

IRAN COLLOQUIUM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12 | 12:00PM
202 LUCE HALL, 34 HILLHOUSE AVENUE

Hossein Kamaly, Fellow at the Middle East Institute, Columbia University

GOD AND MAN IN TEHRAN: CONTENDING VISIONS OF THE DIVINE FROM THE QAJARS TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

Talking about his recent book, *God & Man in Tehran: Contested Visions of the Divine from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic* (Columbia University Press, 2018), Hossein Kamaly will discuss a cluster of centrally important and historically contested ideas in the intellectual history of modern Iran. Concepts such as nature, law, and reason are related to multiple visions of the divine—in popular belief, *feqh*, Sufi teachings, and *madrseh* philosophy. The purview is restricted to the past two centuries, ever since Tehran became the seat of Qajar rule to the present time. Examples are given from a range of writings from science and philosophy to dream interpretation and state propaganda.

Hossein Kamaly is currently a fellow of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University. He obtained his PhD in history from Columbia in 2004, and then went on to teach until 2017. Before entering Columbia with a Richard Hofstadter fellowship to study with Richard W. Bulliet, Kamaly had spent a semester in transition at Harvard University, and then worked briefly at the *Encyclopedia Iranica* with a direct invitation to join the editorial staff from the late Professor Ehsan Yarshater. Prior to that, he was enrolled at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Science at New York University, from which he graduated with a MSc. degree but left the doctoral program there to switch his field of work. His Persian translation of Karl Popper's *Logic of Scientific Discovery* appeared in print back in 1991 with a foreword by the original author. Kamaly's most recent book, *God & Man in Tehran: Contending Visions of the Divine from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic*, was just released by Columbia University Press, and he has a forthcoming book entitled *A History of Islam in 21 Women*, to be published next year by OneWorld Publications.

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