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Iran: A Beginner's Guide (Beginner's Guides)



Synopsis

As the Western-Iranian impasse continues to dominate international affairs, politicians and the media confidently proclaim Iran the greatest threat to the Western World. But this villainous mask obscures a far more complex identity formed by a vibrant and tumultuous history. Revealing the true face of this troubled country, acclaimed expert Homa Katouzian delves deep into Iran's past, exploring how an ancient civilization at a cross-road of diverse dynasties and religions grew to become an ethnically, linguistically and culturally rich nation still bound by the Persian tradition. Major political events and key figures are brought to life as centuries of authoritarian and arbitrary rule, chaos and revolution are unraveled and analyzed, shedding new light on modern Iran and making this an indispensable resource for understanding the current situation in the Middle East.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Katouzian offers a combination of either brilliant panoramic overviews or else detailed accounts of blow-by-blow developments. I liked his introduction best, with its clear layout of the basic realities that have shaped the country all these thousands of years. He documents, in more-than-adequate detail, the gradual rise of a third option for society -- between the previous options of autocracy or chaos. As the reformist ex-president Khatami put it, "arbitrary rule and chaos are two sides of the same coin."

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