi periods, and the revolution of 1978-79 and its aftermath. The book is a collaborative exercise among scholars specializing in a variety of sub-fields, and across a number of disciplines, including history, art history, classics, literature, politics, and linguistics. Here, readers can find a reliable and accessible narrative that can serve as an authoritative guide to the field of Iranian studies.

Taking a theologically oriented method for engaging with historical and cultural phenomena, this book explores the challenge, offered by revolutionary Shi'i theology in Iran, to Western conventions on theology, revolution and religion's role in the creation of identity. Offering a stringent critique of current literature on political Islam and on Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the author suggests that current literature fails to perceive and engage with the revolution and its thought as religious phenomena. Grounded in the experience of unconditional faith in God, Shi'i thinkers recognize a distinction between the human and the divine. Concerned with the challenge of constructing a virtuous society, these thinkers pose a model of authority and morality based on mediation, interpretation and participation in the experience of faith. Ori Goldberg considers this interpretative model utilizing a broad array of theoretical tools, most notably critical theologies drawn from Jewish and Christian thought. He draws on a close reading of several texts written by prominent Iranian Shi'i thinkers between 1940 and 2000, most of which are translated into English for the first time, to reveal a vibrant, complex discourse. Presenting a new interfaith perspective on a subject usually considered beyond the scope of such research, this book will be an important reference for scholars of Iranian studies, political Islam, theology and cultural studies.

Examining the trajectory of the secularization of Islam in Iran, this book explains how efforts to Islamize society led, self-destructively, to its secularization. The research engages a range of debates across different fields, emphasizing the political and epistemological instability of the basic categories such as Islam, Sharia, and secularism. The volume is an interdisciplinary study of both the history of Islamic revival and Khomeini's very specific merger of Islamic law and mysticism. It traces back the process of secularization to the early encounter of Iranian intellectuals with Europeans and adoption of their fundamental framework in an Islamic guise. The process continued until the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, when Khomeini tried to substantively de-secularize Iranian social imaginaries. His attempts were not followed up by his followers, who vigorously reinstated the previous trend, after his death, resulting in a polity that is mostly secular but with Islamic ornaments. Bringing together area studies (Iran), religious studies (Islam), and political theory (secularism), this interdisciplinary volume places findings in a broader narrative that is both specific to Iran and broad enough to engage a global readership.

The essays in this volume on the subject of equality are the work of scholars at Bard College and West Point. Their research falls within the areas of history, religion, legal theory, social science, ethics and philosophy. The regions covered include the Middle and Far East, Europe, and America; the time periods studied are both contemporary and historical. Each essay is a well-detailed

exploration which assumes the reader has no prior acquaintance with the topic. Together, the studies reveal both conflicting standards of equality as well as patterns of pernicious inequality. In an ideal world, equality and inequality among humans would vary in acceptable proportion, increase of the one ensuring decrease of the other. Unfortunately, as the studies illustrate, any such expectation of progress in the real world is almost routinely thwarted. Despite the wide variety of topics, a common thread binds these essays. Human nature seems to harbor a moral deficiency lying deeper than any written laws and those traditional customs which promote inequality and breed injustice. The fault is prominent in those who champion unjust laws or who willingly enforce discrimination but it is no less active in the silent many who condone the practice. The essays reveal the same persistent and unappealing trait which social groups from the remote past to the present manifest in various ways: blind determination to perpetuate whatever advantages one group believes it enjoys over another, convinced that its own members are more equal than theirs. Being made unequal, the others too easily become targets who are considered less worthy, sometimes even less human. In this timely, informative edited volume, major Iranian scholars and civic actors address some of the most pressing questions about Iranian civil society and the process of democratization in Iran. They describe the role of Iranian civil society in the process of transition to democracy in Iran and offer insight about the enduring legacy of previous social and political movements—starting with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906—in the struggle for democracy in Iran. Each contributor looks at different aspects of Iranian civil society to address the complex nature of the political order in Iran and the possibilities for secularization and democratization of the Iranian government. Various contributors analyze the impact of religion on prevailing democratic thought, discussing reformist religious movements and thinkers and the demands of religious minorities. Others provide insight into the democratic implications of recent Iranian women's rights movements, call for secularism within government, and the pressure placed on the existing theocracy by the working class. The contributors address these and related issues in all their richness and complexity and offer a set of discussions that is both accessible and illuminating for the reader.

A global debate has emerged within Islam about how to coexist with democracy. Even in Asia, where such ideas have always been marginal, radical groups are taking the view that scriptural authority requires either Islamic rule (Dar-ul-Islam) or a state of war with the essentially illegitimate authority of non-Muslims or secularists. This book places the debate in a specifically Asian context. It draws attention to Asia (east of Afghanistan), as not only the home of the majority of the world's Muslims but also Islam's historic laboratory in dealing with religious pluralism. In Asia, pluralism is not simply a contemporary development of secular democracies, but a long-tested pattern based on both principle and pragmatism. For many centuries, Muslims in Asia have argued about the legitimacy of non-Islamic government over Muslims, and the legitimacy of non-Muslim peoples, polities and rights under Islamic governance. This book analyses such debates and the ways they have been reconciled, in South and Southeast Asia, up to the present. The evidence presented here suggests that Muslims have adapted flexibly and creatively to the pluralism with which they have lived, and are likely to continue to do so.

The essays in this volume examine ten Muslim intellectuals from the Arab world, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, the USA, and Europe who employ contemporary critical methods to interpret the Qur'an, arriving at conclusions which challenge those of earlier Muslim interpretation, and which are critical of political Islam and progressive in orientation. The volume offers a framework for understanding their work, and responses to this among Muslim and Western audiences.

Provides an analysis of the dynamics of change and class configuration in Iranian society. Using a theoretical framework, this work maps the trajectory of class changes over time, specifically noting the movements between pre revolutionary and post revolutionary Iran.

This interdisciplinary volume offers a range of studies spanning the various historical, political, legal, and cultural features of social justice in Iran, and proposes that the present-day realities of life in Iran could not be farther from the promises of the Iranian Revolution. The ideals of social justice and participatory democracy that galvanized a resilient nation in 1979 have been abandoned as an avaricious ruling elite has privatized the economy, abandoned social programs and subsidy payments for the poor, and suppressed the struggles of women, workers, students, and minorities for equality. At its core, Iran's Struggles for Social Justice seeks to educate and to develop a new discourse on social justice in Iran.

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