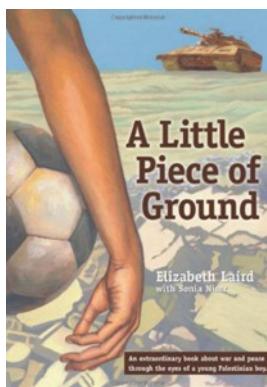


Introducing Islam to Children Part 2

The books with Islamic themes for slightly older children are more problematic in that the children do not have a grasp of history in which to put what is written into context. These children have been conditioned to respond emotionally, rather than factually. Through fictional works such as the ones I will be discussing, children are directed to specific outcomes through the emotional attachments they make with the protagonists of these stories. Just as an adult watching a movie may find himself cheering for a successful jewelry heist by a jewel thief, these children develop an affinity with these fictional book characters. Furthermore, by middle school, these children have already learned how to be social justice warriors and now they are just awaiting a cause. Do these books provide such a motivation?

As you examine these book descriptions and excerpts, you need to attempt to read these as a child would. Children do not know what you know about this subject. Often there is more damage done by what is omitted, rather than the words written. What will they believe about this subject when they finish these books, and will these new-found beliefs be reinforced through school curricula, numerous other children's books, television, and movies, etc.?



I will begin with a book for middle-schoolers. *A Little Piece of Ground*, by Elizabeth Laird, was first published by Macmillan in 2003, and by Haymarket in 2006. Haymarket's motto is, "Books for changing the world." Haymarket Books is a radical, independent, nonprofit book publisher based in Chicago, a project of the Center for Economic Research and Social Change.¹ *A Little Piece of Ground* won the Hampshire Award (a British award) in 2004. This award is given for the best paperback fiction title published in the previous year for the 11-14 age group. The judges are Year 8 students from schools which subscribe to the School Library Service. Here in the USA, this book can be found on both the Accelerated Reader and Lexile Find a Book websites. This book was translated into Arabic by Palestinian author Sonia Nimer and was published by the Tamer Institute for Community Education.²

A Little Piece of Ground has been published with the generous support of the Wallace Global Fund. According to a May 24, 2018 article by Joshua Needelman in the Washington Jewish Week, "the Wallace Global Fund has donated thousands of dollars to groups that both endorsed and supported the BDS movement. . . . According to the Forward, the fund gave \$25,000 to Code Pink, an anti-war organization that in 2009 endorsed the BDS movement. In 2011, it earmarked \$150,000 for Haymarket Books, which later published "BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights," by Omar Barghouti. Zipin, a Democratic Jewish Outreach Pennsylvania founder, called Barghouti a "disturbing individual who believes in the eradication of the state of Israel."³

I tell you, the Israeli's won't be happy until they've driven us all out and grabbed every inch of Palestine for themselves. (39) [page numbers from e-book version]

They won't be satisfied until they've driven us out of our whole country and taken all of it for themselves, . . . (152)

It was the only thing he wanted, after all. Just to be ordinary, he murmured. To live an ordinary life in an ordinary country. In free Palestine. But it'll never work for us. They'll never give us back what's ours. (202)

Israeli tanks fired shells into a crowded building in Rafah last night, killing nine people and injuring . . . (226)

Karim's family is on the way to visit his grandmother and help her pick olives when they are stopped by Israeli soldiers who order their father out of the car. His father and the other Palestinian men were ordered to remove their clothing.

"Why is Baba [father] taking off his clothes?"

*. . . "To humiliate them. Old men, too. In front of their families, and strangers." (52)
The men, standing out in the road in their underpants, looked funny and pathetic, helpless and stupid. They were staring . . . anywhere except at each other, or at the waiting line of cars in which their women and children sat, witnesses to their shame. (54)*

. . . he saw his father's humiliation (55)

. . . Hassan Aboudi had been allowed to dress himself and return to his car at the end of an agonizing hour. . . . I'd have fought back, he told himself savagely. I wouldn't ever let them do that to me. But he knew that his father had had no choice. He knew he'd have been forced to bear it too. (56)⁴

Book reviews give a window as to the thoughts of the readers. 88% of the reviews are 5 star, 10% are 4 star and 2% are one star. Here is a 5 star Amazon review written in 2005 by Jane Chesterman (before the book was published in the U.S.):

I read 'a Little Piece of Ground' in one night when visiting UK last summer, and promptly bought another 45 copies, to distribute to others in the USA, and the whole lot have already gone.

This book is a must read for every American who wants to know how our 3 billion tax dollars per year sent to Israel in military aid affect the everyday life of Palestinian families on a day to day basis. The whole thing comes alive on a personal level. You feel you are actually in Ramallah, suffering with the twelve year-old boy who only wants to be a kid and play football outside with his friends.

Remember how a book changed American history so dramatically? 'Uncle Tom's cabin' [sic] is said to have played a major part in changing public opinion with respect to slavery.

When 'a Little Piece of Ground' is published in the USA, as it undoubtably [sic] will, I would not be suprised if it changes public opinion about the Middle East conflict as dramatically.⁵

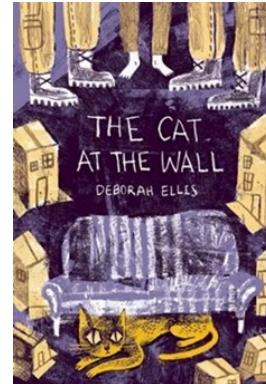
Guy Spier gave a lengthy one-star review in April of 2016. This is an excerpt from that review:

A more responsible author, or perhaps I should say, an author without a subtly and carefully concealed political motive would have found ways to weave other perspectives into the story. Given that she is consciously writing for a child audience, I find this worse than scurrilous. I find myself asking why an author would so deviously try to poison young children's minds and to incite hatred and intolerance.⁶

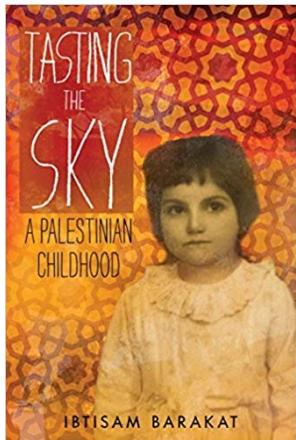
Reviewers often comment on how brutal the Israeli's are. It's difficult to discern if that description comes from reading this book alone, or from other sources. Regardless, most of these reviews are written by adults. There are over hundred reviews for this book on good-reads.

