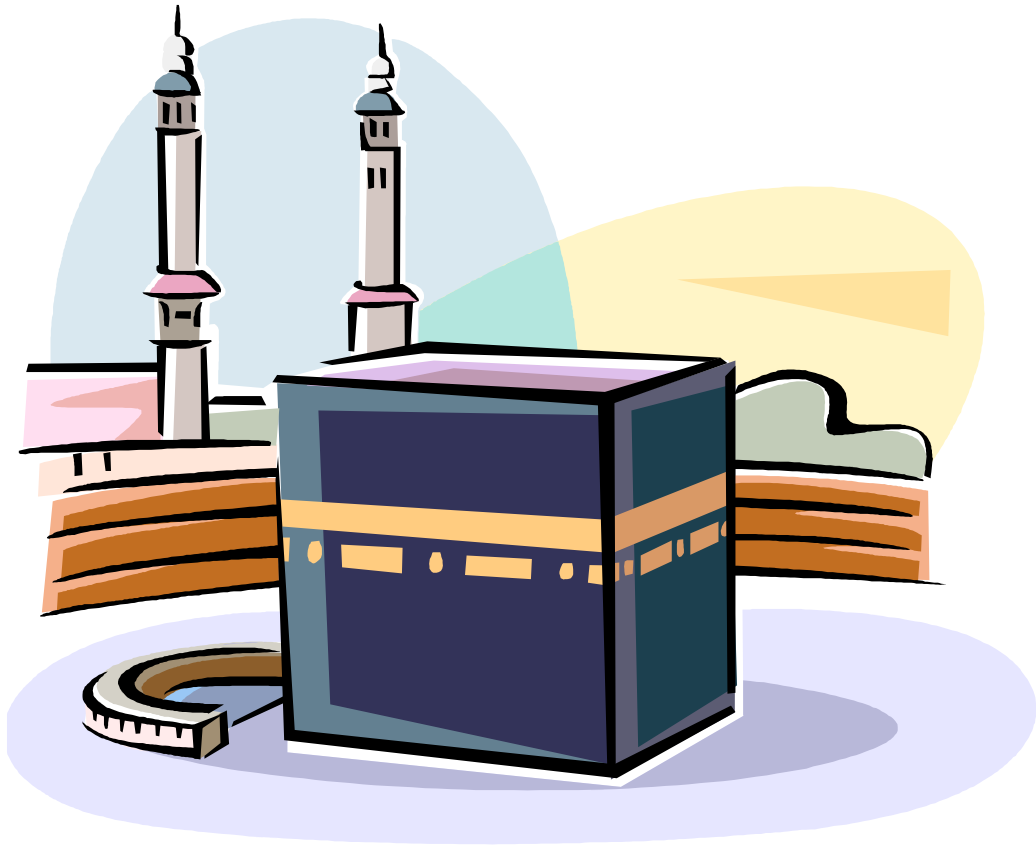


# Children's Books with Muslim and Related Cultural Themes



Compiled by Rukhsana Khan

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## **Some Background Information**

In 2006, around the fifth anniversary of the attacks on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, I was asked by *School Library Journal* to write an article that would address the need for literature about Muslims to create cross cultural understanding. Towards that end, I wrote an article called *Muslims in Children's Books* and compiled this book list. You can find the article here: <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6367083.html>

Over the years I have added to this booklist as more books about Muslims become available and time allows. These are books that I approve of, so it is by no means a complete list of all the books out there.

I designed this booklist for teachers, librarians, conscientious parents and anyone with an interest in Islam and Muslims. The format of each entry is pretty standard: Author's last name in bold capitals, Author's first name, title of the book, illustrator of the book (if necessary), publisher and year of publication followed by a brief description of the book.

I've divided the booklist into sections: Contemporary picture books; Contemporary novels and short story collections; Folktales; and Non-Fiction.

Any suggestions for additions or comments regarding this book list can be sent to me at [rukhsana@rukhsanakhan.com](mailto:rukhsana@rukhsanakhan.com).

I hope you find this list useful and I hope this list leads to greater cross-cultural understanding. With all the turmoil going on in this world, heaven knows we need it!

Sincerely,

Rukhsana Khan

## Contemporary Picture Books

**AKTAR**, Nasreen. *Samira's Eid*. illus. by Enebor Attard. Mantra Lingua. 2000.  
A simple Eid story.

**ALEXANDER**, Sue. *Nadia the Willful*. illus. by Lloyd Bloom. Dragonfly Books. 1992.  
A poignant story about bereavement through the eyes of a strong Arab heroine.

