

8. “To Know the Great Arab People”

History books in the general and religious state networks that deal with the history of Zionism and Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael, present students with the various approaches and attitudes that were prevalent in the Zionist movement with regard to the Arabs, and statements by prominent leaders on the Arab question. The student is presented with the various approaches, including internal criticism by prominent leaders over behavior by Jews in certain instances. The students are exposed to arguments raised by important Zionist leaders that the Arabs' fears of Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael should be understood, and ways should be explored for rapprochement and dialogue with them, in an effort to bring them to accept the Zionist enterprise, and at the least not to oppose it. Other books quote statements according to which Jews should learn the Arabic language and Arab culture, in order to get to know the Arabs in a direct way and create good relations between Jews and Arabs, as well as for practical reasons – to acquire knowledge from them in various spheres, such as agriculture.

Two books quote the words of Ahad Ha'am, (a prominent leader of the Zionist movement in its early stages), which also include self-criticism. Bringing a selection of this type elicits openness and sensitivity in the student to the feelings of the Arab side. Although written at the end of the nineteenth Century the message to the student is relevant to the present time:

"The first leader who made his opinion known over the existence of the problem and over the potential problem of a sharp conflict between Jews and Arabs was Ahad Ha'am. On his very first visit to Eretz Yisrael in 1891 he noted the following:

“... Not just this, but in general it is not our way to learn for the future. We most assuredly could have learned from the chronicles of our past and present just how cautious we must be lest the anger of the simple folk be aroused by despicable acts. We must therefore be extremely careful in our behavior with a non-Jew when we come to live among him once more, to walk with him in love and respect and, it goes without saying, in justice and in righteousness. And what do our brethren in Eretz Yisrael do? Precisely the opposite! ... They move about among the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly, strike them shamefully without any sufficient cause, and even boast that they do so ... Our brothers are correct when they say that the Arab respects only those who show him bravery and courage. When he feels that justice is with his opponent; not so if he justifiably thinks his opponent's actions to be oppressive and stolen justice. Then, even if he also remains silent, he will restrain himself endlessly, but his anger persists in his heart and he plans revenge and bears a grudge’.”

(299, **The World and the Jews in Recent Generations**, 1998, pp.228-229).

(160, **From Conservatism to Progress**, History for eighth grade, 1998, p.374).

The teacher Yitzhak Epstein is quoted in praise of the Arab people:

"In general, we are mistaken in regards to a great people ... This is the mightiest, most excellent people in physical attainments and in the skill of its understanding. We

must not belittle its rights (those of the Arab people). The Hebrew people respects not only the personal rights of each person, but rather the national rights of each nation and tribe."

(160, **From Conservatism to Progress**, eighth-grade History, 1996, p.374)

In another book, Epstein is quoted in an article that he wrote in the newspaper *Hashiloah* in 1907, entitled "A Hidden Question":

"Among the difficult questions connected with the idea of resurrecting our people on its land is one question that stands clearly against them all: the question of our relations with the Arabs. This question, on whose correct resolution hangs the rebirth of our national hope, has not been forgotten, but rather has vanished entirely from among the Zionists and in its true form it is almost never mentioned in the literature of our movement. The loyal Zionists have so far not touched on the question of how we should act towards the Arabs when we come to buy land in Eretz Yisrael, to establish moshavot, and in general to settle the land.. Most of the land we buy from the large estate owners ... When we buy such land, we completely remove those who previously worked on it. True, we will not send them away empty-handed, we will pay them nicely for ruined houses and gardens, and in general we will not be stingy with gold coins during the time of the 'exemption.' From the standpoint of accepted justice and official honesty we are completely just, entering lawfully. However, if we do not knowingly want to deceive ourselves, let us admit that we dispossessed poor people from their meager property and broke the staff of their bread. Can we really persist on such a path of purchasing land? Is it successful, does it befit our objective? A hundred times no. Members of the people that was the first to say, 'And the land will not be sold in perpetuity,' and limited the rights of the buyer in favor of the worker, should not, cannot, expropriate their land from the hands of its workers, who settled on it in good conscience. But let us leave justice and sentimentality for a moment, and look at the question from the standpoint of ability alone. Will they be silent in the face of dispossessions, calmly accepting what we do to them? Will they not ultimately awaken to restore by force what was stripped from them by gold! ... And this people ... is only a small part of the larger nation, which holds everything surrounding our country: Syria, Aram Naharayim, Arabia and Egypt..."

The author of the book writes that "Herzl assessed the Arab problem as being a marginal matter, not requiring treatment, at least not in the first phase of acquiring legal title to the land". A letter he wrote in 1899 is quoted as follows: "You see another difficulty in the existence of the non-Jewish population in Eretz Yisrael, but who will say that they should be removed from there? Their private good and fortune will increase as a result of our bringing our assets. Do you believe that an Arab who has land or a house will be sorry when the price of his land increase five- and ten-fold? This is something that will necessarily happen with the coming of the Jews."

The same book quotes the words of Arthur Ruppin, one of the Zionist movement's central leaders, at the Zionist Congress in 1913:

"At first, the Zionist movement believed that Eretz Yisrael was empty of people ... In the meantime, we learned to see matters in a completely different way ... As of now, there are six times as many Arabs in Eretz Yisrael as there are of us ... It is a necessary task to make the lives of Jews and Arabs, side by side, as equal and friendly as

possible ...Clearly, Jewish settlement has thus far brought the Arabs great material benefits ... but along with this we must take the Arabs into consideration, be tactful in the matter of purchasing land, in order to prevent difficulties from them ... In any case, it is no wonder that relations between Arabs and Jews are not good. There is a wide gap between the new Jewish immigrants and the Arabs in custom and habit, and the two sides have not done enough to understand each other. Similarly, the attitude of the masses depends on the position of a thin layer of privileged families. The Arabic press is also controlled by this stratum, which mostly belongs to Christians and has absorbed certain anti-Jewish attitudes ... It would be useful if a generation grew up that would learn Arabic in our high schools and could speak with the Arabs in their language."