The Cat at the Wall, by Deborah Ellis, is hailed as a balanced story addressing the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It is about an extremely selfish thirteen year old girl from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania who was killed while crossing a street. She was reincarnated as a cat who now lives in the *real* Bethlehem. The cat enters a Palestinian home that two Israeli soldiers have come to occupy in order to surveil the neighborhood for terrorists. Omar is a young boy they find living in the house alone. This cat is the narrator of this book.

While Ellis does show the humaneness of both Palestinians and Israelis, something of this so-called *balance* is lost when the most memorable scene in the entire book is of the death of both of Omar's parents at an Israeli checkpoint. The cat saw it happen and tells the story. There were two young soldiers at the checkpoint when Omar's father and ready-to-deliver pregnant mother showed up. The soldiers couldn't understand Arabic and the Palestinian didn't understand Hebrew. Furthermore, Omar's mother was deaf. One moment Omar's mother is lying on the ground screaming in pain (labor pains) and the next she has died. The father is killed when he attempts to get his identification papers which are inside his violin case. The Israeli soldier shoots him fatally, as he believes him to have a rifle. The Israeli soldiers were afraid that it was a trap—that the woman had a bomb strapped to her. When it was all said and done, the two Israeli soldiers had tears in their eyes. Tears at the checkpoint, but no translators? I'm still at a loss as to why Omar's mother actually died instead of just delivering her baby right there at the checkpoint.



There is no real context given for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, which leaves one to question just what the take away will be for the young readers. A picture is painted of Palestinians with rocks and Israelis with tanks; the Palestinians as those who are occupied, and the Israelis as the occupier. The scales are tipped on this one.



Tasting the Sky, by Ibtisam Barakat, was published in 2007 by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Barakat was just three years old when the Six Day War in 1967 broke out. Barakat tells her story of growing up in Ramallah. Beginning with a traumatic memory at the age of three and a half, Ibtisam Barakat's perceptions are through the eyes and understanding of a child. As a result, the sixth grade and up readers will only perceive these events as social injustices and human rights violations of which they are already considered experts in identifying.

How many of these young readers understand the meaning of “fedayeen” in this excerpt?

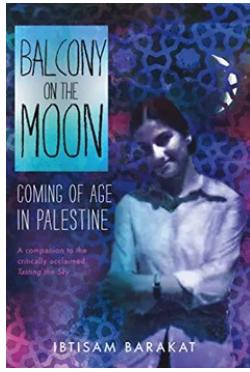
They sit outside with Father and speak about work, land, politics, religion, children, past and present wars, and the latest operations of armed resistance by the fedayeen. The resistance gives Father and the men hope that living under the occupation may not be forever. (38)

Father cursed, saying that we were living in the middle of a daily war. Where was it leading us? It seemed to him that the planes flying low above Ramallah were meant to keep us frightened. And we were. (149)

Father seemed sad. Many people had been saying that much of the land in Palestinian cities, towns, and villages would soon be confiscated by the Israeli government. (116)

Everything reached a breaking point . . . when two soldiers came to our door. Thinking they wanted a drink of water, Mother impatiently pointed to the water room. But they laughed, walked to the well, then returned. One of them pulled out his gun and stood away from the window to guard the door. The other threw kisses at Mother, hugged and touched his body up and down as he pointed to hers. . . . I looked at Mother’s face. She was pale and trembling. Before the soldier left, he made a circle with his hands, meaning that he would return on another day. (149-150)⁷

These are a few comments I found on Amazon: “Bought this for my daughter for a school assignment” . . . “I used this book as a read aloud in my 5th grade daughter’s homeschooling segment on the middle east” . . . “Bought for daughter for Eng 1 class.” . . . “(Part of 9th grade reading list for my state.)” . . . “My rising 9th grader was assigned this book as a back-up summer reading assignment.” . . . “I read this book with 4 classes of seventh graders.” . . . “Propaganda that my son was FORCED to read in High School.”



A Junior Library Guild Selection
A VOYA Nonfiction Honor Roll Selection
A Skipping Stones Honor Book
A Bank Street College of Education Best Book
An American Library Association/Amerlia Bloomer Project Top Ten Book
A News & Observer Newspaper's Wilde Best Book Award Winner
A Palestine Book Award Shortlist Selection
An Arab-American National Museum Honor Book
A Middle East Book Award Honorable Mention
A Notable Book for a Global Society

Balcony on the Moon continues through Ibtisam Barakat's adolescence during the years 1972-1981. I will quote from the Author's Note at the end of this story:

Recognizing that many countries helped to alleviate the homelessness of the Jews as a people by making a home for them in Palestine, and that this resulted in the Palestinians becoming a homeless people, the United Nations formed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA. It is the largest UN agency dedicated to providing refugees of one displaced people with basic protection, housing, education, and health services.⁸

Resources are provided in the “Learn More” section. These include the UNRWA, the Institute for Middle East Understanding, and two books by former President Jimmy Carter—*Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* and *We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land: A Plan That Will Work*.

In a January 2016 article in the JewishPress.com, author Leora Eisenberg JewishPress.com writes:

It's no wonder that pro-Israel activism on campus struggles when its anti-Israel counterparts make up their facts. Usually made up of wide-eyed “liberal”, “progressive” students eager to change the world, anti-Israel groups tote their status as populist human rights groups while thriving on dubious narratives that nobody questions.

