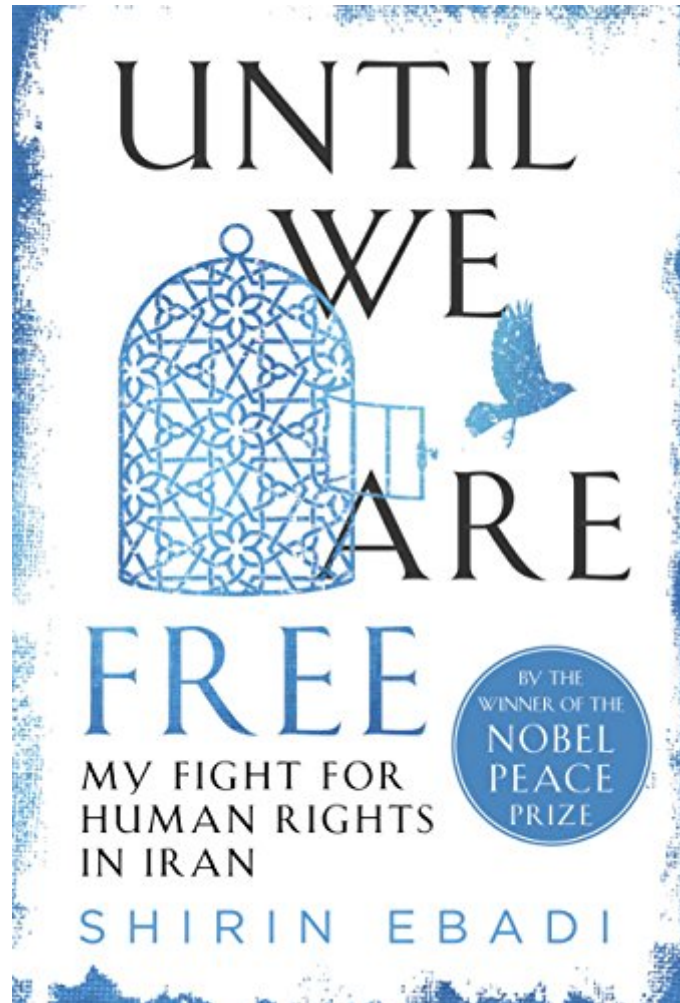


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# Until We Are Free: My Fight For Human Rights In Iran



## Synopsis

The first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, Shirin Ebadi has inspired millions around the globe through her work as a human rights lawyer defending women and children against a brutal regime in Iran. Now Ebadi tells her story of courage and defiance in the face of a government out to destroy her, her family, and her mission: to bring justice to the people and the country she loves. For years the Islamic Republic tried to intimidate Ebadi, but after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rose to power in 2005, the censorship and persecution intensified. The government wiretapped Ebadi's phones, bugged her law firm, sent spies to follow her, harassed her colleagues, detained her daughter, and arrested her sister on trumped-up charges. It shut down her lectures, fired up mobs to attack her home, seized her offices, and nailed a death threat to her front door. Despite finding herself living under circumstances reminiscent of a spy novel, nothing could keep Ebadi from speaking out and standing up for human dignity. But it was not until she received a phone call from her distraught husband and he made a shocking confession that would all but destroy her family that she realized what the intelligence apparatus was capable of to silence its critics. The Iranian government would end up taking everything from Shirin Ebadi—her marriage, friends, and colleagues, her home, her legal career, even her Nobel Prize—but the one thing it could never steal was her spirit to fight for justice and a better future. This is the amazing, at times harrowing, simply astonishing story of a woman who would never give up, no matter the risks. Just as her words and deeds have inspired a nation, *Until We Are Free* will inspire you to find the courage to stand up for your beliefs. Praise for *Until We Are Free*—Ebadi recounts the cycle of sinister assaults she faced after she won the Nobel Prize in 2003. Her new memoir, written as a novel-like narrative, captures the precariousness of her situation and her determination to stand firm. "The Washington Post" "Powerful . . . Although [Ebadi's] memoir underscores that a slow change will have to come from within Iran, it is also proof of the stunning effects of her nonviolent struggle on behalf of those who bravely, and at a very high cost, keep pushing for the most basic rights." "The New York Times Book Review" "Shirin Ebadi is quite simply the most vital voice for freedom and human rights in Iran." "Reza Aslan, author of *No god but God* and *Zealot*" "Shirin Ebadi writes of exile hauntingly and speaks of Iran, her homeland, as the poets do. Ebadi is unafraid of addressing the personal as well as the political and does both fiercely, with introspection and fire." "Fatima Bhutto, author of *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*" "I would encourage all to read Dr. Shirin Ebadi's memoir and to understand how her struggle for human rights continued after winning the Nobel Peace Prize. It is also fascinating to see how she has been affected positively and negatively by her Nobel Prize. This is a must read for all." "Desmond Tutu" "A