(299, **The World and the Jews in Recent Generations**, 1998, pp.230-232).

Knowing the Arabic Language and Culture

The need to know the Arabs' language and culture was raised by a number of leaders, led by Arthur Ruppin.

"The leaders of the Zionist movement were divided on the question of the Arabs. They hoped that the prosperity that would come in the wake of Jewish settlement would bring a great deal of progress to the Arabs of the country, which would lead the Arabs to accept Zionism, while others saw the conflict between Jews and Arabs as a natural clash between two peoples living in the same land. Arthur Ruppin believed that in order to contend with the Arab national movement, the Jewish Yishuv had to be strengthened, and that Arab culture and the Arabic language had to be known, in order to deepen the knowledge of the neighboring people. With the end of the First World War, it was already clear to the Zionist leaders that the Arab question would be the Zionist movement's most severe problem".

Author and researcher Yosef Meyuhas is also quoted: "The Jewish people will learn to know the large and important eastern people with whom we dwell, and in whose company we live and will continue to live for years and generations."

(160, **From Conservatism to Progress**, History for eighth grade, 1998, pp.368, 373).

There were those who sought to know the Arabs' life for practical purposes, including the members of Hashomer – the first self-defense organization established in Eretz Yisrael. "Yisrael Shohat wrote the following: Hashomer ascribed special attention to peaceful relations with the Arab environment. We knew that the Arabs would be our neighbors and that we would have to be with them, and to a certain extent adapt our lives to them. Hashomer members learned Arabic and wanted to learn whatever they could among the Arabs. The Shomrim tried not to make do only with visits to the effendis and sheikhs, but rather preferred the 'madafiya' (the village's hospitality room), in order to meet with the Arab peasant farmer, tenant or worker. The Shomrim learned the Arab way of life, and the life of the Arab village."

Hashomer members also dreamt of conquering the pasture: shepherds wander with their flocks to far-off regions and know the homeland well. Three members of Hashomer went out to live among Beduin tribes, in order to learn the profession. One

of them, Yosef Harit, related the following: "Three members undertook to acquire the doctrine of shepherding first hand – from the Beduin, and to that end Hashomer made contact with the Turkmen, a semi-wild tribe that lives in the mountains with their flocks. In the winter of 1913, three of our members dressed in Beduin clothes and went to be shepherds with the tribe's youth. The work was difficult, because the shepherd was both milker and guard, and would also sleep next to his flock. The shepherd's meal was meager – a bit of bread in the morning and a bit of bread in the evening, besides the milk that he was permitted to drink during the milking season. Despite all of these, and despite the illnesses they contracted, the members acquired the required experience and then we could think about getting a herd to shepherd on our own."

(76, **Homeland – Chapters in the History of the Jewish Yishuv**, pp.93, 95).

Concern arose among the Arabs over the successes of the Jews, concern that was mixed with admiration for their ability to overcome the difficulties that they encountered on their arrival to Eretz Yisrael. One book includes a quote from a newspaper that appeared in Damascus on 8 April 1913:

"Jaffa is the most important commercial city in Palestine. Most trade is controlled by the Jews, and anyone arriving in town would think that he had come to a Jewish city. Jaffa's earnings are from the golden apples. There are those who say that there is no reason to be concerned about the Jews conquering Palestine, since they are not in control of the government, but in truth the nation that controls commerce rules. The real rulers are the rich, who are also wise. The Zionists who own property (who have taken hold of the land and established many communities) are also diligent and learned, and since they dwell among a foolish people, ultimately they will take over all sources of livelihood and slowly expel all of the country's residents. Most of the hotels are owned by Jews. The Jews also have many schools, and the most important of them is the school in Tel Aviv (the Herzliya Gymnasium), the new neighborhood that dazzles all those who see it with the beauty of its buildings, its expansive streets, its landscaped parks, and which is nothing other than a slice of Europe."

(160, **From Conservatism to Progress**, history for eighth grade, 1998, p.376).

9. Stories Written by Arab Authors

In many literary anthologies there are stories about experiences and daily life of Arabs, which were written by Arab authors. These stories do not have any connection to relations with Jews. Usually, the author's country of origin is noted and occasionally other details about his life and ideologies are included. Most of the stories take place in a village and usually the people belong to the lower class. The stories portray the characters as good, friendly, familial. One story deals with the dilemma between following old custom or modern values. The student is exposed to seeing the Arabs as ordinary human beings, just like himself. Here are few examples of many stories that appear in the readers.

One reader features a story about children riding a donkey on the way to pick figs. They return on foot, walking after the donkey who has been packed with boxes full of figs.

(3, **Windows**, third-grade reader, 1994, p.53).

A reader features a story about the friendship between two boys who went to pick apples in an orchard. When one is caught by the watchman, he does not disclose the name of the friend who was with him in the orchard.

(29, **New Israel Readers**, fourth grade reader, 1986, p.61-64).

Another reader includes a story about a Beduin living in the Arabian peninsula who had a beautiful mare and colt. The tribe's sheikh coveted the mare and colt and took them for himself.

