

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

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.

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. 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,

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the modern period, defined as 1800-present, is covered extensively.

A new reading of Ali Shariati's intellectual legacy on Iranian political discourse and concepts of Islam and modernity. 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.

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.

The Iranian Revolution represented to intellectuals and professionals the potential of spiritual values to triumph over

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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.

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.

From popular and 'New Wave' pre-revolutionary films of Fereydoon Goleh and Abbas Kiarostami to post-revolutionary

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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 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

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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.

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.

This detailed examination of contemporary Iran addresses the most important current social, political, and economic issues facing the nation and the way it is perceived by the outside

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world. The volume brings together some of the most important scholars and researchers in the field, working in such diverse disciplines as anthropology, economics, history, international relations, philosophy, political science, and sociology, to offer a broad range of perspectives on the significance of three decades of changes for Iran's current and near-term-future domestic and international politics. Drawing upon a wealth of original field research, the authors challenge conventional wisdom and simplistic media stereotypes about the Islamic Republic. The chapters reach beyond traditional images of the country to show that, as a consequence of thirty years of economic and social changes, the reality, or 'essence', of contemporary Iran is more complex and nuanced than is often portrayed in the international media. Offering valuable insights into Iran's economic and social policies, as well as its politics, since the Islamic Revolution, this book will be of great interest to students and scholars of political science, sociology, and Iranian studies.

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,

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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.

Ethnicity, Identity, and the Development of Nationalism in Iran investigates the ways in which Armenian minorities in Iran encountered Iranian nationalism and participated in its development over the course of the twentieth century. Based primarily on oral interviews, archival documents, personal memoirs, memorabilia, and photographs, the book examines the lives of a group of Armenian-Iranians—a truck driver, an army officer, a parliamentary representative, a civil servant, and a scout leader—and explores the personal conflicts and paradoxes attendant upon their layered allegiances and compound identities. In documenting individual experiences in Iranian industry, military, government, education, and community organization, the five social biographies detail the various roles of elites and non-elites in the development of Iranian nationalism and reveal the multiple forces that shape the processes of identity formation. Yaghoubian combines these portraits with theories of nationalism and national identity to answer recurring pivotal questions about how nationalism evolves, why it is appealing, what broad forces and daily activities shape and sustain it, and the role of ethnicity in its development.

Iranian history was long told through a variety of stories and legend, tribal lore and genealogies, and tales of the prophets. But in the late nineteenth century, new institutions emerged to

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produce and circulate a coherent history that fundamentally reshaped these fragmented narratives and dynastic storylines. Farzin Vejdani investigates this transformation to show how cultural institutions and a growing public-sphere affected history-writing, and how in turn this writing defined Iranian nationalism. Interactions between the state and a cross-section of Iranian society—scholars, schoolteachers, students, intellectuals, feminists, and poets—were crucial in shaping a new understanding of nation and history. This enlightening book draws on previously unexamined primary sources—including histories, school curricula, pedagogical materials, periodicals, and memoirs—to demonstrate how the social locations of historians writ broadly influenced their interpretations of the past. The relative autonomy of these historians had a direct bearing on whether history upheld the status quo or became an instrument for radical change, and the writing of history became central to debates on social and political reform, the role of women in society, and the criteria for citizenship and nationality. Ultimately, this book traces how contending visions of Iranian history were increasingly unified as a centralized Iranian state emerged in the early twentieth century.

In 1978, as the protests against the Shah of Iran reached their zenith, philosopher Michel Foucault was working as a special correspondent for *Corriere della Sera* and *le Nouvel Observateur*. During his little-known stint as a journalist, Foucault traveled to Iran, met with leaders like Ayatollah Khomeini, and wrote a series of articles on the revolution. *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* is the first book-length analysis of these essays on Iran, the majority of which have never before appeared in English. Accompanying the analysis are annotated translations of the Iran writings in their entirety and the at times blistering responses from such contemporaneous critics as Middle East scholar Maxime

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Rodinson as well as comments on the revolution by feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. In this important and controversial account, Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson illuminate Foucault's support of the Islamist movement. They also show how Foucault's experiences in Iran contributed to a turning point in his thought, influencing his ideas on the Enlightenment, homosexuality, and his search for political spirituality. Foucault and the Iranian Revolution informs current discussion on the divisions that have reemerged among Western intellectuals over the response to radical Islamism after September 11. Foucault's provocative writings are thus essential for understanding the history and the future of the West's relationship with Iran and, more generally, to political Islam. In their examination of these journalistic pieces, Afary and Anderson offer a surprising glimpse into the mind of a celebrated thinker.

