These books offer a unique perspective on
the Islamic world and the Islamic people’s
lives, dreams and struggles.

**Nonfiction**

**Persian Mirrors : the elusive face of Iran**
by Elaine Sciolino
The author worked as a journalist during the
Iran revolution and observed the interest in
America and Americans, even in the midst of
virulent anti-American sentiments, and became
fascinated with the culture and contradictions
of Iran.

**The Lemon Tree : an Arab, a Jew, and the heart
of the Middle East**
by Sandy Tolan
The author personalizes the conflict between
Arabs and Israelis by detailing the linked lives
of a Palestinian refugee named Bashir Al-Khairi
and a Jewish settler named Dalia Eshkenazi
Landau, who are connected through a stone
home in Ramla which was built in the 1930s by
Bashir’s father. The Al-Khairi family was forced
to flee during the violent formation of Israel in
1948, and the Eshkenazis, Holocaust
survivors from Bulgaria, became the new
owners. After 1967’s Six Day War, Bashir
showed up and Dalia invited him in and began
an intense dialogue that’s lasted four decades.

**The Story of My Life : an Afghan girl on the
other side of the sky**
by Farah Ahmedi
A young girl’s memoir of being born in Kabul
Afghanistan during the war with the Soviet
Union. The story intertwines her childhood in
the devastation of war and her adolescence
in Chicago.

**Kabul Beauty School : an American woman
goes behind the veil**
by Deborah Rodriguez
The author went to Afghanistan in 2002 to work
as a nurse’s aide and found that her skills as a
trained hairdresser were far more in demand.
She opened a beauty school to help women earn
money and gain independence.

**The Dressmaker of Khair Khana : five sisters,
one remarkable family, and the woman who
risked everything to keep them safe**
by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon
When the Taliban seized control of Kabul, a
young woman’s father and older brothers fled
the city to avoid being forced into military
service, and she became the sole support of her
five siblings. She started a successful dressmak-
ing business to support her family and other
destitute women. The author rejects
the idea of Afghan women as victims of war
and instead demonstrates how women,
particularly entrepreneurial women, actively
resisted gender oppression.

**No God But God : the origins, evolution, and
future of Islam**
by Reza Aslan
The author, a comparative religions scholar from
the University of Iowa, writes this introduction
to the history of Islam, which also devotes
several chapters to the place of Islam in the
contemporary world, and aims to halt the
showdown between East and West by arguing
that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
have much in common.

**The Golden Cage : three brothers, three
choices, one destiny**
by Shirin Ebadi
The author, Nobel Laureate Shirin
Ebadi, recounts growing up in Iran along with
the three brothers of her childhood girlfriend
Pari. Through the lives of Abbas, Javad, and Ali,
Ebadi tells how each brother formed his own
unique political ideology, setting the path to-
ward each one's distinct future. The stories of
Pari, her mother, and of Ebadi herself give the
memoir a humanist scope, making it accessible
for those who may lack compassion for some of
the selfish and violent choices made by the men.

**Reading Lolita in Tehran : a memoir in books**
by Azar Nafisi
Nafisi, a retired professor at the University of
Tehran, held private classes in her home after
rules became too restrictive at the university.
She invited a group of Iranian women to
discuss classics like *Lolita, The Great Gatsby, Pride
and Prejudice* and *Daisy Miller* and began to draw
parallels between the fiction and life
in Iran.

**Peace Be Upon You : the story of Muslim,
Christian, and Jewish coexistence**
by Zachary Karabell
Middle East expert Karabell highlights stories of
interfaith co-operation and tolerance.

**Confessions of a Mullah Warrior**
by Masood Farivar
Farivar draws on his unique experience as a na-
tive Afghan, a former mujahideen fighter, and a
longtime U.S. resident to provide insight into
the recent collision between Islam and the West.
This memoir shows the other, non-American
side of the Middle Eastern coin, explaining how
a normal person can get caught up in radical
Islam—not because he is anti-American or
anti-West but because he is pro-Afghanistan.
Abraham: a journey to the heart of three faiths
by Bruce Feiler
The author traces the influence of Abraham, the symbolic founder of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, and sets out to recover Abraham as he is portrayed in all three religions. Booklist calls this book “a passionate and prayerful argument for peace between faiths.”

Elvis is Titanic: classroom tales from the other Iraq
by Ian Klaus
The author taught U.S. history and English in Arbil, the largest city in Iraqi Kurdistan. Among the Kurds he found that people were curious about American culture, mostly holding favorable opinions but furious about the occupation and hungry for the opportunities that came with English-language skills.

**Fiction**

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi,
A heartbreaking memoir, told in a graphic novel form, of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. Persepolis paints an unforgettable portrait of daily life in Iran: of the bewildering contradictions between home life and public life and of the enormous toll repressive regimes take on the ordinary citizen.

Saffron Dreams by Shaila Abdullah
Pakistani-born Arissa Illahi moves to New York City to be with her husband, who perishes when the Twin Towers collapse, and Arissa nearly crumples herself as she struggles with tremendous grief, a troublesome pregnancy, and the various trials she faces as a Muslim when others associate her with the terrorists.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid
This novel is about the American Dream as seen through the eyes of a young Princeton grad from Pakistan in a post-9/11 world. Changez finds his position in his adopted city suddenly overturned, and his identity in crisis as well, uncovering loyalties he was unaware of.

Rooftops of Tehran by Mahbod Seraji-
A novel of young love in an Iran headed toward revolution. In a middle-class neighborhood, 17-year-old Pasha spends one perfect, stolen summer with his beautiful neighbor, Zari, until he unwittingly guides the Shah’s secret police to their target: Zari’s intended. The violent consequences awaken Pasha and his friends to the reality of life under the rule of a powerful despot.

Sons and Other Flammable Objects by Porochista Khakpour
A novel of an Iranian-American family caught in the feverish and paranoid currents immediately after 9/11.

Once in a Promised Land by Laila Halaby-
This novel details the painful crumbling of a marriage mired in prejudice, cultural displacement, and deceit in the days following 9/11.

The Night Counter by Alia Yunis
This novel of Lebanese matriarch Fatima Abdullah has complicated family ties, long-buried secrets, and last-minute surprises. It gives insight into the lives of Lebanese immigrants in America.

The Writing on My Forehead by Nafisa Haji
The protagonist of this novel is a young American woman whose parents are immigrants from India and Pakistan. She spends her early life resisting her mother’s pressure to follow tradition and marry within her culture. Instead, Saira wishes to go away to college and pursue a career in journalism.

A Choice of Angels by Charles Sobczak
The story of the love between Daniel Harris, son of an upper-middle-class southern Baptist minister, and Ayse Yalcin, daughter of a Turkish (and Muslim) businessman. They marry in spite of disapproval from both families, and Daniel’s father disowns him.

Mosaic by Soheir Khashoggi-
A novel about a half-Lebanese woman whose husband turns her world upside down when she discovers that he has kidnapped their eight-year-old twins from New York and returned with them to his homeland in Jordan.

Gardens of Water by Alan Drew
This novel is a reworking of the Romeo-and-Juliet theme and explores the interactions between two families, one Muslim and the other Christian, in an Istanbul suburb during the earthquake that struck Turkey in 1999.

De Niro’s Game by Rawi Hage-
Growing up in war-torn Beirut, Bassam and George, best friends since childhood, each confront a choice between staying in the city and consolidating power through crime, or seeking safety in exile abroad, alienated from everything they know.