(44, **Literary Selections for Grade 8**, 1992, p.76-84).

Another reader features a story about the scars the author still has from a fall after stumbling over an obstacle. The obstacle was the "end of a looped metal stick, the kind the armies fighting in the First World War used as posts for erecting barbed wire fences.

(78, **I Understand**, Reading Comprehension, 1993, p.150).

One reader contains a story of a very poor peasant farmer who had 15 beautiful children. A wealthy and childless vizier (minister) convinced the mother to sell one of the sons to him. The mother agreed in order to get money with which she would buy food for her children. When the father heard this, he did not agree to the sale and begged the vizier to give him back his son. The vizier could not withstand the father's plea. He returned the boy and also let the father keep the money. Nine months later, the vizier's wife, who had been barren, gave birth to a boy, just as the blessing the poor farmer's wife had given her predicted.

(26, **New Israel Readers**, for third grade, 1986, pp.161-165).

Another reader features a story about a barber with a mentally ill brother.

The introduction states that the Egyptian writer, Tewfik al-Hakim, the author of the story, "advocated peace and understanding between peoples and sharply criticized the tyranny of the Egyptian leader, Nasser."

(165, **Literary Leaves**, 1987, p.169).

Another reader includes a story about an Arab porter who collected empty bottles and as he was about to bring them to the wealthy man who had asked him to collect them, the bottles fell and broke. The porter became very sad and was certain the rich man would not pay him his wages. But to his surprise, the wealthy man says he planned to break them in order to put the shards on top of the wall, as a charm against thieves, and he pays the porter for his work. The author of the story is Yatta Muhamad Ali. (169, **New Israel Readers**, for third grade, 1986, p.224).

The same story is repeated in a fourth grade reader (186, **Strings**, for fourth grade, 1993, pp.257-259).

Another reader features a story about a young porter who struggles under a heavy load and falls. The author, whose goods the porter was carrying from his store, realized how hard it was for the boy to carry such a heavy load. "My attitude toward him changed completely." He wiped the blood from the forehead of the boy who had been injured in the fall, and added to his wages. The author is the well-known Lebanese author, Tewfik Youssef Awad. (28, **New Israel Reader**, for sixth grade, 1992, pp.47-49).

One reader contains a story by Israeli Arab author Mahmud Abassi about two children who move from the city to a village in the Menashe mountains. The story deals with their absorption into the new society in the village and the differences between them and the village children. (309, **The Way of Words**, sixth grade reader, 1996, pp.14-17).

An eighth-grade reader includes a story by the well-known Egyptian writer, Naguib Mahfouz about two young people debating whether or not to get married. (244, **Reading Selections** for eighth grade, 1992, pp.170-176).

A ninth grade reader contains a story by the Egyptian writer Sophie Abdallah about the problems emerging from the transition from a traditional lifestyle to life in a modern city.

The hero of the story is Ismail, a young Egyptian Arab who left the village as a youngster and moved to the city with his mother after the murder of his father. Ismail does not know why his father was murdered, but this episode from his past continues to haunt him and presents him with a difficult dilemma: on the one hand, he is expected to avenge his father's death. This is the tradition in his village and he is expected to follow the tradition. On the other hand, revenge of this sort is contrary to the progressive education he received in the city. "He refuses to kill someone unconnected to the murder as some pressure him to do, and his mother supports his decision and says: 'Man and animals are not the same thing. The difference between them is the difference between conscience and barbarism. I brought you to the city so that you would turn your back on the law of the jungle.'" (161, **Literary Leaves**, ninth grade reader, 1998, pp.112-115).

A ninth-grade reader features a story by Naguib Mahfouz about a port worker who dreamt for 20 years of taking revenge against the man who took away his wife just hours after their wedding. He forced him to divorce her after beating him into unconsciousness.

Now the man wants to avenge himself and take back the woman who was his wife. He comes at the head of a large group. It turns out that the man who stole his wife died several years earlier and his wife sells eggs in the market. The man meets with her for a few minutes and then returns to his city.

(161, **Literary Leaves**, ninth grade reader, pp.117-121).

Two readers, for grades 4 and 6, include two stories about verdicts issued by a judge named Karkash who “was known in Arabic folklore as a stupid and evil judge. Instead of saying ‘stupidity’ they would say ‘Karkash trial’.”

The stories express social criticism of the legal system.

(28, **New Israel Reader**, for sixth grade, 1992, pp.156-157).

(29, **New Israel Reader**, for fourth grade, 1986, pp.155-157).

In contrast, a seventh-grade reader features a story about a wise sheikh who was known for his ability to arrange compromises between rivals and let justice and fairness prevail. The sheikh managed to apprehend a thief in a clever and amusing way.

(32, **Variations**, seventh grade general school reader, 1992, pp.150-151).

Another entertaining story tells of a man who sold his house, but made one condition: the nail stuck in the wall of the guest room would continue to be his property. The seller began coming every day to the buyer’s home to see his nail, hung things on it and then tied a wild dog to it. Eventually, the buyer got fed up and fled from the home he had bought.

(32, **Variations**, seventh grade general school reader, 1992, pp.168-171).

10. The Good Muslim Ruler

In some stories in ultra-orthodox school readers, a recurring motif is of the Muslim ruler who fosters the Jews and grants them rights out of confidence in their wisdom and loyalty, and stands against opposition from advisers and groups who seek to restrict the Jews.

