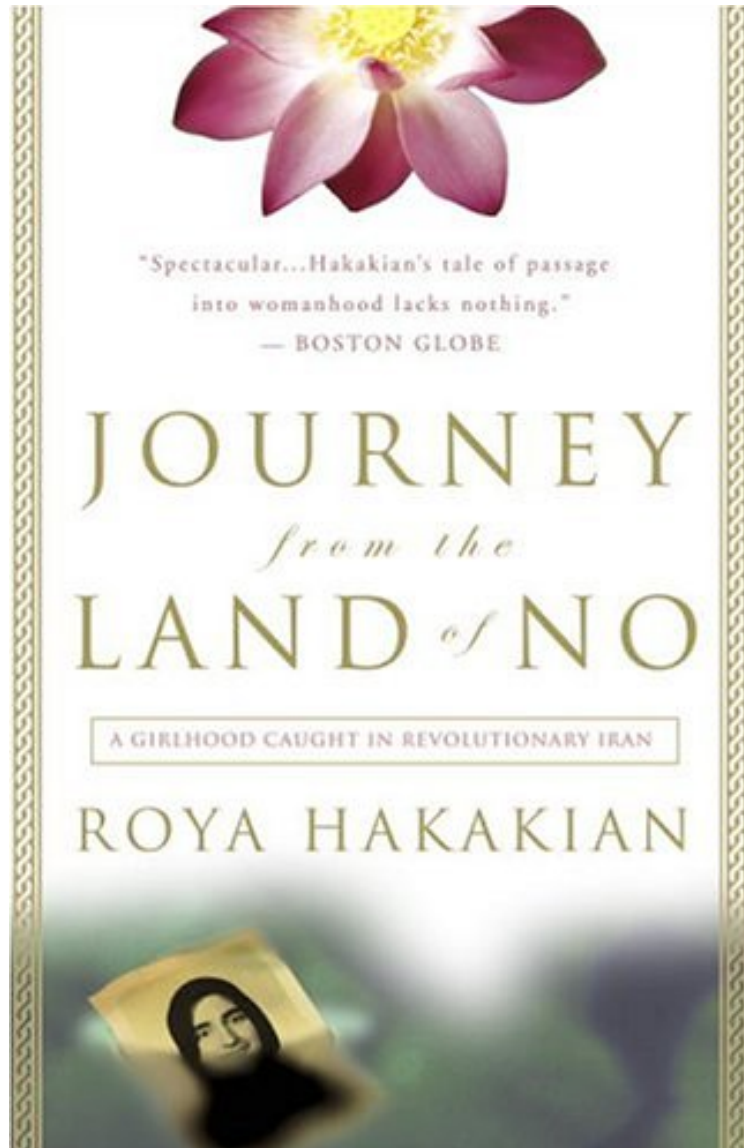


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## Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran

*Roya Hakakian*

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#836178 in Books Roya Hakakian 2005-06-28 2005-06-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .60 x 5.30l, .61 #File Name: 0609810308256 pages Journey from the Land of No A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran | File size: 71.Mb

**Roya Hakakian : Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Vefry Good Middle Class PerspectiveBy BabakThis book is a treasure for those interested in enhancing their understanding of religious minorities' "Nationalist" mindset in Iran, particularly during the Pahlavi period. One has to take into consideration that a large number of Jews in Iran converted to Islam for pragmatic reasons prior to the Pahlavi dynasty. The brand of pre-Islamic nationalist secularism promoted by the Pahlavi shahs in Iran is ever present throughout this book. The author does, to some degree, have an understanding of an "Iranian consciousness" regardless of religious inclination. She is very sympathetic toward "martyrs" of Iran-Iraq war, to the extent to which she modestly discredits herself as a moral authority on the subject due to the fact that she did not pay a physical price for defending Iran. Many Iranian Jews consider themselves Iranians first and then perhaps Jewish, quite similar to many secular Muslim Iranians.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A beautiful, harrowing read ...By c langridgeEvery American should educate themselves about the country of Iran, which was Persia, and the history of the U.S. and that country. This story is the autobiographical account of a young girl, born into the idyllic place Iran was at that time (beautiful, peaceful, later tensions then unheard of) and coming of age at the end of the Shah's reign and the in-between years before hard-line Islamists turned Iran into the hell it is today. Anything was possible and they believed freedom would be theirs at last: little did they know. A beautiful, harrowing read ...15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A major book by an important writerBy Wendy SalingerThis book opened my eyes like nothing I've read since "Midnight's Children." And it is all the more powerful for being a woman's story. Do we have many books like this? I don't think so. It's the story of the convergence of the peak, rapid-fire events of the writer's dawning adolescence with the historically definitive crises of her country of Iran, her city of Tehran. I agree with Salman Rushdie that the health of a culture can be measured by its treatment of women. JOURNEY follows a trail of blood--the blood of the lamb slaughtered for a wedding feast, the blood of a disgraced female cousin's questioned virginity, and finally the blood of the martyrs of the revolution. And then there is the writer's own blood--her first menstrual blood at 13. On the threshold of womanhood, she wonders at the shame assigned to women, the glory to the martyr's sacrifice: "No matter how young or old, that bleeding head was venerated. And not my blood?" A wonderful thing in this book is the chapter about the character of Mrs. Arman. The female schoolteacher, mother and muse of women writers. (Like a Eudora Welty schoolteacher heroine.) She gives her students a sense of solidarity in their exile under the Muslim regime; her touch restores them to their bodies. And it's the moment when Mrs. Arman proclaims--you're a writer! you're a writer! Don't ever forget it! Don't let me down!--that is the decisive one in the author's story, that baptizes her and sanctifies her coming journey out into the world. Because the story's about her emergence as a writer as well. It's only when the map of her beloved city (which her writing traces) is no longer recognizable and the notebooks she's filled with her poetry have been burnt, that her journey from the land of No is inescapable. The writing is breathtaking. The metaphors flow effortlessly. I think this is a major book by an important writer.

