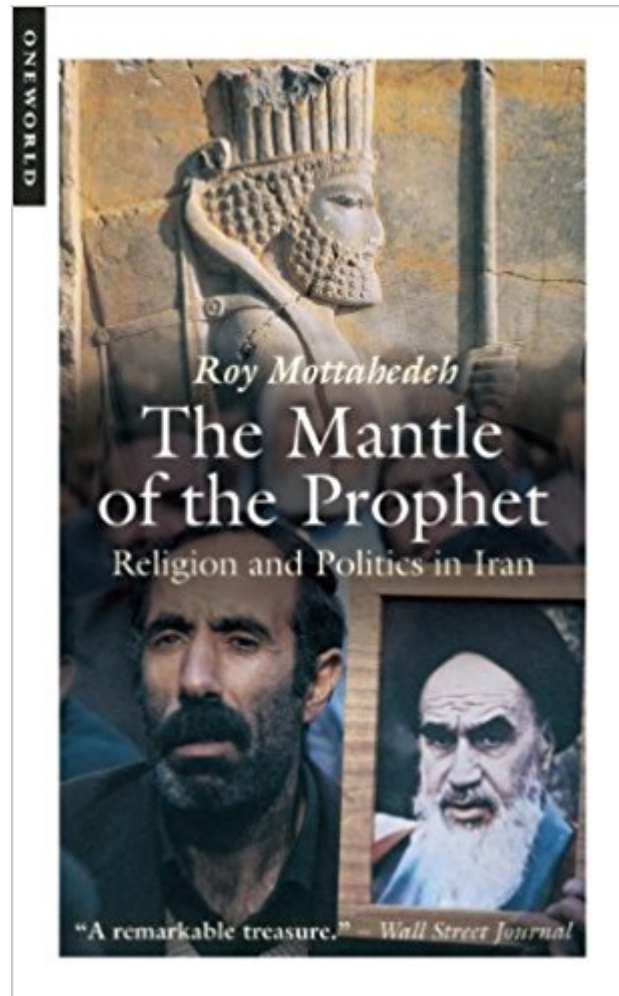




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The Mantle Of The Prophet



Synopsis

Drawn from the first-hand accounts of eyewitnesses, Roy Mottahedeh's gripping account of Islam and Politics in revolutionary Iran is widely regarded as one of the best records of that turbulent time ever written. The true story of a young mullah, his life in the sacred shrine city of Qom, and the dramatic events of the 1979 Revolution, this enthralling account paints a vivid picture of contemporary Iran, while providing a panoramic survey of Muslim, Shi'ite and Persian culture from the Middle Ages to the current day. From the ancient time of Zoroaster to the world of Khomeini, this sweeping saga interweaves biography with history, politics and religion to offer new levels of understanding into Iran's past, present and future. Written with feeling, sympathy and clarity, this revised edition includes a new chronology detailing events in Iran from the revolution right up to the present day and Ahmadinejad's controversial regime.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Even with news breaking daily in Iran, the first book I send myself and other readers back to has to be Roy Mottahedeh's "The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran," which was first published in 1985. A professor at Harvard, Mottahedeh has written an intellectual history as stirring and graceful as any novel. He sets the intimate biography of a young cleric against the vast epic of Iranian thought from Zoroaster to Avicenna, Kasravi to Khomeini. "The Mantle of the Prophet" is literary, learned, and deeply felt; the writing is splendid, and the story is an education for the Western reader unaware of the powerful tides of Shi'ite and Persian thought over a period of centuries. -- The New Yorker, June 26, 2009

"A masterpiece....[Mottahedeh exposes], with dazzling erudition, the subterranean Sufi and poetic heritage lying just below the surface of Khomeini's seemingly granitelike orthodoxy."--The New York Review of Books --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Iran is the only majority Muslim country today that still has a conscious connection to its pre-Islamic past. This book is not only about Islam. It also explores what you may call "Iranian Consciousness" rooted in the region's historical experiences with multiple religions and intellectual trends. In the beginning of the book Ali Hashemi's resistance to overtly celebrate the fall of the monarchy brings into mind Khatami's emotionless stare at the Azadi stadium that was captured on television cameras after the Iranian national team scored a goal. It gives you a clue to the mindset of the clerical class in Iran. One also has to add to this the question that was posed to Khomeini as his plane was about to land in Iran: What is your feeling about coming back to Iran? Khomeini replied "NOTHING." Towards the end of the book there is a mention of Imam Hussain and Rustam. Only a few Iranians will take one over the other as a superior hero.

The book is wonderful in that it goes past simple history and tries to give you the upmost context possible. You live the life of a young boy and see how he and his nation progressed through time. It's like a history book with flavor by not focusing on a step by step narration of what resulted in Iranian history. Many subjects converge and diverge such as art, Islam, logic and politics, etc. To me, that accurately describes the multi-cultural characteristics of Iran and its revolution.

This work relates much of the religious background to the 1978 Iranian Revolution with it's focus on Shia learning. It's structure is tricky with forays onto the past peppering a first person retelling.

While there is some very good aspects of this book, the problems far out weigh the positive parts of the work. The book focuses on individuals which gives the work a micro feel to it. It follows some of the intellectuals in Iranian society throughout history which gives the reader an idea of the varied intellectual milieu, and also shows how these differing strains culminated in the Iranian Revolution. The problem is the book loses the big picture, and the author doesn't do an adequate job tying everything together. The book just jumps around too much without giving the reader a clear picture of how all these different narratives work together which leaves one feeling as if they wandering aimlessly. The other large problem is that the book has a narrow audience. The work is a great

starter to get a reader introduced to the many currents of intellectual thought in Iran, but these are not the people who are going to be drawn to this work, instead those with a deep interest in Iran will come to this work. The problem is that there are better books that cover the same subject with better focus. Books by Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Ali M. Ansari treat the same subject more adeptly. If one is already pretty familiar with Iranian history and its intellectual history then much of this work will be somewhat redundant. In the end there are just better works out there that are better reads. This book left me feeling empty and often I was simply disinterested in the author's story. While the individuals were always interesting, the author doesn't bring the story together so that the reader is just reading the individual stories as isolated islands unto themselves. In the end I just can't recommend this book.

One of the best book I have ever read in Islamic studies.

Purposefully evocative, notoriously unbiased

I began reading this book while on a tour in Iran. Of all the books I've read on Iran, I consider this one the best explanation of what the Islamic Republic is all about, from the perspective of the history of Shia Islam. This is solid history, well worth reading for anyone who wants an important "background story" to go with today's and tomorrow's headlines.

Very worthwhile and useful: to try to understand and appreciate the psychology of a people you need to know its history.

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