What is remarkable, however, is that these groups rely on sources such as Al Jazeera+ (more commonly known as AJ+) and the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU) for their “facts.”

. . . The Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU) is an American organization which promotes dubious understanding, while claiming to “offer journalists facts, analysis, experts and digital resources.” If one ventures onto their home page, one finds stories— heartbreaking ones, admittedly— that are minimally researched and wholly one-sided. Even its “fact sheet” is rife with anecdotal references meant to elicit pity— only perpetuating a victim mentality. . . .

. . . AJ+ and IMEU are hugely present on social media, making themselves widely accessible to their activist base, which is generally between the ages of 18 and 21,

the age when many attend college and are susceptible to jumping on the “movement bandwagon,” so to speak, of anti-Israel activity. . . .⁹

There are numerous articles written about the corruption within the UNRWA. Barakat was also greatly affected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

The biggest present donated by people in other countries, however—and much better than clothes—is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I saw a summary of it posted on a wall at the UNRWA office. I read it and copied every word from it into my notebook. Later, I wrote the key words on a piece of paper I keep in my pocket. (87)¹⁰

The twelve year-olds and up reading this story will also learn about Dalal al-Mughrabi:

. . . But in the spring of ninth grade, the entire West Bank is astonished by news of the actions of a twenty-year-old Palestinian woman, Dalal al-Mughrabi.

. . . Dalal, a young woman from a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon and a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, infiltrated the Israeli border, leading a group of armed fedayeen. She and her group hijacked an Israeli bus to avenge the killing of a Palestinian military leader.

There was more than thirty hours of shooting and fierce fighting, with blood in the streets, sirens everywhere, many people injured, and others killed, including Dalal. Everyone in Ramallah is shocked that a young woman would do all this.

The girls in my school are moved to tears by Dalal’s story. They whisper that if we had a country and an army, she would be one of the heroes, like the men who carry arms and fight and die for their people’s freedom. We would name a street after her. Had she lived, she might have become the head of the country, like Menachem Begin, the current Israeli prime minister, who once led a group that committed many massacres in the struggle to create the nation of Israel.

. . . Dalal’s name, however, on Palestinian tongues, begins to mean courage and resistance . . . The Israeli newscasters, while mourning their dead, describe Dalal and her group as the most dangerous of terrorists. Israeli military leaders promise severe retaliation against the Palestinians. (122-123)¹¹

I’m sure Barakat just forgot to mention that 38 Israelis were killed including thirteen children.



The Shepherd’s Granddaughter is a book found in many school libraries. In the Baltimore County School District in Maryland, Parkville High School has a copy of this book written in Arabic, but no copies available in English!¹² I don’t see Arabic as one of the class choices listed in that school system, but perhaps some of the students are learning or have learned Arabic in their local mosque. Accelerated Reader lists this book for 4th-8th graders.

The first “Editorial Review” listed on the Amazon site for this book is one from Jewish Book World which states,

“...One of the very few YA novels attempting to tackle the subject of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” This one-liner makes it seem as if the Jewish Book World was endorsing the book . When you find the entire review within the Customer Reviews, Marge Kaplan, the Jewish Book World reviewer, ended with this: “This earnest effort to create meaningful fiction from this difficult subject eventually falls flat because it is too one-sided.” Kaplan gives the book two stars.¹³

The bulldozers had been digging through their fields. . . .

“Did you watch?”

...Amani knew from his twisted face that he had, hating the Israeli soldiers and the workmen and how they did what they wanted. Omar hated being powerless to stop them. Amani understood.

“I read that book you gave me,” she said. Omar had given her a history book about Al Nakba, the catastrophe. Six hundred thousand Palestinians had evacuated their homes during the war of 1948. Instead of returning in a few weeks, they had become refugees. (80)

“Violence is not the answer,” Baba said.

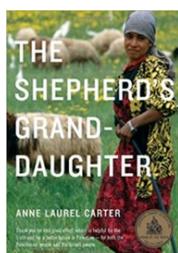
“Tell that to the Israelis. They started it. They punish us. We punish them.”

“Think about it, Hani. They have billions of American dollars behind them. You blow up one bulldozer tonight, they’ll bring ten more tomorrow. Worse, they’ll bring soldiers and tanks. Their Mossad will knock at our door, shoot us or throw us in prison, demolish our houses and the village, too. How does that help anyone?” (83)

Her friends all had a father or uncle, cousin or brother who’d spent months, sometimes years in Israeli prisons. Amani listened to the stories of beatings, humiliation and no trials. They hated the Israelis and their prisons. (140)

. . . Everyone had a story of a husband, son, brother or cousin who’d been in an Israeli prison, or someone who wasn’t allowed to cross the border. (173)¹⁴

Then Amani’s sheep were poisoned, her dog shot, and their home bulldozed. But a Christian from the United States, a rabbi from Jerusalem, and a human rights lawyer in Tel Aviv that Baba had met when he’d organized a mobile clinic and a protest against the highway, stepped in to help them. They get Baba out of jail. The rabbi mentions that Baba has some broken ribs, completing the picture in the young readers minds of the brutality of the Israelis. One of the Jewish settler’s sons befriended Amani in this story. He decides to leave the settlement and return to New York so he can share the story of the plight of the Palestinians like Amani. Both the Rabbi and the Jewish boy were painted favorably because they sided with the Palestinians.



Challenges

2010 – In Ontario, B’nai Brith Canada – a Jewish advocacy group – called for the removal of this young-adult novel about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a recommended reading program for students in Grades 7 and 8 in public schools. Brian Henry – a parent with a child in a Toronto public school—also complained about the novel in a letter to Ontario’s minister of education.

