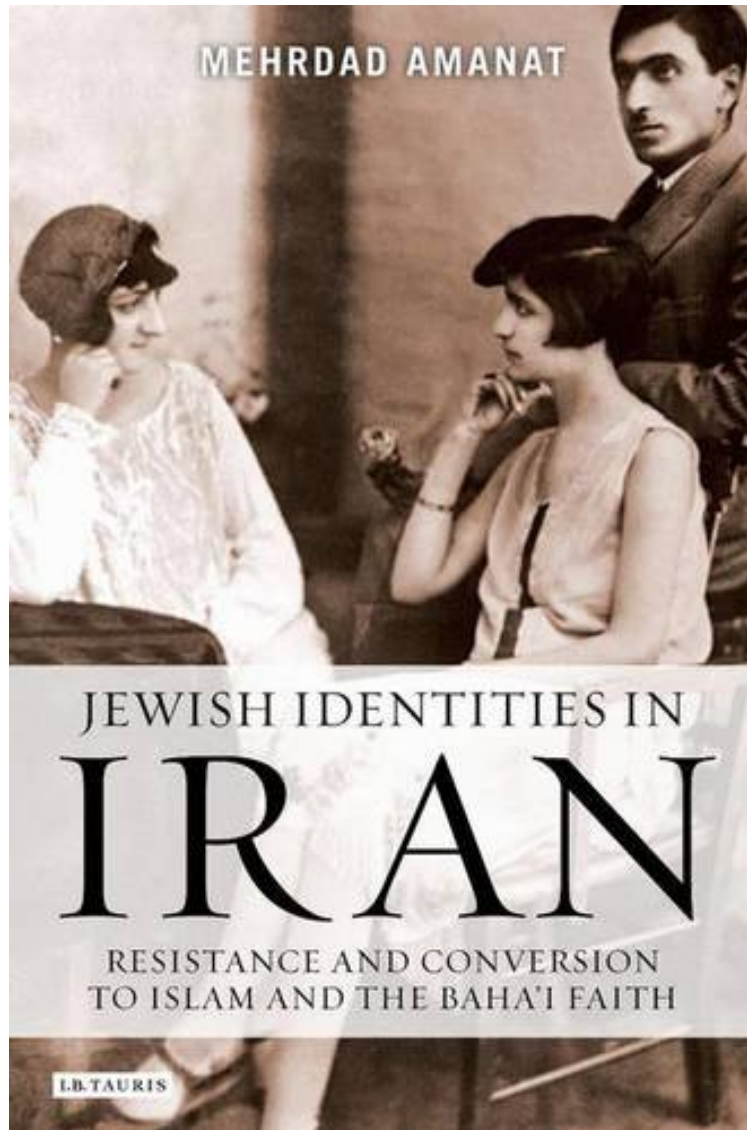


## Jewish Identities in Iran: Resistance and Conversion to Islam and the Baha'i Faith

*Mehrdad Amanat*

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**Mehrdad Amanat : Jewish Identities in Iran: Resistance and Conversion to Islam and the Baha'i Faith** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jewish Identities in Iran: Resistance and Conversion to Islam and the Baha'i Faith:

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Legendary Burl BarerAs a Baha'i of Jewish Heritage and upbringing, I found this book an absolute treasure! It is

remarkable for the depth of its research and the insights gleaned from not only rare written documents but from preserved oral histories and fascinating anecdotes and observations. If you are Jewish, Baha'i, Iranian, Muslim or curious about the interplay of monotheistic faiths in Iran, I cannot praise this book highly enough. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Important book on Iranian Jewish identities

By Lior The emergence of the Baha'i faith and the appeal it had on Iranian Jews remained somewhat obscure in academic scholarship. In depth research of the various Jewish communities in Iran and their reaction to modernity has yet to be addressed. Amanat takes head on these two challenges and goes on a journey to investigate the trajectories that took prominence in shaping Jewish Iranian identities.

For minority faith groups living in nineteenth-century Iran, religious conversion to Islam - both voluntary and forced - was the primary means of social integration and assimilation. However, why was it that some Persian Jews instead embraced the emergent Baha'i Faith, which was subject to harsher persecution than Judaism? Mehrdad Amanat explores the conversion experiences of Jewish families during this time, and examines the fluid, multiple religious identities that many converts adopted. The religious fluidity exemplified in the widespread voluntary conversion of Iranian Jews to Baha'ism presents an alternative to the rejectionist view of religion that regards millennia of religious experience as inherently coercive, oppressive, rigidly dogmatic and a consistently divisive social force.

'Mehrdad Amanat's highly original and deeply researched book provides the first convincing and well-documented history of the interactions of the Jewish, Baha'i and Shi'i communities in modern Iran. It demonstrates the changing nature throughout history of all Iran's major religions, and should be read by all interested in modern Iranian history, and also those concerned with the histories of Judaism, Baha'ism and Islam.' Nikki Keddie, Professor of History, UCLA 'A fascinating story of Jewish life in nineteenth-century Iran and how some Jews traded one minority status for another by converting to Bahai'ism.' Janet Afary, Professor of Religious Studies and Feminist Studies and the Mellichamp Chair in Global Religion and Modernity, University of California Santa Barbara 'Mehrdad Amanat's sleuthing in rare manuscript sources has shed illumination on the otherwise obscure history of Iranian Jews and Baha'is, and has thereby added rich texture to the social and cultural history of modern Iran.' Juan Cole, Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History, University of Michigan