In a sixth grade reader used in the ultra-orthodox network, a story is told about the Jews of Tiberias, which was subject to Muslim rule. The Muslim ruler invited the Jews to rebuild the destroyed Tiberias, but his close advisers did not view the rise of the Jews favorably and accused them of causing a drought. Rabbi Nahman prayed and rain began to fall. And the ruler said: "I now know that the Lord your God is the greatest God of all."

(379, **Our Childhood 6**, sixth grade reader, pp.52-54).

Another story, that takes place in Yemen, tells of an Arab woman who spread a rumor that the Jewish rabbi blew the shofar during the days when Selihot (atonement) prayers are said, in order to prevent rain from falling and to kill the Arabs by thirst. When rain fell, she claimed that they were plotting to drown the Arabs. The district governor determined that the Arab woman had defamed the rabbi and that he was a holy man.

(379, **Our Childhood 6**, sixth grade reader, p.102).

There is a story that occurs during the Golden Age in Spain about the Caliph Abdul Rahman, who dealt kindly with the Jews. An Arab tried falsely to accuse the son of the head of the Jewish community, who was very successful in his studies, saying that he had written a poem containing negative things about the Caliph. When the forgery of the poem was discovered, the Caliph tried to give the boy a great deal of money, but the latter refused. Later, he appointed him a minister.

(379, **Our Childhood 6**, sixth grade reader, p.372).

There is a story about a Jew who succeeded in capturing two lions who had broken out of their cage in Kushta and saved the city. The sultan praised his wisdom and gave him money for the poor of Jerusalem.

(43, **Everything in its Time**, third grade reader, p.87).

There is a story about the pasha, the governor of the sultan who ruled in Greece and who respected the Jews and their wise men. His advisers gnashed their teeth, because "they could not see the honor of Israel." In response, the pasha compares the Jews to the boilermen in the bottom of a ship, because of whom "the ships' passengers enjoy themselves and have a safe and pleasant sailing."

(379 **Our Childhood 6**, sixth grade reader, p.26).

"The legend tells of a certain Arab who was full of envy for the Jewish poet Ibn Gvirol, who was an outstanding Arabic poet, murdered him and buried him under a fig tree. Ever since, the fig tree has yielded the most incredibly sweet fruit. By

chance, the king ate some of those figs and inquired as to the reason for their sweetness. Ultimately, the murderer admitted his deed and was killed."
(369, **The History of Israel**, 1993, p.62).

A story about the death of Rabbi Yehudah Halevy is repeated in several readers for ultra-orthodox and state religious schools. A reader for fourth-graders in the ultra-orthodox network relates that when Rabbi Yehudah Halevy arrived in Eretz Yisrael, "an Arab horseman was passing by. When he saw Rabbi Halevy kissing the ground of the land of his forefathers, he trampled him wildly with his horse."
(378, **Our Childhood 4**, fourth grade reader, p.140).

The same story appears in book 317, **Lessons in the Bible** (the Book of Exodus) for state religious schools, 1979, p.69; in book 369, **The History of Israel**, 1993, p.70; and in literature reader 165, **Leaves of Literature**, 1987, p.8.

In contrast, in another book that deals with Rabbi Yehudah Halevy's teachings, a different version is given:
"Rabbi Yehudah Halevy was determined and boarded a ship to Eretz Yisrael, though he was forced to turn back due to stormy weather. In 1141, he died in Egypt and was buried there ... The legend says that Rabbi Yehudah Halevy arrived in Eretz Yisrael and set forth for Jerusalem. 'When he reached the gates of Jerusalem, he tore his clothes and walked barefoot on the ground, and would say the lament that he had written, Zion, Doest Thou Not Ask? A certain Ishamaelite was jealous of him because of his fervor and he ran over him with his horse, trampling him to death.' It is reasonable to assume that this story is not historically accurate, since at that time the Jews could not enter Jerusalem out of fear of the Crusaders, both because even Muslims were prohibited from entering Jerusalem and because it was not at all likely that a Muslim would kill a Jew, a fellow sufferer under Crusader rule."
(322, **The Historical Thought of Rabbi Yehudah Halevy**, 1987, pp.14-15).

11. The Contribution of the Arabs to Human Civilization

Some history books in the state-run networks include in the chapters of the history of the Arabs descriptions of the achievements by Arab scientists and thinkers. Here is one example:

“Despite the religious split which divided believers in the empire, a rich Arab culture developed in it. Since the empire encompassed many lands with different cultures and customs, the Arabs conveyed the cultural assets from people to people, and from country to country. From India to their country, and from their country to the countries of Europe, the Muslims transferred numbers, which replaced Roman numerals, which were not convenient for arithmetic functions. They also translated into Arabic the rich literature of the Greeks, which dealt with philosophy, science and medicine. Afterwards, the peoples of Europe translated these books from Arabic into Latin, and thus the Arabs contributed to restoring the cultural treasures of Greece to the European peoples.

“However, the Arabs were not simply **cultural middlemen**, they were also **creators of culture**. For example, they were the first to discover the existence of infectious diseases. They were also the first to build public hospitals. Because of their considerable contribution to various scientific fields, there are disciplines that to this day are called by their Arabic names, such as algebra. The Islamic religion also influenced the development of culture. The obligation to pray in the direction of Mecca led to the development of astronomy, which helped identify the direction according to the heavenly bodies. The duty to make a pilgrimage developed geography and gave a push to the writing of travel books. These books, and the Arabs' high capability in map drawing, helped develop trade. To this day, merchants use Arabic words, such as bazaar, check and tariff. Since the language of the Koran is Arabic, the Muslims spent much time researching the Arabic language and grammar.