Objection – The complainants described the novel as anti-Israeli propaganda.

*Update – The complaints provoked a public controversy. Sheila Ward, a trustee on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), said that she would “move heaven and earth to have *The Shepherd’s Granddaughter* taken off the school library shelves.” Carter and the novel’s publisher – Patsy Aldana of Groundwood Books – denied the charge of anti-Israeli bias. Erna Paris – chair of the Writers’ Union of Canada – and Aldana urged the TDSB to defend students’ freedom to read. Others defended the novel’s educational and literary value. In June 2010, a review committee of the TDSB said that teachers should use the novel to encourage students to read and think critically. In August 2010, Chris Spence – the TDSB’s director of education – decided to keep the novel in the schools’ recommended reading program.¹⁵*

My son read this book for school project . . . He got very emotional, cried few times. . . [Amazon]

I read this book as a requirement for my Young Adult Literature class. . .

I read this book for a class . . .

I chose to read this book because it was required for the class.

I chose to read this book because it was assigned for my class.

This book was assigned to me in a class I am taking and I am so glad it was.

I read this book for a Young Adult Literature class.

I read this book because it was required for my YA Literature class.

I read this book for class but I was genuinely interested in this topic.

I read this book because I was required to for a class.

I read this for my YA Lit, and I loved it.

I want all of my students to read it. I want to pass it out like candy to keep me (and a lot of Americans) from being so hard-line pro-Israeli and anti-Palestinian.

I was interested to read this book as I read that it had been censored in several Jewish schools.

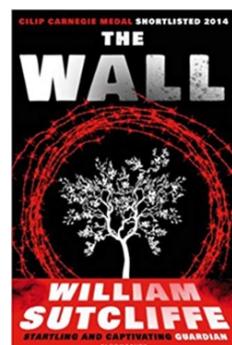
I had to read this book for a college course and found it interesting learning about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I read this book because of the fact that it was in my required readings for the class.

[All but the first quotation are from goodreads.]

Of course, we should all breathe a sigh of relief knowing just how balanced and factual these class discussions have been and will be.

Although the area depicted in this book is unnamed, the copyright page of *The Wall*, by William Sutcliffe, describes the area as closely mirroring the West Bank. The School Library Journal review states unequivocally that the story is “Drawing from the military and cultural tensions in the West Bank. . .” Accelerated Reader reads that it is an “isolated town that closely resembles the West Bank.”



Joshua tells his one quasi-friend David about the flattened house he saw and David responds:

"They have to do it." . . . "The army. Imagine how cool that is. Just flattening a house. Imagine being the driver. Doosh!" He barges into me for emphasis, almost knocking me over, as if he's the bulldozer and I'm the house. (65)
. . . "Sometimes I look at the soldiers," he goes on, "and I can't wait."
. . . "Until it's our turn. Can you imagine what that's going to feel like? Wearing the uniform. Carrying a gun. Going over to the other side and having all those people, everywhere, scared of you, doing everything you tell them."
. . . "And if anyone crosses you or messes around with you. . ." He tosses me the ball, lifts an imaginary rifle to his shoulder, and fires three invisible rounds. "Doof! Doof! Doof!" . . . "It's the best army in the world," he says. "and in a few years we're going to be in it. You know how lucky we are?" (67)

Jonathan is returning from helping his friend's family on the "other side of the Wall," when he is mistaken for a Palestinian boy and shot at the checkpoint. As a result he is now a paraplegic.

I don't know when it will happen or how it will happen or what exactly I will do, but I feel driven by a new sense of purpose. I will work. I will focus everything on work, and I'll learn whatever skills are needed to be of use, and I will go back to The Zone. When there is something I can do, I will return, not to Amarias, but to Leila's town, perhaps even to look for Leila herself. [The town of Amarias is an anagram of Samaria.]

I tried to help and I failed, but I can try again, and I can keep trying, and if I fail again I can try once more. With this realization, I immediately feel renewed, fortified, blessed, knowing that even if I spend my whole life failing, I will be failing at something I believe in; I will be fully alive and fully me. If the alternative is to do nothing, to forget, there is no alternative at all. How can I possibly forget when I sit, all day every day, in a wheeled reminder of the soldiers and The Wall and the people who are supposed to be invisible? (284)

There are words noticeably absent from *The Wall*:

Muslim or Moslem	Jew, Jewish	Temple
Mosque	West Bank*	Suicide bomber
Islam	Sabbath	Allah
Koran/Quran	Hebrew	Akbar
Palestine/Palestinian	Synagogue	Zion
Mohammed, Muhammad	Torah	Gaza

*West Bank: not mentioned in the text, but is mentioned once in the Acknowledgments, three times in the Author's Note, and once on the copyright page.

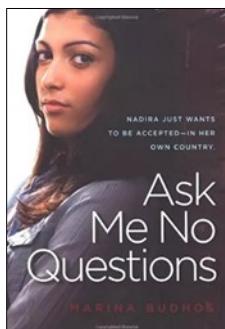
Palestine is mentioned 3 times in the acknowledgments and author's note at the end of the book, but not in the story text.

In the Summary on the copyright page of this book, it is stated that "thirteen-year-old Joshua discovers that his world may not be as it seems; that his people may be aggressors rather than victims . . ."

How, pray tell, would a ten or twelve year old determine who the aggressors and victims are in this very real scenario when the words above were not even used in the story? With facts hidden from view, the readers can only reach the desired outcome of the author by means of his or her emotions. The reader will be drawn to the conclusion that Israel is indeed the aggressor and the Palestinians are the victims.