**ADDASI**, Maha. *The White Nights of Ramadan*. Illus. by Ned Gannon. Boyds Mills Press. 2008  
A look at the Arab custom of Girgian during the middle nights of Ramadan.

**BINT ROBERT**, Na'ima. *The Swirling Hijaab*. illus. by Nilesh Mistry. Mantra Lingua. 2002.  
A little girl enjoys playing imaginatively with her mother's religious headscarf.

**DIAKITE**, Penda. *I Lost My Tooth in Africa*. illus. by Baba Wague Diakite. Scholastic. 2006  
An effortless blend of parallel cultures, written by a child.

**ENGLISH**, Karen. *Nadia's Hands*. illus. by Jonathan Weiner. Boyds Mills. 2003.  
Set in North America, a South Asian girl feels self-conscious after putting henna on her hands.

**HEIDE**, Florence Parry & Judith Heide Gilliland. *The Day of Ahmed's Secret*. illus. by Ted Lewin. HarperCollins. 1995.  
Set in Egypt, a boy learns to spell his name.

**HEIDE**, Florence Parry & Judith Heide Gilliland. *Sami and the Time of Troubles*. illus. by Ted Lewin. Clarion. 1992.  
Sami deals with the realities of war in Beirut.

**HOFFMAN**, Mary. *The Color of Home*. illus. by Karin Littlewood. Dial. 2002.  
A young boy deals with leaving his war torn homeland and coming to America.

**KHAN**, Hena. *Night of the Moon: A Muslim Holiday Story*. illus. Julie Paschkiss. Chronicle. 2008.  
A vibrantly illustrated story about a Pakistani-American's experience with Ramadan and Eid.

**KHAN**, Rukhsana. *Big Red Lollipop*. illus. by Sophie Blackall. Viking. 2010.  
A Pakistani-American girl has to take her little sister to a birthday party she's been invited to.

**KHAN**, Rukhsana. *King of the Skies*. illus. by Laura Fernandez & Rick Jacobsen. Scholastic. 2001.  
A crippled boy in Pakistan has one day he rules: the day of Basunt, the kite festival.

**KHAN**, Rukhsana. *The Roses in My Carpets*. illus. by Ronald Himler. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2004.  
An Afghan refugee finds hope amid adversity.

**KHAN**, Rukhsana. *Ruler of the Courtyard*. illus. by Gregory R. Christie. Viking. 2003.  
A Pakistani girl overcomes her fear of chickens.

**KHAN, Rukhsana.** *Silly Chicken.* illus. by Yunmee Kyong. Viking. 2005.  
A Pakistani girl is jealous of her mother's pet hen.

**KYUCHUKOV, Hristo.** *My Name Was Hussein.* illus. Allan Eitzen. Boyds Mills. 2004.  
Based on the author's experience growing up in Bulgaria and being forced to change his name.

**MOBIN-UDDIN, Asma.** *A Party in Ramadan* illus. by Laura Jacobsen. Boyds Mills. 2009  
A girl who is fasting during Ramadan has to resist temptation at a party.

**MOBIN-UDDIN, Asma.** *My Name Is Bilal.* illus. by Barbara Kiwak. Boyds Mills. 2005.  
A young boy learns to appreciate his Muslim culture and name.

**MOBIN-UDDIN, Asma.** *The Best Eid Ever.* illus. by Laura Jacobsen. Boyds Mills. 2007  
A story about charity and a young Pakistani-American girl who is celebrating Eid ul Adha.

**MUNSCH, Robert & Saoussan Askar.** *From Far Away.* illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick. 1995.  
This is a collaboration based on the story of Askar, who left Beirut at age five.

**NYE, Naomi Shihab.** *Sitti's Secrets.* illus. by Nancy Carpenter. S & S. 1994.  
A young American returns to her roots in Palestine to visit her grandmother.

## Contemporary Novels and Short Story Collections

**ABDEL-FATTAH, Randa.** *Does My Head Look Big in This?* Orchard Books. 2007  
A humorous novel about an Australian girl who starts to wear hijab.

**ABDEL-FATTAH, Randa.** *Ten Things I Hate About Me.* Orchard Books. 2006  
A novel about a girl who hides her Muslim/Lebanese identity at school.

**ABDEL-FATTAH, Randa.** *Where the Streets Had a Name.* Marion Lloyd Books. 2009  
A novel about a thirteen year old girl living in Palestine under Israeli occupation.

