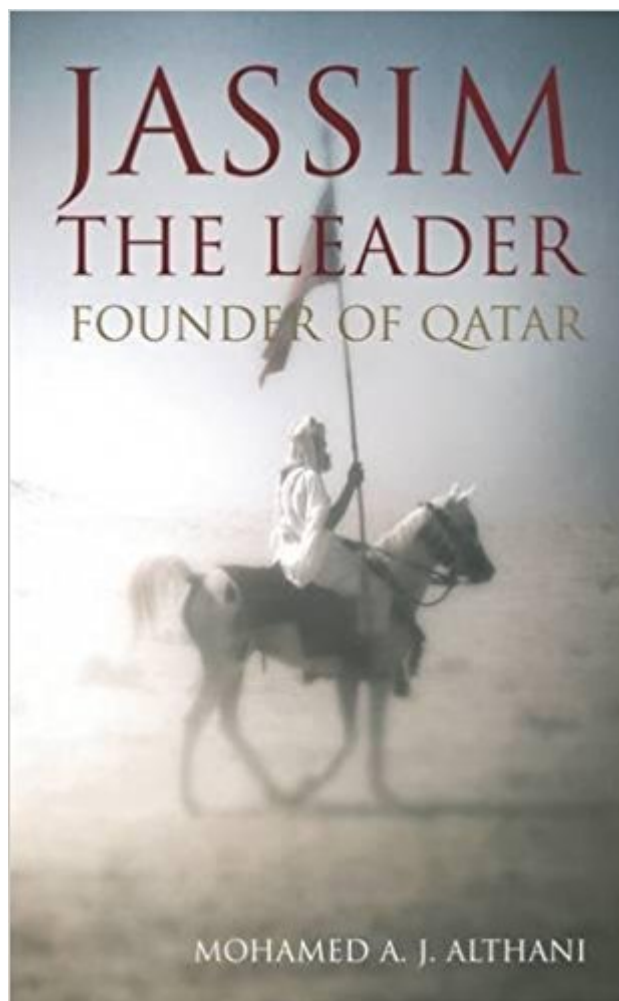


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Jassim - The Leader: Founder Of Qatar



Synopsis

The Gulf state of Qatar tops the Forbes list of the world's richest countries. In 2010 the country had the world's highest GDP per capita, and its reserves of oil and natural gas are vast. Yet Qatar has climbed to this pinnacle of wealth and influence in a remarkably short time, and from a starting point of obscurity and insignificance. This astonishing transition is the direct result of the efforts nearly two hundred years ago of one visionary man—Jassim bin Muhammad Bin Thani, known as "the Leader." Shaikh Mohamed A. J. Althani is a former minister in the Qatari government.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Shaikh Mohamed A. J. Althani was born in Qatar in 1962 and took a degree in industrial management from Central Michigan University. From 2004 to 2006 he was the Qatari Minister for Economy and Trade. He now runs a range of businesses involved in private equity, oil consultancy and construction.

This book has been published almost a century after Jassim's death, and the book is a timely and absorbing biography of a most neglected statesman; a true player in the high imperial drama of the nineteenth century. I liked the concise and elegant overview of Qatar's history up to the 1830s. It is clear from this light yet very readable, scholarly work that the author has read his way through copious diaries, reports and correspondence in the Qatari, Turkish and British archives. He has resurrected Jassim for himself, wherein lies the importance of this biography. Additionally, there are many personal elements that give this book unique value - specifically the translation of

(regrettably) few verses of Jassim's poetry, the loving but tense relationship with his father and a masterful characterization of the Englishman William Gifford Palgrave, who has suffered little at the hands of British historians to date. Althani does not shy away from handling more sensitive topics which resonate with today's sensibilities - the issue of slavery, the expulsion of Indian merchants, the bloody events at Liwa in the 1890s, his admiration for the Salafist movement and even his tacit support for gun-running. The contextualization of these issues brings a 'warts-and-all' reality to a well-researched book.

This book is currently a bestseller in Qatar. One day in the country's famous Villaggio shopping mall, the cover of this book caught my eye, in a murky background an old Arab man held a flag riding on an Arabian horse, looks weak, yet stubborn and with kind of invincible spirit, this made me suddenly think about that famous portrait Napoleon Crossing the Alps, that painting is almost perfect to reflect the warrior's greatness, just one regret it was not accurate, Napoleon was actually on a mule when crossed the Alps. This amazing cover design, without too much glorifying the character, it gives me a feeling of genuineness. I finally bought this book. The content of book truly didn't disappoint me, the writing of this book was initially inspired in the author's childhood story, yet the book was not that kind of folklores, the stories inside were well researched, there are quotes, reports, etc. from various British, Turkish adventurers and diplomats' sources, making the contents really reliable. The way of the story telling is really British in my opinion, reading it just like reading that British Economist newspaper, serious yet very interesting. Jassim was a remarkable leader, he used his vision and political skills to unite the Qatari tribes, to kept a balance between colonial powers, a grand master of trouble shooter of internal and external conflicts. His visionary thought and contribution set the foundation of The State of Qatar, he is truly the Leader, the Founder of this Country. Along reading his personal political career, you will also get to know a lot about the Arab tribal culture, tradition and their ways of doing politics and waging wars. You will also get something to feel the hardships of pearling, cruelty of the piracy, tribal conflicts and colonial wars. For this year's Eid holiday, I spent one day to drive through the country, from Doha, the capital to its Southernmost and Westernmost points. Driving through desert was exciting and relaxing, to my surprise, by the road you will see a lot of woods with big trees, it is different from the Jassim's time, which was a miserable desert without any vegetations. Except for its hot weather, I experienced a country full of potentials, the country's ruler has a good vision to diversify and expand their economy, and they are just happening. I recommend

everybody who is interested in Qatar, in the GCC region should read this book, especially the expatriates who will work in the region.

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