“Islamic art was also influenced by religion. Across the empire, many mosques were built and they created a new architectural style. Because of the religious prohibition against drawing a person or animal, Muslim artists decorated their buildings with **arabesques** – engineering shapes or stylized forms of leaves and plants.

“Rulers also helped cultural growth in the empire. The leaders of the empire built palaces and the palace court was a place frequented by many intellectuals: scientists, poets and writers. With the money that flowed into the state treasury, the rulers bought valuable objects and art treasures.”

(34, **From Generation to Generation**, vol.b, 1994,p.220)

See also detailed chapters on this topic in books 341, **Lessons in History**, vol.b pp. 213-219; 369, **History of Israel**, 1993, p.53; and 348, **History of Israel and the Nations**, vol.b, 1987, pp 204-218.

12. Arab-Jewish Relations in Palestine in the Nineteenth Century

Books used in the ultra-orthodox stream contain descriptions of relations between Jews and Arabs. In these descriptions, Arabs are portrayed in negative terms. Thus, for example, a seventh grade reader tells of relations between Arabs and Jews in Safed in the following way:

Ishmaelites

"The Arab Ishmaelites, who hate the miserable Jews very much, will search for pretexts and carry out plots against them. In order to show you how strong their hatred for Jews is and how they persecute and attack them, I will relate several stories: in the city of Safed, the Ishmaelites were advised to throw a villainous man into the pit in the yard of a Jewish man and to testify that the Jew murdered that man. But before they could carry out their plot they were caught, their plan was discovered and they were brought to the court and punished for their wickedness."
(330, **Our Childhood 7**, seventh grade reader, p. 142)

A fourth grade reader used in ultra-orthodox schools relates that a year after an earthquake that destroyed many parts of Safed, an "evil man-made plague" befell them:

"The Arab villagers went up to Safed ... Ishmaelites breaking into homes, penetrating into every place, sparing no one, not even property. They hacked at houses with their axes, stabbed babies and infants with their swords. They left mourning and destruction in their wake. The Ishmaelites gathered together around the narrow alleyways and their hands dripped with blood ... Jewish blood."
(378, **Our Childhood 4**, fourth grade reader, p.145)

An eighth grade reader for the ultra-orthodox schools tells about the Jews in Jerusalem's Old City in the nineteenth Century:

"With this new settlement in Jerusalem, the housing shortage in the city grew far worse and there was incredible overcrowding. The Christians looked unfavorably on the increase in the Jewish population and placed many obstacles in its way. The Arabs, as a result of their great laziness and because they saw Jewish money and did not want to invest their own money in construction, did not bother to build new buildings as needed. They too became crowded, vacated their homes and attics for the Jewish residents and made a fortune renting out 'their apartments.' They sucked the Jewish residents drier and drier, because they raised the rent every year.

At that time, no one dared think such a bold thought as to leave the walled city to build a home and live in it!"
(329, **Our Childhood 8**, eighth grade reader, 1989, p.275)

Goyim

A first grade reader used in the ultra-orthodox stream calls the Arabs "goyim". This Hebrew term for gentiles has a negative connotation. It connects the Arabs to a long history of Jewish suffering in pogroms and attacks by Christians in many countries.

A story is told of two Jewish brothers who lived in Ashkelon and who had "bad and jealous neighbors who were goyim. Their goyish neighbors tried to do them harm and to steal their property, but they did not succeed."

(45, **Everything in its Time**, first grade reader, 1998, p. 213)

A third grade reader for ultra-orthodox schools tells about Grandmother Geula who lived in Jerusalem's Old City.

"The grandmother suffered a great deal in her life – suffering from poverty and deprivation, and most of all the difficulty of raising her children surrounded by bothersome Arab neighbors."

(43, **Everything in its Time**, third grade reader, 1999, p. 196)

Muhammad Ali – The good Ruler

A seventh grade reader in the ultra orthodox stream tells a story about Jerusalem in the days of Muhammad Ali emphasizes the Arabs' negative behavior and highlights the good treatment received from Muhammad Ali:

"The Sephardi community and the Ashkenazi community then bought from the Arabs, at a full and high price, a large and expansive courtyard in Jerusalem's Old City, and they built houses of prayer and study in it, as well as many regular houses to live in. When the communities' funds ran low and they could not afford to carry out their entire initiative, they were forced to borrow money from the Ishmaelites, and when the day came and they could not pay back the money they had borrowed, they gave that courtyard and all its buildings to their Ishmaelite creditors as a guarantee. And the Ishmaelites pressured them greatly to pay them the money in full, both the principal and the interest, and they harassed them with terrible cruelty, until recently, on the eighth day of the month of Heshvan 5581(1821) those savages burst into the houses of prayer and burned forty Torah scrolls and looted all of their sacred objects, and they imprisoned the leaders of the community. From that day on, the large courtyard lay silent, and all of its buildings, both holy and secular, were destroyed and covered with dust. And in the year 5596 (1836) in the month of Sivan (June), we residents of the holy city of Jerusalem sent emissaries to Muhammad Ali, the King of Egypt's deputy who is in Alexandria, to implore him to favor us with his kindness and order the Ishmaelites to return the large courtyard to the Ashkenazi Jews ... And when our emissaries came to see the great master and ruler Muhammad Ali, his face shone upon us and he spoke kindly with them and fulfilled the request which they made to him on behalf of all the Jews sheltered in his shadow ..."