**BAIG, Reshma.** *The Memory of Hands.* Amirah. 1998.  
A poetic collection of short stories about Muslims in America.

**BUDHOS, Marina.** *Ask Me No Questions.* S & S. 2006.  
A Bangladeshi girl's family faces problems as illegal immigrants in post-9/11 America.

**CARTER, Anne Laurel.** *The Shepherd's Grand-daughter,* Groundwood, 2008  
A poignant look at a Palestinian girl's life under Israeli occupation.

**ELLIS, Deborah, WALTERS, Eric.** *Bifocal.* Fitzhenry & Whiteside. 2007  
Despite problems with Muslim characterizations, this novel provides excellent analysis of today's political realities.

**ELLIS, Deborah.** *Mud City*. Greenwood. 2003.  
Sequel to *Parvana's Journey*, about Parvana's friend's continued adventures.

**ELLIS, Deborah.** *Parvana's Journey*. Greenwood. 2003.  
A young Afghan girl is separated from her family during war in Afghanistan.

**EMERICK, Yahiya.** *Ahmad Deen and the Jinn at Shaolin*. Amirah. 1996.  
Ahmad Deen travels to China and finds a mystery.

**KHAN, Rukhsana,** *A New Life*, illus. by Nasrin Khosravi, Greenwood, 2009.  
A young girl and her brother arrive in Canada as immigrants.

**KHAN, Rukhsana** with Elisa Carbone and Uma Krishnaswami, *Many Windows*, illus. by Patty Gallinger, Napoleon. 2008. A collection of religious celebration stories about six kids from five different faiths.

**KHAN, Rukhsana.** *Muslim Child*. illus. by Patty Gallinger, Albert Whitman. 2001.  
A collection of short stories and poems about Islam from a child's perspective.

**KHAN, Rukhsana.** *Dahling, if You Luv Me, Would You Please, Please Smile*. Stoddart. 1999.  
A Muslim girl tries to appease the kids in her classroom.

**KHAN, Rukhsana,** *Wanting Mor*. Greenwood. 2009  
A novel set in post-Taliban Afghanistan, about a girl who gets abandoned by her father.

**LAIRD, Elizabeth.** *Kiss the Dust*. Puffin. 1994.  
A historical novel about a young Kurdish girl's flight from Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

**LAIRD, Elizabeth,** with Sonia Nimr. *A Little Piece of Ground*. Macmillan. 2004.  
A heart-wrenching story set in Israeli occupied Gaza.

**MELLING, O. R.** *My Blue Country*. Viking. 1996.  
A novel about an exchange visit to Malaysia.

**NYE, Naomi Shihab.** *Habibi*. S & S. 1997.  
A romantic novel about a young American girl who goes with her family to Palestine.

**NYE, Naomi Shihab.** *The Space between Our Footsteps*. S & S. 1998.  
A wonderful collection of poems that give voice to Middle Eastern perspectives.

**SIMPSON, Juwairiah. J. L.** *The Jinn in the Clock*. American Trust. 1990.  
Features a framed story from the storyteller Duwairig.

**SIMPSON, Juwairiah. J. L.** *A Wicked Wazir*. American Trust. 1990.  
Linked to the previous title, again Duwairig frames a story of court intrigue.

**TEMPLE**, Frances. *The Bedouin's Gazelle*. Scholastic. 1996.  
An amazing novel set in a Bedouin society in the year 1302.

## Folktales

**BURNS**, Khephra. *Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali*. Illus. by Leo Dillion & Diane Dillon. Harcourt. 2001.

A story about the childhood of the famed king of Mali.

**CONOVER**, Sarah & Freda Crane, adapts. *Ayat Jamila: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*. illus. by Valerie Wahl. EWU. 2004.

A collection of folktales and wisdom culled from the Muslim world.

**DURKEE**, Noura. *The Animals of Paradise*. illus. by Simon Trethewey. Amideast. 1996.  
The animals in paradise tell stories of how they helped various messengers of God.

**JOHNSON-DAVIES**, Denys. *Animal Tales from the Arab World*. illus. by Eda S. Ghali. Amideast. 1995.

A collection of fables about animals set in the Arab culture.

**LEWIN**, Ted. *The Storytellers*. illus. by author. HarperCollins. 1998.  
Set in Morocco, the story deals with the craft of storytelling.

