

Delve Deeper into *The Light in Her Eyes*

A film by Julia Meltzer and Laura Nix

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Gina Blume of Monroe Township Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *The Light in Her Eyes*.

Houda al-Habash, a conservative Muslim preacher, founded a Qur'an school for girls in Damascus, Syria, 30 years ago. Every summer, her female students immerse themselves in a rigorous study of Islam. A surprising cultural shift is underway — women are claiming space within the mosque. Shot right before the uprising in Syria erupted, ***The Light in Her Eyes*** offers an extraordinary portrait of a leader who challenges the women of her community to live according to Islam, without giving up their dreams.

ADULT NONFICTION

Syria (History, Culture)

Lawson, Fred H. *Demystifying Syria*. London: Saqi Books, 2010. Lawson provides the reader with a critique concerning key aspects of Syria including politics, economics and society.

Leverett, Flynt. *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2005. This book is a resource for general audiences and academia providing an in-depth look on topics including Syria's occupation of Lebanon, the war on terror, its support of Hezbollah, and the dictatorship under the al-Assad family.

Muslim Feminism

Afzal-Khan, Fawzia. *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*. New York: Olive Branch Press, 2004. Afzal-Khan offers a comprehensive volume ranging from poetry to memoirs aimed at de-mystifying the Western portrayal of Muslim women and revealing the complexity of their lives.

Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993. This book presents an historical overview of women and gender in Islam. It is written from a feminist perspective, using the analytic tools of contemporary gender studies. The results of its investigations cast new light on the issues covered.

Mernissi, Fatima. *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. New York: Basic Books, 1992. Mernissi, an internationally known Moroccan sociologist, reveals that the discrimination against women commonly exhibited throughout today's Muslim world is not a fundamental tenet of Islam, as many contemporary male Muslims would like us to believe.

Islamic Beliefs and Practices

Holland, Tom. *In the Shadow of the Sword: The Birth of Islam and the Rise of the Global Arab Empire*. New York: Doubleday, 2012. The evolution of the Arab empire is one of the supreme narratives of ancient history. Just like the Romans, the Arabs came from nowhere to carve out a stupefyingly vast dominion—except that they achieved their conquests in a matter of decades. Just like the Greeks during the Persian wars, they overcame seemingly insuperable odds to emerge triumphant against the greatest empire of the day.

Irshad, Manji. *Allah, Liberty and Love: The Courage to Reconcile Faith and Freedom*. New York: Free Press, 2012. Best-selling author Manji shows how any of us can reconcile faith with freedom and thus discover the Allah of liberty and love—the universal God that loves us enough to give us choices and the capacity to make them..

Keskin, Tugrul. *The Sociology of Islam: Secularism, Economy and Politics*. Reading (UK): Ithaca Press, 2012. Assistant Professor of International and Middle East Studies at Portland State University provides an examination of the role of Islam in an increasingly globalized world, as well as how Islam affects the West.

Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival

Bradley, John R. *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. A seasoned reporter based in the Middle East provides first-hand knowledge and analysis of how the divisions within the various sects of Islam are playing a role in the emerging governments after the uprisings.

Khalaf, Samir. *Arab Youth: Social Mobilization in Times of Risk*. London: Saqi Books, 2012. Sociology Professor Khalaf explores how disenfranchised youth in Middle Eastern and North African countries including Lebanon, Syria, Morocco and Iran are mobilizing to win their freedom from oppressive regimes.

Lynch, Marc. *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*. New York: Public Affairs, 2012. This is an examination of the uprisings that began in Tunisia and continue on in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria and what the rise of the Islamist movements in these emerging democracies mean to their neighboring countries and for the West.

Wright, Robin. *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion across the Islamic World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. A decade after the 9/11 attacks, this groundbreaking book by a preeminent reporter takes readers deep into the struggle within the Muslim world where a growing movement defies and



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challenges extremism and repudiates Osama bin Laden, his deviant doctrine, and his violent disciples.

ADULT FICTION

Kashua, Sayed. *Dancing Arabs*. New York: Grove Press, 2004. *Dancing Arabs* is a fictional story about a young Palestinian man who wins on a quiz-show, and the prize is a rare opportunity to study at a Jewish university in Jerusalem.

Pasha, Kamran. *Mother of the Believers: A Novel of the Birth of Islam*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2009. This is an epic novel based on meticulous research about the widow of the Prophet Muhammad and her role in shepherding Islam into the world.

Tamer, Zakaria. *Breaking Knees: Modern Arabic Short Stories from Syria*. Reading (UK): Garnet Publishing, 2008. The general theme of *Breaking Knees*, as of much of Tamer's work, is repression: of the individual by the institutions of state and religion and of individuals by each other, particularly women by men.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Haqq, Shahada Sharelle. *Stories of the Prophets in the Holy Qu'ran*. Clifton: Tughras Books, 2008. A collection of illustrated stories for children offering an Islamic take on the lives and missions of familiar prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Noah and Jesus.

Maydell, Natalie and Sep Riahi. *Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World*. Global Content Publishing, 2008. Multi-award winning picture book chronicling the lives of 13 Muslim women in history who have lived extraordinary lives and influenced their communities in a positive way, often overcoming extreme hardship and inaccurate stereotypes.

Stone, Caroline. *DK Eyewitness Books: Islam*. New York: DK Children, 2005. An illustrated overview for readers ages 8 and older about faith, culture and history that have shaped the modern Islamic world.

FICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Does My Head Look Big In This*. Australia: Pac Macmillan Australia, 2005. After making the decision to wear her hijab all the time, 16 year-old Amal must learn to deal with the prejudice, taunts, and miscomprehension of those around her.

FILMS/DOCUMENTARIES

***America at a Crossroads: Faith without Fear*. A film by Ian McLeod. PBS Home Video, 2007. TRT: 82 min.** Best-selling author Irshad Manji goes on a quest to reconcile her faith in Allah with her love of freedom.

***The Message (30th Anniversary Edition)*. A film by Moustapha Akkad. Anchor Bay, 2005. TRT: 177 min.** This film is a two-disc set featuring the biblical epic about the origins of Islam starring Anthony Quinn.

***Muhammad: The Last Prophet*. A film by Richard Rich. MPI Home Video, 2009. TRT: 95 min.** The first animated feature-length film introducing the story of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad to young audiences.

