Some Background Information

In 2006, around the fifth anniversary of the attacks on Sept. 11th, 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.

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


A Pakistani-American girl has to take her little sister to a birthday party she’s been invited to.

A crippled boy in Pakistan has one day he rules: the day of Basunt, the kite festival.

An Afghan refugee finds hope amid adversity.

A Pakistani girl overcomes her fear of chickens.

A Pakistani girl is jealous of her mother’s pet hen.

Based on the author’s experience growing up in Bulgaria and being forced to change his name.

A girl who is fasting during Ramadan has to resist temptation at a party.

A young boy learns to appreciate his Muslim culture and name.

A story about charity and a young Pakistani-American girl who is celebrating Eid ul Adha.

A young American returns to her roots in Palestine to visit her grandmother.

The story of the partition of India and Pakistan told through two children’s perspective.

Set in Malaysia and featuring the local flora, a little girl plays in her mother’s garden.

**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.
A novel about a girl who hides her Muslim/Lebanese identity at school.

A novel about a thirteen year old girl living in Palestine under Israeli occupation.

A poetic collection of short stories about Muslims in America.

BINT ROBERT, Na’ima. *Boy vs. Girl*. Frances Lincoln. 2010
Set in England, a boy and his twin sister deal with peer pressure and Ramadan.

A Somali girl living in London, England, has to come to terms with her cultural heritage.

A Bangladeshi girl’s family faces problems as illegal immigrants in post-9/11 America.

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.

Sequel to *Parvana’s Journey*, about Parvana’s friend’s continued adventures.

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.

A young girl and her brother arrive in Canada as immigrants.


A Muslim girl tries to appease the kids in her classroom.

Muslim Booklist compiled by Rukhsana Khan  www.rukhsanakhan.com
A novel set in post-Taliban Afghanistan, about a girl who gets abandoned by her father.

A historical novel about a young Kurdish girl’s flight from Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

A heart-wrenching story set in Israeli occupied Gaza.

A boy in 1947 India enlists the help of friends to hide news of the Partition from his father.

A humorous story of a boy dealing with his sleepwalking, homesick Algerian father.

A novel about an exchange visit to Malaysia.

A romantic novel about a young American girl who goes with her family to Palestine.

A wonderful collection of poems that give voice to Middle Eastern perspectives.

An English teen gets abducted by U.S. forces while on vacation in his father’s homeland, Pakistan.

A middle grade novel about a girl in Afghanistan with a cleft lip who yearns to read.

A middle grade novel about a boy and his family leaving Kabul for San Diego.

Features a framed story from the storyteller Duwairig.

Linked to the previous title, again Duwairig frames a story of court intrigue.

An amazing novel set in a Bedouin society in the year 1302.

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**Folktales**

Muslim Booklist compiled by Rukhsana Khan  [www.rukhsanakhan.com](http://www.rukhsanakhan.com)
A story about the childhood of the famed king of Mali.

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

The animals in paradise tell stories of how they helped various messengers of God.

**IfTikhar, Asma.** *The Poor King.* Illus. Ana Rammis. Greenbird books. 2011
A allegory/parable folktale that minimizes the importance of wealth.

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

Set in Morocco, the story deals with the craft of storytelling.

A collection based on a classic Persian folktale.

**Walker, Barbara.** *Watermelons, Walnuts and the Wisdom of Allah and Other Tales of the Hoca.*
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.

A memoir of a Palestinian woman set during the six day war with Israel.
A fascinating look at how Muslim civilization and culture have affected our daily lives.

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

A well-illustrated guide to the region.

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

An excellent picture book biography of Islam’s Prophet.

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

An informative book about the month of fasting.

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

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

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

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

A good resource on the life of Muhammad.

A very good resource that includes information beyond the festivals.

A beautifully illustrated book that examines Islamic architecture.

An excellent read and good starting point in understanding the Islamic movement in the African American community.
A biography of the African basketball star.

A beautifully illustrated and thoroughly researched piece of little known history.

An intriguing look at the famous Muslim traveler.

A children’s biography of the activist.

A biography of the famous boxer.

Alia Muhammad Baker’s works to save her library during the American invasion of Iraq.

An informative look at Muslim issues from a political angle.

A detailed guide to Islam.

Alia Muhammad Baker’s works to save her library during the American invasion of Iraq.

A memoir from the Muslim chaplain at Guantanamo Bay wrongfully accused of treason.