(330, **Our Childhood 7**, seventh grade reader, p. 141)

The following is another story about good relations, this time among the simple folk:

A sixth grade reader used in the ultra-orthodox schools relates a tale of life in "Jerusalem of a century ago." It states that "all of Jerusalem's residents lived in friendship and brotherhood." Among other things, it told of an Arab who would bring sacks of coal to the Jews. "The coal man spoke fluent and colorful Yiddish like a Lithuanian Jew."

(373, **Our Childhood 6**, sixth grade reader, p. 255)

Arabs and Jews in the New Towns (Moshavot)

A story about Tel Aviv's Nordia neighborhood tells of how the Jews leased land from an Arab effendi, a Jaffa resident named Hinawi:

"In normal years, Arab passers-by and the Jews would establish bonds of friendship. But the pioneers were not always allowed to sit in their huts in peace. An ill wind would pass through the neighbors, inciters would gain the upper hand and the Arabs would try to attack the Jews and their property ... Hinawi the landowner also fell victim to incitement ... Members of Arab gangs, who did not like business being conducted with the Jews, pressured him to contribute his own money to their activities as 'ransom' for his ties with the Jews. Hinawi rejected their demand and two gang members murdered him."

(194, **The Way of Words 4**, 1996, pp.189-190)

The following is told of the behavior of the Arabs in the first moshavot (newly build small towns) that were established in the late nineteenth century:

"Blocking wells, uprooting saplings, stealing agricultural machinery and cattle, and flocks of Arab sheep invading the fields – all of these were recurring events."

(160, **From Conservatism to Progress**, history for eighth grade, 1998, p.279)

"The pioneers in the Jordan Valley came to work their land in peace, but their Arab neighbors did not like their coming and tried to drive them off their land. From time to time, they would set fire to the fields, steal fruit or sheep from the flock, and even try to harm members of the group. When the incidents of theft and burning increased, the pioneers decided to join the Haganah.

(194, **The Way of Words 4**, 1996, p.70)

A geography book used in the ultra-orthodox network describes the Arabs' actions vis-a-vis the moshavot (small towns):

"The residents of Rishon Le'Tzion suffered from attacks by their Arab neighbors, who had a hand in everything. Gangs of bandits sowed fear among the new settlement ...

"In Gedera, the Arabs would occasionally conduct raids of theft, robbery and murder ..

"Jaffa was an Arab city: its streets were actually narrow, old alleyways; the air was thick; loud calls and shouting at night were heard in its streets. It was difficult for the Jews in Jaffa to find decent apartments to live in, and when they did find them they were forced to pay a high rent for them ..."

(372, **Eretz Hemda (A Beautiful Land)** 1990, pp.135, 138, 144)

13. “The Hatred of the Adults Has not Affected Us”

The following three stories describe friendships that develop between Jewish children and Arab children. These stories start out with suspicion toward the Arab that stems from preconceived, negative notions that Jewish children have about the Arabs. During the course of the stories, the suspicion disappears and in its place a friendship develops. The message is that when it comes to personal relationships, it becomes clear that the Arab is a person like any other and stereotypes are proven wrong. Examples of this appear even in an ultra-orthodox textbook.

A Friendship Between Two Boys

A second grade reader tells of an Arab boy from the Arab village of Mizra'a who is accepted into the kindergarten of Kibbutz Evron. Prior to his arrival, there was some suspicion among the kibbutz children who asked, “Is he one of the good Arabs or one of the bad Arabs?” However, after he arrives, the barriers drop and he integrates into the kindergarten's routine. Later on it is related that the kibbutz children were invited to the village to celebrate Hamadi's birthday, enjoyed the candies his mother had prepared and “from that day on, the friendship deepened... Hamadi was invited to all of the kibbutz celebrations and he always came with some of the village children, he enjoyed it.” (1, **Strings** for second grade, 1996, pp.62-64).

One textbook has a poem about a boy playing ball beside the Sea of Galilee. He is joined by another boy who, it turns out, is called Bashir.

“I thought to myself: strange, I've never played with an Arab boy.

... Bashir and I ate together in the shade
on a rock shaped like a table.

Before we parted, we exchanged addresses
and promised to write each other.

I hope that we'll meet again.”

(47, **Windows**, 1993, p.83).

In another story, the Jewish narrator first attributes to the Arab he meets reservations about meeting a Jew. As time goes by, the Arab stops being suspicious and they become friends. The narrator sits on the shore of the Yarkon River, and senses someone standing beside him and sees an Arab boy playing the flute. “When he saw me, he wanted to run away. I called to him, ‘Come here, boy!’ I don't know if he understood everything I wanted to tell him ... apparently my facial expression soothed his fear. He started to approach me hesitatingly.” They introduce themselves. The boy plays the flute and the narrator invites him to join him for a meal. “It was a meal of affectionate feelings, friendly looks and confused talk, together with gestures and facial expressions that made us both laugh.” The Arab gives the Jew his flute as a gift and the Jew gives him a nice penknife. “His face glowed with happiness. ‘By Allah, you're very good!’ he said in a hushed voice that was all love and friendship. We parted amicably from the Yarkon. Many years have passed since then. The flute has remained with me as a souvenir... its sweet notes are still etched in my memory.” (194, **The Way of Words 4**, 1996, pp.236-237).

A Friendship Between Girls

A sixth and seventh-grade reader used in the state-run school system quotes a passage from the book, *Nadia*, by Galila Ron-Feder, about an Arab girl who comes to a Jewish boarding school. The passage describes the Arab girl's fear that the Jewish girls, one of whom lost a brother in a terrorist attack, won't want to share a room with her. Happily for her, she is warmly accepted and one of the girls asks her to share a room with her.

(218, **Literature 7**, pp.103-106).

(146, **Strings**, sixth grade reader, 1997, pp.264-267).

An eighth-grade reader describes the love between an 18-year-old boy from a Jewish settlement and a Bedouin girl. The story ends with their elopement.

(158, **Literature 8**, pp.308-309).

A Jewish boy describes his friendship with Abed, a Bedouin shepherd. "We didn't have a common language, but the hatred of the adults also hadn't attached itself to us yet. Children's games don't need words. After the war started, Abed disappeared for a long time. One day, the Jewish narrator saw him and followed him until the two met. "We stood facing each other – two quiet and sad children." Abed gave the Jewish boy the only gift he could give him – "a poor man's gift which he held in his hands: his weathered shepherd's staff."

(5, **Strings**, for fifth grade, 1994, p.43).

An Israeli Meets an Egyptian Boy

A sixth grade reader includes a story of the friendship that develops between an Israeli boy and an Egyptian boy who meet at an international youth conference in London. It all began when the Jewish boy was invited to play on an Egyptian boys' soccer team and scored a goal. Sa'id, the Egyptian boy, comes to the Israeli boy's room: " 'I realize you're surprised by a visit from a boy from an enemy country... I was looking for a chance to talk to you. My older brother fell in the Sinai during the last war between our countries,' Sa'id said, 'but it would be stupid for me to be angry at you for that.' 'If so, we're even,' Amir said with a sad smile on his face, 'because my father also died in that war. He was among those who crossed the canal.' For a moment, the room was filled with an oppressive silence and the two boys were steeped in confusion. Sa'id was the first to recover. 'Well,' he said, 'since that accursed war, I thought, that everything needs to be done to ensure that it will be the last war. It may sound strange because our radio, television and newspapers, and even our textbooks fill us up with stories about the evil Israelis, who stole the Arabs' homes. My teacher at school is a unique individual, who always cautioned us about blind hatred and in his history classes, told us about the sufferings of the Jews for 2,000 years, even though there is no mention of it in the textbooks. The teacher also told us what the Nazis did to the Jews during the Second World War. In general, he opened our eyes to many things, which we were used to accepting without thinking about them.' Amir listened carefully to Sa'id's words. For a brief moment, he thought he was dreaming. Could it be possible? Could an Israeli boy and an Egyptian boy sit

together and have a friendly conversation without a barrier of hate and without cursing each other? And then came questions and answers from both sides in an unending flow, with each one thirsting to know something about his friend, his hobby, his studies, where he lived and about his family. Sa'id flooded his friend mainly with questions about the kibbutz.

“The two boys did not notice the passage of time. They forgot where they were and forgot the conference, as if they were old friends. They forgot their parents' hostility, the unending war between their countries, the war that had continued for dozens of years and it seemed to them that they were speaking one language, even though they were speaking English, a language that was foreign to both.

“At midnight, Amir's roommate, Walter, came back to the room and to his surprise, found the unexpected guest there. Smiling broadly, he said: “The conference is starting to be effective, if a wolf and a lamb can live together – without my specifying which of you is the wolf and which is the lamb.”

(280, **Story and Song – Let's Get Acquainted**, 1985, pp.360, 361).

A Friendship in Baghdad

A fifth grade reader used in the state-run school system tells of a Jewish family from Baghdad that immigrates to Israel and parts from an Arab woman, the widow of a murdered Arab who was a friend of the family. “I will never forget your love for my husband, Kaid Al-Hashemi. Every day that you are without your children is a shame. If you sent them to Palestine – go to them.”

“And the Jewish woman answers: ‘We will pray for your well-being and the well-being of your children and, of course, for Kaid's soul.’ Mother parted from her with hugs and kisses.”

(49, **Windows**, reader for grades 5-6, 1997, p.31).

14. Stories of Arabs Rescued by Jews

These stories convey to the student a basic, universal, humanistic value: One must help another person – even an enemy – when he is in trouble and come to his rescue in times of danger, simply because he is a fellow human being. Four of the following stories take place during the war itself.

A fourth-grade reader for state religious schools tells of Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem during the Six Day War who, on entering one home, found a blood-soaked Arab girl. One of the soldiers “ran under heavy fire with her to an ambulance and thus saved her life. The girl has long since left the hospital and returned to her family and parents, but the friend who rescued her is still lying wounded. War is cruel, children, and let us hope that you will be soldiers in a time of peace. We wrote this word – peace – on the pieces of papers that we placed between the stones of the Western Wall when we reached it. That was our prayer: Peace.”

(138, **Open the Gate**, 1993, p.186).

A class reader for the ultra-orthodox network tells of the legend of Rabbi Pinchas BenYair. He saw a Jew carrying a load of wheat who wished to cross a river, but was afraid of drowning. Rabbi Pinchas Ben-Yair ordered the river to let the Jew pass. There was an Arab with the Jew, who was also carrying a load and who feared that his goods would be ruined by the water. “Rabbi Pinchas Ben-Yair saw him and told the river, ‘Let the Arab pass because he was an escort. So the Arab also crossed the river safely. With this deed, all saw the righteousness and greatness of Rabbi Pinchas Ben-Yair.’” (44, **Everything in its Time**, second grade reader, 2000, pp.160-164).

A fourth-grade reader for state religious schools tells the story of two childhood friends in Baghdad – a Jew and an Arab. Years passed and the Jew grew wealthy while the Arab became poorer. The Arab asked for help from the Jew but was rebuffed. The story says that the Jew sent his children in disguise to help his Arab friend, who indeed became wealthy without knowing that his Jewish friend had planned this without his knowledge. The Arab discovers this at the end of the story and regrets that he had doubted their friendship.”