revealing portrait of the state of political oppression in Iran . . . [Ebadi] is an inspiring figure, and her suspenseful, evocative story is unforgettable.â Publishers Weekly (starred review)â Ebadiâs courage and strength of character are evident throughout this engrossing text.â Kirkus Reviews

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## Customer Reviews

In the present political climate in America and much of the civilized world, this is a book it would do well for most of us to read. Let's face it; when much of the news about Muslims is only about terrorist attacks, death threats against Israel and our nation -- and against many who speak out against the violent and suppressive actions of the fundamentalist fanatics -- it's hard not to become fearful, and mistrust an entire group of nations. So it's good to know that there remain voices of tolerance and reason in the midst from the Muslim world. It's good to know that a few of Islam's own "Silent Majority" can and will speak out, in spite of their personal danger. Shirin Ebadi's "Until We Are Free" is such a voice. Ms. Ebadi was once a judge in Iran, until the rise of the Ayatollahs and their political pawns like Amadinejad. After that, a woman was no longer allowed on the bench. She

withstood grave and even life-threatening opposition, and continued to be a lawyer and advocate for many persecuted people -- even though she has never given up her love for her country and her religion. While many in the West have been victims of violent Islamic fanaticism, we can easily forget (or never even be aware) that persecution of their own citizens in nations including Iran, can often be the worst of all. When their own tolerant, civilized, educated voices are silenced, the freedoms we often take for granted are the first casualties. Shirin Ebadi's is just such a story. For her efforts, she was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, but this was a mixed blessing, as you will read. While it increased her stature around the world, and the prize money funded her pro bono legal advisory practice, it brought her more hatred and danger from the fanatics.

This isn't a book that you read for the caliber of its prose or the organization of its ideas or any of those mundane details, but because of its author: the recipient of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize, Shirin Ebadi, now a de facto exile from her home country Iran, who writes with pain that literally brought tears to my eyes about what it is like to live outside the country that she loves because of the human rights work that she has done for the people in her homeland that won her the Nobel and the enmity of the Iranian hardliners. Ebadi is ruthlessly honest with herself, unsparing in her analysis of her own flaws and shortcomings, accepting that she can be mistaken (for instance, in her initial acceptance of the idea that Iran's insistence on needing a nuclear power program was justified) as she is in her criticism of the current Iranian regime. She is aware that her own devotion to her ideals has cost her dearly, but also aware that she could have acted no other way -- and has accepted the painful prices she has had to pay. And while I don't want to deliver any spoilers here, that list grows longer throughout the years covered by this memoir, which begins with her winning the Nobel and culminating in her departure from Iran on the eve of the 2009 election and the violent repression that followed, to give a speech in Spain. Cautioned not to return, it soon became clear that if she did, she would end up in prison -- at best -- and since then everyone close to her who remained in Iran has been harassed to breaking point. The litany of human rights abuses is startling and revelatory. The facts are laid out plainly and succinctly, as if being presented in legal summaries. Is this a particularly well written memoir? Nope.

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