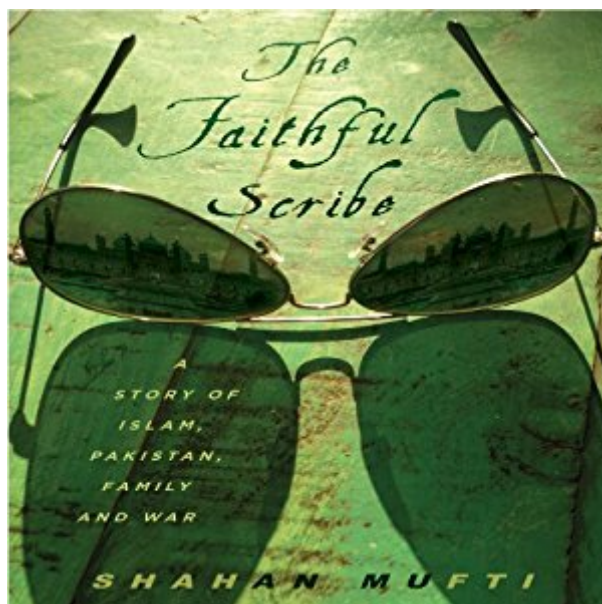


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The Faithful Scribe: A Story Of Islam, Pakistan, Family, And War



Synopsis

A journalist explores his family's history to reveal the hybrid cultural and political landscape of Pakistan, the world's first Islamic democracy. Shahan Mufti's family history, which he can trace back 1,400 years to the inner circle of the prophet Muhammad, offers an enlightened perspective on the mystifying history of Pakistan. Mufti uses the stories of his ancestors, many of whom served as judges and jurists in Muslim sharia courts of South Asia for many centuries, to reveal the deepest roots - real and imagined - of Islamic civilization in Pakistan. More than a personal history, *The Faithful Scribe* captures the larger story of the world's first Islamic democracy, and explains how the state that once promised to bridge Islam and the West is now threatening to crumble under historical and political pressure, and why Pakistan's destiny matters to us all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book offers an insight into Pakistan's history, present and possible future that you can find nowhere else. As a keen-eyed observer and skilled journalist - and a citizen of both the United States and Pakistan - Mufti is able to weave the personal and the political together in a way that illuminates the contradictions and yearning at the heart of modern Pakistan. He skillfully juxtaposes his own family's long and intriguing history (with a tradition of scholars and Islamic jurists in both his paternal and maternal lineages) with the often torturous political transitions that have taken place since Partition. Mufti doesn't offer prescriptions or point fingers. His goal is to simply tell his own story, and by telling it, help readers gain a more textured understanding of the place, its history and

its people. He writes movingly about his own parents, and how their aspirations and decisions and disappointments reflected the currents of the troubled times they lived in. He tells the little-known tale of the democratic ideals of those involved in the founding and creation of Pakistan (alongside the more cynical motives often imputed to figures like Jinnah), even as he is disarmingly honest about his own frustration at leaders' failure to live up to those ideals, and about his own uncertainty as to where the country is heading. Apart from the new window it opens onto a little-understood but hugely consequential part of the world, this book is noteworthy for its heartfelt and understated writing (several passages are quite lyrical) and for its attempt to merge the personal with the political.

The author has been candid about the weakness and strengths of Pakistan, which he calls a 'laboratory for merging Islam with democracy'. As a person interested in the wellbeing of Pakistan, I found it to be an interesting read, unputdownable. While he has tried to be upbeat at times, and noncommittal at others, he does seem to downplay the realpolitik that resulted in Partition: while Islam was often used as an excuse and to rouse the masses, it was the landowners that basically financed the activities of Muslim League because they didn't want to stay within India which had already decided on a centrally controlled socialism after independence from Britain. Mr. Jinnah was the most un-Islamic of people: he chose to be a clean-shaven, tailored-suit donning gent with all manners English, and enjoyed a daily glass of Scotch. He was once a proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity, against Partition and abhorred the Islamic clergy with a zeal. Even the Muslim League, and madrasahs like Deoband, were for a united India after the British left. How did he get hoodwinked by the Muslim League and the landowners should have been investigated by the author, since that would give an important answer to the actual reasons of creation of Pakistan, instead of repeating the official line that it was separated to serve as a nation for Muslims - although more than half of them chose to stay in India in 1947 anyways. Mr. Mufti gives only a couple of paragraphs each of factors that are mainly responsible for the current chaos in Pakistan. I'd like to expand. First, the entire political class is feudal, unless it is disposed by the Army in a coup - and the Army has ruled for more than half the time since the nation's inception.

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