**TARNOWSKA**, Wafa', retel. *The Seven Wise Princesses: A Medieval Persian Epic*. Illus. by Nilesh Mistry. Barefoot. 2000.

A collection based on a classic Persian folktale.

**WALKER**, Barbara. *Watermelons, Walnuts and the Wisdom of Allah and Other Tales of the Hoca*. illus. by Harold Berson. Texas Tech. 1991.

A collection of stories about the classic folk figure Mullah Nasruddin (sometimes called Nasruddin Hoja, Joha or Hoca).

**ZEMAN**, Ludmila, *Sindbad: From the Tales of the Thousand and One Nights*. Tundra. 1999.  
A lush retelling of the famous story from the Arabian Nights.

## Nonfiction

**AL-GAILANI**, Noorah & Chris Smith. *The Islamic Year: Surahs, Stories, and Celebrations*. illus. by Helen Williams. Hawthorn. 2003

Part biography of Muhammad and part activity book, it helps explain Muslim holidays.

**BARAKAT**, I. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian childhood*. Farrar Straus Giroux. 2007.

A memoir of a Palestinian woman set during the six day war with Israel.

**BAKHT**, Natasha, editor. *Belonging and Banishment: Being Muslim in Canada*. TSAR. 2008

A collection of essays by prominent Muslim Canadians on various contemporary issues.

**BEARDWOOD**, Mary. *The Children's Encyclopedia of Arabia*. Stacey International. 2002.

A well-illustrated guide to the region.

**BORRELLO**, Helen. *Kareem Abdul-Jabbar*. Chelsea House. 1995.

A biography of the first Muslim African-American basketball star.

**DEMI**. *Muhammad*. S & S. 2003.

An excellent picture book biography of Islam's Prophet.

**ELLIS**, Deborah. *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*. Groundwood. 2004.

An honest look at the conflict in Israel/Palestine in the words of Israeli and Palestinian children.

**GHAZI**, Suhaib Hamid. *Ramadan*. illus. by Omar Rayyan. Holiday House. 1996.

An informative book about the month of fasting.

**HOYT-GOLDSMITH**, Diane. *Celebrating Ramadan*. photos. by Lawrence Migdale. Holiday House. 2001.

Set in America it follows a young Muslim through this special month.

**ISLAM**, Yusuf. *A Is for Allah*. Mountain of Light. 2000.

Contains wonderful songs and text (by the former rock star Cat Stevens).

**ISLAM**, Yusuf. *The Life of the Last Prophet*. Mountain of Light. 1996.

A wonderful, concise biography of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**KHAN**, Saniyasnain. *Tell Me about Hajj*. Al-Risala. 2001.

Well illustrated, this book takes the reader through the steps of the fifth pillar of Islam.

**KHAN**, Saniyasnain. *Tell Me about Muhammad*. Al-Risala. 2001.

A good resource on the life of Muhammad.

**KNIGHT**, Khadija. *Islamic Festivals*. Heinemann Library. 1997.

A very good resource that includes information beyond the festivals.

**MACDONALD**, Fiona. *A 16th Century Mosque*. Hodder Wayland. 1996.

A beautifully illustrated book that examines Islamic architecture.

**MALCOLM X**, with Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Penguin. 2004.  
An excellent read and good starting point in understanding the Islamic movement in the African American community.

**MCMANE**, Fred. *Hakeem Olajuwon*. Chelsea House. 1997.  
A biography of the African basketball star.

**RUMFORD**, James. *Traveling Man*. illus. by author. Houghton. 2001.  
An intriguing look at the famous Muslim traveler.

**RUMMEL**, Jack. *Malcolm X*. Chelsea House. 1989.  
A children's biography of the activist.

**RUMMEL**, Jack. *Muhammad Ali*. Chelsea House. 1988.  
A biography of the famous boxer.

**STAMATY**, Mark Alan. *Alia's Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq*. illus. by author. Knopf. 2004.  
Alia Muhammad Baker's works to save her library during the American invasion of Iraq.

**SIDDIQUI**, Haroon. *Being Muslim*. Groundwood. 2006.  
An informative look at Muslim issues from a political angle.

**WILKINSON**, Philip. *Islam*. DK. 2002.  
A detailed guide to Islam.

**WINTER**, Jeanette. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*. Harcourt. 2005.  
Alia Muhammad Baker's works to save her library during the American invasion of Iraq.

**YEE**, James. *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire*. Public Affairs. 2005  
A memoir from the Muslim chaplain at Guantanamo Bay wrongfully accused of treason.