If this is read in class, most likely the students will come to the same feelings-based conclusion. After all, it would be forbidden to discuss the ideologies of the Israelis/Palestinians and Jews/Muslims. For a student (or teacher) to discuss what is clearly stated in the Quran or the teachings of Mohammed would be considered hate speech or bullying. Even if an Israeli and a Palestinian were invited into the classroom to address the issue, it would be fruitless if the Palestinian speaker was a Muslim incorporating taqiya in his discourse. If the Israeli attempted to counter with facts, it would still be considered hate speech, or at the very least mean-spirited. Keep in mind that these same children are ingrained with the idea that "Islam is a religion of peace." That is their premise. Which way would the scale dip?

Fifteen percent of the author's royalties from the English-language edition of this book will be donated to Playgrounds for Palestine . . . a charity that constructs playgrounds for children in Palestinian towns and refugee camps. (p. 287)



Since emigrating from Bangladesh, fourteen-year-old Nadira and her family have been living in New York City on expired visas, hoping to realize their dream of becoming legal U.S. citizens. But after 9/11, everything changes. Suddenly being Muslim means you are dangerous—a suspected terrorist. (Back book cover)¹⁶

. . . I remember when we first arrived . . . in New York . . . Even then we were afraid because we knew we were going to stay past the date on the little blue stamp of the tourist visa in our passports. Everyone does it. You buy a fake social security number for a few hundred dollars and then you can work. A lot of the Bangladeshis here are illegal . . . Some get lucky and win the Diversity Lottery so they can stay. (7)

*. . . Year after year we went on, not thinking about Abba's expired passport in the dresser drawer, or how the heat and the phone bills were in a second cousin's name. . . You forget you don't really exist here, that this really isn't your home. One day, we said, we'd get the paperwork right. In the meantime we kept going. It happens. All the time. (8)*¹⁷

Aisha, the older sister is the class Valedictorian.

This is Aisha's Valedictorian speech:

My name is Aisha Hossain. And I am an illegal alien.

... My family came here eight years ago on a tourist visa and stayed. My father worked every job he could. We paid a lawyer to make us legal, but then he disappeared. We hired another lawyer to do the same thing, but it didn't work.

"In those days they didn't enforce the laws. We were the people you don't always see, flashing our polite smiles, trimming hedges . . . doing the night shift. You needed us and we needed you.

... And then one day two planes came and smashed into two towers. A war started. Overnight, we, the invisible people, became visible. We became dangerous. We became terrorist, people with bombs in our luggage, poison in our homes.

... My father just wanted to do the right thing. For us. He drove us to Canada because he thought that was for the best. But we couldn't get in, so the authorities took him away. For many weeks. They said he gave money to a suspicious organization. It wasn't true. And none of those things tell you who he is or who we are.

I got scared for him. I got scared for me, too. I got scared that they would take me away in the middle of the night.

I tell none of this to make you pity me. I understand there are bad people in the world. But you have to understand what happened to my father. Because for all those years, my Abba—all of us—believed. They let us in, and they let us believe that we belonged. That we could hope for a future here. That one day I could go to college and carry on. And then they took that hope away. They broke my father's heart. And they broke mine, too.

... All I ask of you is to see me for who I am. Aisha. . . . See me. I live with you. I live near you. I go to your school; I eat in your cafeteria; I take the same classes. Now I am your valedictorian. I want what you want. I want a future.¹⁸ (150-152)

Their family, like many others, came in on limited tourist visas knowing they were going to stay illegally. Notice the next to last paragraph of her speech—the infamous “they” took away their hope for a future. Since “they” let us in, it is clear she is speaking of the United States government. It is that government that “let us believe,” that “took that hope away.” Now, our carefully crafted young social justice warriors, can express their moral outrage by defending a new set of victims.

Amina's Voice, by Hena Khan, was published by Salaam Reads in 2017. This book for middle-graders is about Amina, a Pakistani Muslim. Woven into this story line about a girl with typical middle school concerns, are descriptions of an Islamic Sunday school, prayers at the mosque preceded by wudu, the hijab, Qu'ran recitation competitions, and learning to read and write Arabic.

The Imam has announced that they are adding a carnival on the day of the Quran competition as a fund-raiser for the Islamic Center.



Baba was filling Thaya Jaan in on plans for the carnival and how he was inviting local churches, synagogues, temples, and interfaith organizations to attend. I wondered if Soojin's Korean church would participate again this year. (79)

Iman Malik and Baba want it to be an interfaith event again.(103)¹⁹

The Mosque and Islamic Center are severely vandalized. A passing car noticed smoke and called the fire department who arrived quickly.

Why would anyone want to ruin our beautiful center? What would they get out of that? (109)

My eyes scan the hateful phrases written in thick crooked lines—sloppy writing that screams Go Home, Terrorists, Towelheads, and bad words so terrible that I squeeze my eyelids shut tight. (112-113)

As we pass the little library, one of my favorite parts of the Islamic Center, I see that the books have been knocked off the shelves and many are in shreds. I peek in horror unable to bear the thought of anyone mishandling the Holy Quran—tearing out the pages and apparently stomping on them. (113-114)

It's going to be hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs between both buildings. . . Maybe even more if they find out there was structural damage. (114)

This just feels so violating, and terrifying. I thought we were part of this community, and now to think that someone wanted to . . . (115)

What kind of person would want to destroy a place where people gather to pray and learn? (117)

Muslims have far more friends than enemies in this country. Some people don't understand Islam or are misled and fear us. But I'm getting so many calls of support from our friends and neighbors in the community," Iman Malik says.

Even with things like this, I'm still convinced there's no better place to be a Muslim in the world than in this country. (121)

[W]e both helped to spread the word about the meeting that Mama and others had set up with county officials. (122)

The cafeteria is filled with faces . . . from the community. . . And there are so many others who have come, like Pastor Stevens, Rabbi Weiss, local officials, my principal, and a bunch of teachers from my school and the others in the county.

