

For Immediate Release:

“This timely little book offers a thoughtful, wide-ranging and captivating introduction to a dynamic country most Americans still regrettably associate with romantic-exotic or religious-fanatical stereotypes....Arranged and framed with care by editor Zanganeh (and featuring original art by Satrapi), the book's contents resist an overarching, dogmatic point of view, presenting instead an open-ended invitation to dialogue. Readers will find this volume complex but accessible; it reveals the human stories behind the veil of the headlines.”

—Publishers Weekly

My Sister, Guard Your Veil;
My Brother, Guard Your Eyes:
Uncensored Iranian Voices
Lila Azam Zanganeh, Editor

Including Azar Nafisi, Marjane Satrapi, Abbas Kiarostami,
Shirin Neshat, and Shohreh Aghdashloo

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Although Iran is in the headlines on an almost daily basis, Americans know very little about Iranian culture beyond hazy notions about its dark religious fanaticism and its axis-of-evil stance towards the West. “All in all,” writes editor Lila Azam Zanganeh in her introduction to *My Sister, Guard Your Veil; My Brother, Guard Your Eyes*, “the gap between the multifaceted realities of Iranian political and cultural life and the simplified image one is often fed by politicians and mainstream media alike remains mind-boggling.”

The first collection of its kind, *My Sister, Guard Your Veil* aims at closing that gap by offering a wide ranging look at Iran from the perspective of some the country’s most astute observers and commentators. Including popular Iranian voices and personalities, such as Azar Nafisi, Marjane Satrapi, celebrated filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, and Oscar nominated actress Shohreh Aghdashloo (*House of Sand and Fog*), as well as lesser known journalists, poets, artists and philosophers, the anthology, notes Azam Zanganeh, “strives to open a series of vibrant perspectives on concealed Iranian realms.”

The fifteen essays in this collection reflect a country of profound contradictions; caught between fierce national pride and the allure of all things Western, religious fundamentalism and satellite TV, and cultural orthodoxy in a society dominated by youth—50 percent of the population is under the age of twenty-five. As Publishers Weekly observes, “The brief, often breezy essays, reminiscences, reportage and interviews overturn the facile image of Iran as a single, homogenous entity, providing animated discussions of politics, sex, art, women's rights, racism, poetic culture, underground nightlife, Tehran's Jewish community, censorship, economic inequality and cross-cultural (mis)understanding under a regime that is highly oppressive but continually subverted.”

Here the controversial visual artist Shirin Neshat discusses Western misconceptions about Iranian women and explains how her allegorical narratives explore gender issues in Islam. Prominent philosopher Daryush Shayegan offers a modern version of Montesquieu's Persian Letters. Azedeh Moaveni, author of *Lipstick Jihad*, reveals the world of secret sex parties in Tehran. Journalist Gelareh Asayesh writes of coming to terms with her race and status in America. Mehrangiz Kar, a human rights lawyer and essayist who was imprisoned in Tehran in 2000, recalls how changes in the appearance of store mannequins reflected what was happening to women during the revolution. And journalist Reza Aslan chronicles a trip to Qom and reveals why Iran is not a theocracy but a mullahcracy. “With each story,” writes Azam Zanganeh, “My Sister, Guard Your Veil aims to corrode fixed ideals and turn cultural and political clichés on their heads.”

About the Editor

Lila Azam Zanganeh has a masters in international affairs from Columbia University. She has taught at Harvard University and has been published in the *New York Times* and *The Nation*.

She lives in New York City.

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Uncensored Iranian Voices

Lila Azam Zanganeh

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