The relationship between Algeria and France that formed during the 132 years of colonial rule did not end in 1962 when Algeria gained its independence. This long period of occupation left an indelible mark on the social fabric of both societies, one that continues to influence their cultures, identities, and politics. Wide-ranging in scope yet complementary in focus, the essays deftly convey the extent to which the French colonial experience in Algeria resonates on both sides of the Mediterranean. Young and established scholars shed light on the linguistic, cultural, and social mechanisms of violence, remembrance, forgetting, fantasy, nostalgia, prejudice, mythmaking, and fractured identity. Addressing the nature of Franco-Algerian relations through such topics as migration, displacement, settler colonialism, racism, and sexuality, these essays provide an important contribution to postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and North African history. With renewed public debate surrounding the two countries' shared past and their

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interwoven communities today, this volume will be indispensable for anyone with an interest in the relations between Algeria and France and the literature on memory and nostalgia.

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.

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

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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.

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.

"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,

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A comprehensive social history of Iranian cinema address documentaries, popular genres, and art films and explores the role of film and media in shaping a modern national identity in Iran.

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.

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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.

Studying intellectual trends in Iran in a global historical context, this new intellectual history challenges many dominant paradigms in Iranian historiography and offers a new revisionist interpretation of Iranian modernity. 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.

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

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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 study entails a theoretical reading of the Iranian modern history and follows an interdisciplinary agenda at the intersection of philosophy, psychoanalysis, economics, and politics and intends to offer a novel framework for the analysis of socio-economic development in Iran in the modern era. A brief review of Iranian modern history from the Constitutional Revolution to the Oil Nationalization Movement, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and the recent Reformist and Green Movements demonstrates that Iranian people travelled full circle. This historical experience of socio-economic development revolving around the bitter question of “Why are we backward?” and its manifestation in

perpetual socio-political instability and violence is the subject matter of this study. Michel Foucault's conceived relation between the production of truth and production of wealth captures the essence of hypothesis offered in this study. Foucault (1980: 93–94) maintains that "In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth; indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place." Based on a hybrid methodology combining hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion, this monograph proposes that the failure to produce wealth has had particular roots in the failure in the production of truth and trust. At the heart of the proposed theoretical model is the following formula: the Iranian subject's confused preference structure culminates in the formation of unstable coalitions which in turn leads to institutional failure, creating a chaotic social order and a turbulent history as experienced by the Iranian nation in the modern era. As such, the society oscillates between the chaotic states of socio-political anarchy emanating from irreconcilable differences between and within social assemblages and their affiliated hybrid forms of regimes of truth in the springs of freedom and repressive states of order in the winters of discontent. Each time, after the experience of chaos, the order is restored based on the emergence of a final arbiter (Iranian leviathan) as the evolved coping strategy for achieving conflict resolution. This highly volatile truth cycle produces the experience of socio-economic backwardness and violence. The explanatory power of the theoretical framework offered in the study exploring the relation between the production

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of truth, trust, and wealth is demonstrated via providing historical examples from strong events of Iranian modern history. The significant policy implications of the model are explored. This monograph will appeal to researchers, scholars, graduate students, policy makers and anyone interested in the Middle Eastern politics, Iran, development studies and political economy.

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.

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.

This book argues that Political Islam in the Iranian context evolved into three main schools of thought during the 1960s and 1970s: Jurisprudential Islam led by Ayatollah Khomeini, Leftist Islam led by Shariati, and Liberal Islam led by Bazargan. Despite the fact that all schools seek an Islamic state, their chosen methods and philosophical approaches diverge considerably. The synthesis of these three contrasting socio-political views is structured here to provide a coherent interpretation by means of ongoing comparison. This method has so far not been presented in academic studies within the field of Political Islam. Furthermore, this book provides a critical analysis of the aforementioned 'Political Islam' schools in Iran, their similarities and differences, relative success or failure, their contribution to the revolution of

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1979 and how they have evolved from the pre-revolution era to the present.

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.

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?

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

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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.

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

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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.

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.

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.

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