Our center is known for being active in the community—we work with local charities

and have a free health clinic. We help people. So I just don't understand why. Why would someone want to do this to us? (123)

Whoever did this was looking to send a message of fear, aimed at all Muslims. (124)²⁰

The community steps in to help. Mr. Heller, Amina's friend Emily's father, has a construction company and offers to rebuild at cost for just materials and labor.

Assalaamwalaikum. My name is Amina Khokar, and I'm going to recite surah Fatiha for you today, I begin. But first I want to thank my friend Soojin Park and her parents . . . for generously arranging to have our Quran competition here at the Milwaukee Central Presbyterian Church. (130)

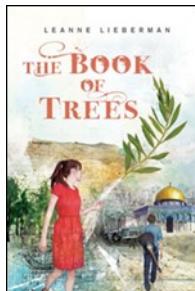
Her school teacher "formed committees of students and volunteers from the local synagogue and Emily's church" to help plan the carnival. (131)

[The imam sat in the dunking booth at the carnival.]

The imam is so great, Soojin laughs . . .

Yeah. You're so lucky that you're part of such an amazing community, Emily adds. So are you guys, I say as I look around at all the different people from their churches who have gathered together. (136)²¹

The words Jew and Jewish are not mentioned in this book. Rabbi is used once and synagogue, twice.



When Mia, a Jewish teenager from Ontario, goes to Israel to spend the summer studying at a yeshiva, or seminary, she wants to connect with the land and deepen her understanding of Judaism. However, Mia's summer plans go astray when she falls in love with a non-Jewish tourist, Andrew. Through him, Mia learns about the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and starts to question her Zionist aspirations. In particular, Mia is disturbed by the Palestinian's loss of their olive trees, and the state of Israel's planting of pine trees, symbolizing the setting down of new roots. After narrowly escaping a bus bombing, Mia decides that being a peace activist is more important than being religious.²² (Amazon)

The Book of Trees was written by Jewish author Leanne Lieberman and published in 2010. This book is for young adults and includes profanity, sexual situations, and drug use. Mia is seventeen in this book.

We stopped by a simple stone monument.

"It commemorates the soldiers who died while taking the hill in the 1948 War of Independence. There was probably a village here."

. . . "Probably some Arab village."

"They planted trees over an Arab village? . . . Why would they do that?"

"To make the land beautiful, I guess."

. . . "What happened to the people who used to live here?"

"I dunno." . . . "Sometimes it doesn't feel like enough, being here. I want to give more. These soldiers"—she pointed to the plaque—"died for Israel." (67)

I gazed at her, then at the stupid dwarf trees. What if each tree represented a person who used to live here? (68)

. . . I'd never really thought about Palestinians. They were men wrapped in scarves throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers on the news. I knew they committed terrorist acts, but I'd never thought about why they did them.

I tried to think of the shade the trees cast . . . each tree representing a pioneer, a Jew who needed a homeland. But other people used to live here, had raised children and crops on this land. The trees seemed paltry, even miserable, in comparison. I mean, I loved trees, but not more than people. (72)

I couldn't concentrate the next day during prayers. Through the windows I could see that creepy army of trees. I kept thinking, There are trees instead of people so Jews like me could come to Israel. (73)

"They get to Israel and they make war on the Ammonites who live there, and they win and resettle the land."

Whoa. "They got there and there were other people, so they just killed them?"

"It was a war," Aviva said.

"It wasn't just a war. . . . It was our promised land. Of course we would win."

I frowned. You just kill the people who get in your way? . . . No wonder the trees didn't bother my religious friends. They were probably used to reading about violence in the Torah. (123-124)

"Mia, I love all people, I really do. . . . But it's like your family. If your brother . . . is hurt, you're going to rescue him before any stranger. These"—he gestured with an outstretched arm, suggesting all of Jerusalem—"are my people. Moshe and the Jews had to think of themselves before the Ammonites."

. . . I wanted to leave their apartment immediately. Who else did the Torah say to kill? I felt like I'd gone to see a movie billed as a romantic comedy and it turned out to be a bloody war epic. Why was everyone so accepting of, even excited by, all this violence? . . . I stared at Leah. Was she really okay with her kids growing up to be soldiers? Who were these people? (125)

No wonder the army could plant trees over Arab villages or knock down Arab houses. It was in the Torah; modern Israel fulfilled biblical prophecy. I felt sick to my stomach. (126)²³

Gee! I wonder what conclusions the young readers will draw from reading these books . . .

Continue reading Part 3 below:

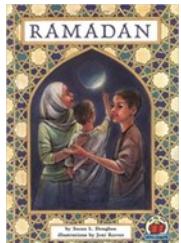
Introducing Islam to Children Part 3

A Quick Search of the word ‘Ramadan’ brings up forty-two listings on the Accelerated Reader website. To put this in perspective, there are 147 Hanukkah entries and 1680 Christmas entries. There are numerous other children’s books on the subject of Ramadan listed on Amazon and other sites. Naturally, some of these are written specifically for Muslim children; others are published to promote acceptance, tolerance, and diversity.

Ramadan Books Listed on the Accelerated Reader Website			
TITLE	AUTHOR	AR	PUBLISHED
Ramadan and Id al-Fitr	Dianne M. MacMillan	LG 4.3	1994, 2008
N Moroccan Foods & Culture (foods enjoyed during holidays . . . Ramadan	Jennifer Ferro	LG 4.3	1999
West Africa (shows foods of this culture and feast days like Ramadan, Easter . . .	Alison Brownlie	MG 5.1	1999
Celebrating Ramadan	Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith	MG 5.5	2001
Ramadan	David F. Marx	LG 2.3	2002
Philippines: The Culture (also describes Christian celebrations)	Greg Nickles	MG 7.0	2002
Ramadan	Kieran Walsh	LG 4.3	2003
Ramadan	Susan L. Douglass	LG 3.7	2004
Ramadan: A Muslim Time of Fasting, Prayer, and Celebration	Carol Gnojewski	LG 5.2	2004
Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr: With Prayer, Fasting, and Charity	Deborah Heligman	LG 4.8	2006
Ramadan: Islamic Holy Month	Terri Sievert	LG 3.4	2006
Ramadan (American Holidays)	Tatiana Tomlijanovic	LG 4.7	2007
My First Ramadan	Karen Katz	LG 2.8	2007
Night of the Moon: A Muslim Holiday Story	Hena Khan	LG 4.1	2008,2018
The White Nights of Ramadan	Maha Addasi	LG 3.6	2008
Ramadan Moon	Na’ima B. Robert	LG 4.6	2009
Ramadan: Count and Celebrate!	Frederick L. McKissack Jr.	LG 3.8	2009
Max Celebrates Ramadan	Adria F. Worsham	LG 2.0	2009
A Party in Ramadan	Asma Mobin-Uddin	LG 4.2	2009
Ramadan	Molly Aloian	LG 4.2	2009

Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle	Reza Jalali	LG 3.5	2010
Islam in Turkey (includes Ramadan)	Frances Hawker	LG 3.2	2010
Ramadan	Sheila Anderson	LG 3.4	2010
Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr	Nancy Dickmann	LG 2.0	2011
Ramadan	M.C. Hall	LG 2.2	2011
Bestest. Ramadan. Ever	Medeia Sharif	MG+ 5.0	2011
Boy vs. Girl (about Ramadan, Muslim issues)	Na'ima B. Robert	MG+ 5.3	2011
Ramadan (ABDO Buddy Books)	Julie Murray	LG 3.3	2012
Rashad's Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr	Lisa Bullard	LG 2.7	2012
Ramadan (American Celebrations)	Tatiana Tomljanovic	LG 5.0	2013
Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story	Reem Faruqi	LG 3.6	2015
It's Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr!	Richard Sebra	LG 2.0	2016, 2017
Ramadan	Rachel Grack	LG 2.8	2017
Ramadan	Joanna Ponto	MG 5.5	2017
Ramadan	R.J. Bailey	LG 1.0	2017
Ramadan	Lisa J. Amstutz	LG 1.0	2017
Ramadan (Spanish version)	R.J. Bailey	LG 1.3	2017
Ramadan (ABDO Kids Junior)	Julie Murray	LG 1.1	2018
Es Ramadan y Eid al-Fitr! (Spanish)	Richard Sebra	LG 1.6	2019
Crayola Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr Colors	Mari Schuh	LG 2.8	2019
Ramadan (Spanish)	Julie Murray	LG 0.8	2019
Ramadan	Katie Gillespie	LG 3.6	2020
Smartbook Media Inc./Lightbox			

Notice the years the books were published. One was published in 1994, two others—mostly about food—in 1999, and one in July of 2001 before the infamous “September 11th” attack. All the others were published after that date.



Susan L. Douglass wrote one of these “Ramadan” books for children. This particular book is from the series, “On My Own Holidays” which includes books on Hanukkah, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, as well. Who is Susan L. Douglass?

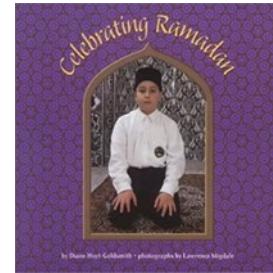
Paul Sperry, a Washington-based investigative journalist, includes on his website, documents that support the material in his book, Infiltration. The 8.3b and 9.1 entries read:

8.3b. . . Also on the White House guest list: Susan Douglass, listed as a "Muslim Educator." Turns out she's not just any educator. She and her husband have been on the Saudi payroll for years teaching at a notorious Saudi academy in Virginia that has graduated terrorist suspects including Abu Ali, accused of plotting to assassinate President Bush. Remarkably, textbook publishers and school districts across the country hire Douglass to help them teach kids in public schools about Islam. Not surprisingly, she sugarcoats over all its warts, including violent jihad.²⁴

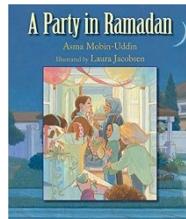
9.1 Textbook publisher's statement that confirms that the Muslim activist group Council of Islamic Education (CIE) revised its interactive educational module on Islam used in public schools in several states, including California. The role-playing module instructs public school children to "become Muslims" for three weeks, reciting Muslim prayers and Quranic verses without any critical analysis of Islam. Susan Douglass – the devout Sunni Muslim, Saudi schoolteacher and special White House guest – is CIE's top "scholar" and the exclusive consultant to the nation's largest history textbook publishers.²⁵

Celebrating Ramadan by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith lists the Acknowledgments on the copyright page of this book.

We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the Board of Trustees and members of The Islamic Society of Central Jersey, and the teachers, staff, and students of the Noor-Ul-Iman School. We would like to give a special thank-you to Imam Hamad Chebli, the Religious Leader of The Islamic Society of Central Jersey, for the cooperation and welcome that we received.



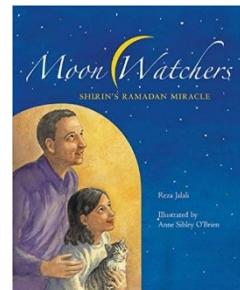
Finally, we wish to thank Shabbir Mansuri of the Council on Islamic Education, and Susan Douglass, the reviewer, for their guidance in the development of this book and for the review of the manuscript to ensure that the text is accurate and reflects the values of the Muslim community.²⁶



Asma Mobin-Uddin, author of *A Party in Ramadan*, is a pediatrician in Ohio, and is currently the President of the Ohio Chapter of the Council on Islamic-American Relations (CAIR) and is active in interfaith dialog.²⁷

The organizers of Martin Luther King, Jr., interfaith event in Maine, invited Reza Jalali, author of *Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle*, to give the keynote address.