From the HardcoverWe stormed every classroom, inscribed our slogans on the blackboard . . . Never had mayhem brought more peace. All our lives we had been taught the virtues of behaving, and now we were discovering the importance of misbehaving. Too much fear had tainted our days. Too many afternoons had passed in silence, listening to a fanatics diatribes. We were rebelling because we were not evil, we had not sinned, and we knew nothing of the apocalypse. . . . This was 1979, the year that showed us we could make our own destinies. We were rebelling because rebelling was all we could do to quell the rage in our teenage veins. Together as girls we found the courage we had been told was not in us.In Journey from the Land of No Roya Hakakian recalls her childhood and adolescence in prerevolutionary Iran with candor and verve. The result is a beautifully written coming-of-age story about one deeply intelligent and perceptive girls attempt to ?nd an authentic voice of her own at a time of cultural closing and repression. Remarkably, she manages to re-create a time and place dominated by religious fanaticism, violence, and fear with an open heart and often with great humor.Hakakian was twelve years old in 1979 when the revolution swept through Tehran. The daughter of an esteemed poet, she grew up in a household that hummed with intellectual life. Family gatherings were punctuated by witty, satirical exchanges and spontaneous recitations of poetry. But the Hakakians were also part of the very small Jewish population in Iran who witnessed the iron fist of the Islamic fundamentalists increasingly tightening its grip. It is with the innocent confusion of youth that Roya describes her discovery of a swastikaa plus sign gone awry, a dark reptile with four hungry clawspainted on the wall near her home. As a schoolgirl she watched as friends accused of reading blasphemous books were escorted from class by Islamic Society guards, never to return. Only much later did Roya learn that she was spared a similar fate because her teacher admired her writing.Hakakian relates in the most poignant, and at times painful, ways what life was like for women after the country fell into the hands of Islamic fundamentalists who had declared an insidious war against them, but we see it all through the eyes of a strong, youthful optimist who somehow came up in the world believing that she was different, knowing she was special. At her loneliest, Roya discovers the consolations of writing while sitting on the rooftop of her house late at night. There, pen in hand, I led my own chorus of words, with a melody of my own making. And she discovers the craft that would ultimately enable her to find her own voice and become her own person.A wonderfully evocative story, Journey from the Land of No reveals an Iran most readers have not encountered

and marks the debut of a stunning new talent.

From Publishers Weekly Political upheavals like the fall of the Shah of Iran and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism may be analyzed endlessly by scholars, but eyewitness accounts like Hakakian's help us understand what it was like to experience such a revolution firsthand. The documentary filmmaker and poet was born to a prominent Tehran Jewish family in 1966, two years after the Shah had exiled Islamic fundamentalist leader Ayatollah Khomeini. As Jews in a largely Muslim world, the family knew how to live respectfully with their neighbors. With powerful illustrations, Hakakian relates how, in 1979, when the Shah fled and Khomeini returned triumphant, she joined the cheering crowds. Khomeini's revolution seemed liberating, but before long, the grip of the Islamic extremists tightened. Women were put under strict surveillance; books and speech were censored. Anti-Jewish graffiti appeared. As the targeting became more visible being made to use separate toilets and drinking fountains, being required to identify their businesses as non-Muslim many Jews emigrated. After Hakakian describes the teacher who risked her job to give her high marks on a "subversive" paper or grips readers with the tale of how she and her teen buddies barely evaded the morality police, readers just want her to leave, too, which her family did, in 1984. Hakakian's story so reminiscent of the experiences of Jews in Nazi Germany is haunting. Maps. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School Hakakian recounts her past as a girl growing up in the second largest Jewish community in the Middle East Tehran during the takeover of the Ayatollah Khomeini. She paints pictures of a changing Iran, from a land that was immersed in the poetry of life and discovery to one that spoke of militaristic prayer and repression, where Jewish people were once again subject to anti-Semitism and where women were stripped of many of their rights. Hakakian's story is that of an individual changing from innocent child into disillusioned, rebellious teenager. As revolutionary fever overtook her country, she was swept up in, and then engulfed by it. Hakakian's poetic prose is lovely, lyrical, and wry, full of metaphor as well as humor and pain. Teens who are interested in history, poetry, different cultures, or biography should enjoy her memoir. Charli Osborne, Oxford Public Library, MI Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Poet and documentary filmmaker Hakakian presents a lyrically poignant account of her coming-of-age years in revolution-beset Iran. The daughter of an accomplished poet, she and her exuberant extended family were members of Tehran's once vibrant Jewish community. After the shah was ousted and Ayatollah Khomeini returned from a 15-year exile in 1979, life as she and her family knew it unraveled rapidly. Reflecting on growing up both Jewish and female in an increasingly restrictive environment, she is able to offer a unique perspective on the search for spiritual sustenance in a rapidly constricting society. It is both a joy and a privilege to bear witness to one young girl's remarkable emotional and artistic metamorphosis within a stunningly repressive culture. Margaret Flanagan Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved