



# **Rage Against the Veil: The Courageous Life and Death of an Islamic Dissident**

*Parvin Darabi*

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On February 21, 1994, a gesticulating and screaming woman entered a crowded public square in Tehran, removed her government-mandated veil and full coat, poured gasoline on her body and lit herself on fire. The crowd watched in horror as this woman, who had shouted, "Death to tyranny! Long live freedom!", committed a slow, painful suicide in a last, desperate attempt to make the world aware of the slavlike conditions of women living in Iran.

A shockwave was felt in the American medical and feminist communities as well as in the Iranian political regime when the media reported that the self-appointed martyr was well-respected Dr. Homa Darabi, a lifelong advocate of civil rights and the first Iranian ever to be accepted into the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Darabi had risen from a student activist to a civil rights leader and moved on to a brilliant career in medicine as a premier psychiatrist, teaching at the University of Tehran, and establishing the first clinic in Iran to treat children's mental disorders.

In this moving memoir, Darabi's sister, Parvin, and her son, Romin P. Thomson, vividly recreate Homa's childhood in Iran in the politically tempestuous '50s and '60s—a time of limited resources, tensions, and religiously sanctioned child abuse. They remember Homa's early yearnings for justice; the battle for democracy during the Shah's regime; and her marriage, which began as a loving partnership and ended under Khomeini in disaster. They unflinchingly recount the stonings, beatings, rapes, and executions of women, all performed in the name of God—outrageous abuses that Dr. Homa Darabi tried to expose to the world through her own final act of desperation.

If you care about basic human rights, this scathing indictment of contemporary oppression in Iran will enrage you.

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