Jalali is a former political prisoner and refugee, an award-winning writer, and a human rights activist. He serves as the Muslim chaplain at Bowdoin College, teaches Islam at the Bangor Theological Seminary, and is the coordinator of multicultural student affairs at the University of Southern Maine.²⁸



Jalali apologized to the audience at the outset of his speech for being “too political” before going on to speak of the fear that has gripped him, as a Muslim-American, since the election of President-elect Donald Trump.

... “The day after the election, I started to look over my shoulder,” Jalali said. “I felt like a ghost, a stranger in a land that had been familiar to me the day before.”²⁹

This is just a small sampling of similar books available for children today. Many of the children who read these books are now adults who share this worldview. What is that worldview? . . . Israel is bad. All Jews and Christians are not bad; just the ones who support Israel. America is bad because it supports Israel. Islam is a religion of peace.

An average adult who listens to many of the Muslim apologists touting the virtues of Islam, and the rest of the interfaith dialog, generally believe the lies and deception. How do we expect children to be unaffected by these books that target their emotions?

Perhaps there are other books for children that are written from a different perspective. The question that should be asked is if one particular viewpoint is being spoon-fed to the young readers.

I highly recommend that you read some of these books for yourself. Most of these books are relatively quick reads. Are our children being indoctrinated? You decide.

¹Center for Economic Research and Social Change (CERSC), cersc.org/

² The Tamer Institute for Community Education, [TAMER Institute for Community Education is an educational non-governmental non for profit organization established in 1989 as a natural and necessary response to the urgent needs of the Palestinian community during the first intifada (uprising)], www.tamerinst.org/en/pages/about-tamer [This link is to the page showing the book translated into Arabic: <https://www.tamerinst.org/en/products/list/94>]

³ Joshua Needelman, “Jews question Democratic congressional nominee about BDS,” May 24, 2018, washingtonjewishweek.com/46251/jews-question-democratic-congressional-nominee-about-bds/news/

⁴ Elizabeth Laird, *A Little Piece of Ground*, Haymarket Books, 2006, e-book edition

⁵ www.amazon.com/Little-Piece-Ground-Elizabeth-Laird/product-reviews/1931859388/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_paging_btm_next_2?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=five_star&reviewerType=all_reviews&pageNumber=2#reviews-filter-bar

⁶ www.amazon.com/Little-Piece-Ground-Elizabeth-Laird/product-reviews/1931859388/ref=cm_cr_dp_d_hist_1?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=one_star&reviewerType=all_reviews#reviews-filter-bar

⁷ Ibtisam Barakat, *Tasting the Sky*, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007

⁸ Ibtisam Barakat, *Balcony on the Moon*, Margaret Ferguson Books, 2016 [Margaret Ferguson Books was an imprint of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux 2011-2017 and presently with Holiday House]

⁹ Leora Eisenberg, “Generation of Misinformation,” Jewish Press.com, January 20, 2016, www.jewishpress.com/indepth/analysis/generation-of-misinformation/2016/01/20/

¹⁰ Ibtisam Barakat, *Balcony on the Moon*, Margaret Ferguson Books, 2016

¹¹ Ibid

¹² destiny.bcps.org/cataloging/servlet/presenttitledetailform.do?bibID=617742&site=1220&siteTypeID=-1&viewType=2&walkerID=1558407912170&includeMedia=false&mediaSiteID=&includeLibrary=true

¹³ Marge Kaplan, “Questionable introduction to the subject for YA readers,” Jewish Book World Magazine, September 11, 2009, www.amazon.com/Shepherds-Granddaughter-Anne-Laurel-Carter/product-reviews/0888999038/ref=cm_cr_dp_d_hist_2?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=two_star&reviewerType=all_reviews#reviews-filter-bar

¹⁴ Anne Laurel Carter, *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*, Groundwood Books, 2008 [our books are loved by children around the world. We look for books that are unusual; we are not afraid of books that are difficult or potentially controversial; and we are particularly committed to publishing books for and about children whose experiences of the world are under-represented elsewhere.

groundwoodbooks.com/]

¹⁵ www.freedomtoread.ca/challenged-works/the-shepherds-granddaughter/#.XODM58hKhPY
[Interestingly, a week after including this, the link is not working; perhaps it is temporary . . . There are numerous other articles found on the web discussing this, however. This is one]:
pepl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/69585486/1361035217

¹⁶ Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, Atheneum Books (Simon & Schuster), 2006

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Hena Khan, *Amina's Voice*, Salaam Reads (Simon & Schuster), 2017

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Amazon description of *The Book of Trees* by Leanne Lieberman, www.amazon.com/Book-Trees-Leanne-Lieberman,ebook/dp/B0056NX3LO/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=The+book+of+trees+by+lieberman&qid=1558448399&s=gateway&sr=8-1

²³ Leanne Lieberman, *The Book of Trees*, Orca Book Publishers, 2010

²⁴ Paul Sperry, "Sperry Files: Supporting Documents," www.sperryfiles.com/documents.shtml

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, *Celebrating Ramadan*, a Holiday House Book, 2001

²⁷ Dr. Asma Mobin-Uddin, Pediatrician, Children's Author, Columnist, Biography, www.asmamobinuddin.com/bio.html

²⁸ Abigail W. Adams, "Interfaith MLK Celebration Seeks to Build 'Beloved Community,'" The Lincoln County News (Maine), January 18, 2017, lcnme.com/currentnews/interfaith-mlk-celebration-seeks-build-beloved-community/

²⁹ Ibid, Also, there is a 45 audio of Reza Jalali: "MHC Board Member Reza Jalali discusses the lives of Muslims in the U.S. and gives an overview of Islam, a faith practiced by many of our neighbors." This talk was recorded on December 16, 2015 at Portland Public Library," mainehumanities.org/blog/audio/podcast-reza-jalali-muslim-in-america/