



Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope

By Shirin Ebadi, Azadeh Moaveni

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A *NEW YORK TIMES* NOTABLE BOOK

The moving, inspiring memoir of one of the great women of our times, Shirin Ebadi, winner of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize and advocate for the oppressed, whose spirit has remained strong in the face of political persecution and despite the challenges she has faced raising a family while pursuing her work.

Best known in this country as the lawyer working tirelessly on behalf of Canadian photojournalist, Zara Kazemi—raped, tortured and murdered in Iran—Dr. Ebadi offers us a vivid picture of the struggles of one woman against the system. The book movingly chronicles her childhood in a loving, untraditional family, her upbringing before the Revolution in 1979 that toppled the Shah, her marriage and her religious faith, as well as her life as a mother and lawyer battling an oppressive regime in the courts while bringing up her girls at home.

Outspoken, controversial, Shirin Ebadi is one of the most fascinating women today. She rose quickly to become the first female judge in the country; but when the religious authorities declared women unfit to serve as judges she was demoted to clerk in the courtroom she had once presided over. She eventually fought her way back as a human rights lawyer, defending women and children in politically charged cases that most lawyers were afraid to represent. She has been arrested and been the target of assassination, but through it all has spoken out with quiet bravery on behalf of the victims of injustice and discrimination and become a powerful voice for change, almost universally embraced as a hero.

Her memoir is a gripping story—a must-read for anyone interested in Zara Kazemi's case, in the life of a remarkable woman, or in understanding the political and religious upheaval in our world.

Praise for Shirin Ebadi and *Iran Awakening*

“This is the riveting story of an amazing and very brave woman living through

some quite turbulent times. And she emerges with head unbowed.”—**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

“The safety and freedom of citizens in democracies is irretrievably bound with the safety and freedom of people like Shirin Ebadi who are fighting to reassert the best achievements of mankind: universal human rights. One of the staunchest advocates for human rights in her country and beyond, Ms. Ebadi, herself a devout Muslim, represents hope for many in Muslim societies that Islam and democracy are indeed compatible.”—**Azar Nafisi**

“A moving portrait of a life lived in truth.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“A riveting account of a brave, lonely struggle . . . [*Iran Awakening*] reads like a police thriller, its drama heightened by Ebadi’s determination to keep up the quotidian aspects of her family life.”—*The Washington Post Book World*

“A must read . . . may be the most important book you could read this year.”—*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“As a testament to how a single, inspired voice can rise above the cacophony . . . the book should be required reading.”—*The Nation*

“Some of her admirers in Iran call her a woman of steel. Sure, the Iranian human rights champion also has a heart of gold. But it is Shirin Ebadi’s unbending will that explains how she has become the conscience of the Islamic Republic.”—*Time*

“[Ebadi] has come forward with professional force and unflinching courage, and she has defied any danger to her own safety. She is truly a woman of the people!”—**Ole Danbolt Mjos, chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee**

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

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Most Americans date troubles with Iran to the 1979 overthrow of the shah and the 444-day U.S. embassy hostage drama. Iranians date the friction back to 1953, when the U.S. orchestrated a coup that removed beloved Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Ebadi recalls that period as the beginning of shifting politics that would erode basic freedoms and notions of human rights in Iran. Raised to believe in gender equality, Ebadi became a judge but was demoted to secretary when the Islamic Revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini demanded subservience of women. Ebadi estimates that five million Iranians, feeling oppressed by the revolution, left the country, draining valuable resources and leaving bitterly separated families. Ebadi lost her profession, her friends, and her country but was determined to stay and speak out against oppression. She eventually returned to public life as a human-rights lawyer taking on the defense of women, children, and dissidents. Ebadi offers a very personal account of her life and her fight for human rights in Iran. *Vanessa Bush*

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Review

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“[Ebadi] has risked her freedom and her life to defend democracy, free speech, and the rule of law.”—*The Boston Globe*

About the Author

Shirin Ebadi is one of the leading human rights activists in the world. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. She continues to work as a lawyer in Tehran while also lecturing widely around the world.

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