(187, **The Way of the Words 5**, 1995, pp.85-87).

Another story also “balances” help for an Arab with help for a Jew. The third grade reader **Way of the Words** tells of Israeli soldiers who brought a wounded Egyptian soldier to a military hospital during the Six Day War, thus saving his life. Later, when the Israelis toured Egypt by bus, there was an attack in which several Israeli passengers were killed or wounded. A man stopped by the bus and took all the wounded passengers in his car, speeding to hospital. It was the same wounded Egyptian who had since become a well-known doctor in Egypt.

(309, **The Way of the Words**, 1996, pp.168-69).

There is a story of reservists in Gaza who found a girl who had been lost for two days from her family. The soldiers returned her to her family.

(283, **Interrelations**, 1993, pp.58-62).

A fifth grade reader for state religious schools tells of the 35 men who left to bring weapons to besieged Gush Etzion during the War of Independence. “En route, they encountered an old Arab man riding his donkey. An argument ensued. ‘Danny, he must be held here ... I think we should tie him up. He might tell about us.’ ‘Forget it, Yossi, what can this poor Arab do to you?’ replied Shaul. Yossi was not convinced but the majority agreed that the Arab should not be harmed and they continued on their way.” The story then tells how the Arabs opened fire on them in a wadi, killing them all.
(137, **Open the Gate**, fifth grade reader for state religious schools, pp.120-121).

A fifth-grade textbook for state schools tells the story of a Jew who saved an Arab even though that same Arab was among rioters who attacked Jews. The story takes place in Baghdad during the riots, looting and burning of Jewish property in the city and focuses on the Jews living in a side street. “The people living in the alley did not prepare themselves for a humiliating death or martyrdom. Their determined decision was to stand fast – come what may.

"Abu Efraim threw one of the rioters off his roof onto the heads of the other fleeing rioters. The man survived and Abu Efraim brought him water and saved his life.”
(27, **The New Israel Readers**, for fifth grade, 1987, pp.181-184).

15. “Arabs Are Just Like You and Me”

Stories of Jews Helped or Saved by Arabs

Many literary anthologies include stories describing Arabs in a positive manner that contrasts with the frequent or common image applied to the Arabs because of the protracted conflict and bloodshed. The authors deal with stories of Arabs saving Jews from physical harm and, no less important, helping Jews maintain their religion and identity. The message in these stories is a very important one: members of different religions must respect each other's religion and identity.

Stories of assistance are divided into the following types:

1. Helping Jews maintain their religion or fulfill their objective of immigrating to Eretz Yisrael; in other words, assistance related to Jewish identity. From this standpoint, these stories present noble behavior exhibited by Arabs;
2. Saving Jews from physical harm;
3. Saving Jews in time of war;
4. Assistance and advice in the field of agriculture from Arabs with know-how and experience.

Keeping Jewish Identity

There is a story about a Jewish widow and mother in Yemen who fell ill and, before she died, asked "her good Muslim neighbor", Fatima, to raise her son.

“ ‘Be his mother, he will play with your children and will forget his loneliness.’ She gave her a gold amulet in the shape of a Star of David and asked that when he reaches the age of 12 he be told that his parents were Jews and that he is a Jew and should immigrate to Eretz Yisrael.

“Fatima fulfilled her Jewish friend's wish and even put herself in danger, because the king of Yemen ordered that every Jewish orphan be converted to Islam. And when the boy reached the age of 12 she told him, in tears, his secret. 'I love you like my own son, but I swore to your mother' and she said to him: 'You must return to your country, your people and your homeland ... your name is Ovadia the Jew and the name of the holy city for the Jews is Jerusalem’.”

(194, **The Way of Words 4**, for fourth grade, 1996, p.180).

A story is told about an Arab who smuggled Jews across the Iraqi border.

"He did not understand what was wrong about poor Jews who love the land where their forefathers had lived in the past and who want to come to it out of this love; what bad could result from this for the world, why they are hated and why all the roads were closed to them."

(26 **New Israel Readers**, for third grade, 1986, p.222).

A story about a friendship that grew between an Arab boy and a Jewish girl located on opposite sides of the border in Jerusalem prior to the Six Day War.

"The courtyard of the girl's house is the border. The friendship is expressed in smiles and expressions, without words. The girl saves money, buys candies and throws them to the boy across the border. One day, the girl is shot and injured. The boy runs to her, takes off his only shirt, rips it and wraps it around the girl's leg. Later, he

disappears. Several days afterward, the Old City is captured. 'My first thought was that now I will be able to talk with the boy without fear.' When she returned home from the hospital there was no longer a border. She approached the boy's house. 'The door was off its hinges... empty, an overturned iron bed... no one was there. An Arab woman waved her arm and showed how they had fled to Amman. On a sign that said 'Caution – Frontier Ahead!' she scratched two words: on the eastern side – 'Sa'id,' and on the Israeli side – 'Edna.'" (The story appears in 194, **The Way of Words 4**, pp. 166- 167; and in 283, **Interrelations**, 1993 pp.52-53).

In a book on reading comprehension for elementary school students, a story is told about how a Jewish girl was saved by an Arab woman. The story underscores a message of equality.

"[The Arabs are like the Jews]... There are nasty people among them and there are decent people and [they shouldn't be labeled]...". To illustrate the point, a story is told about a four-year-old girl whose mother dies and whose father remarries. They lived in Akko. The father worked in Jerusalem and the stepmother raised the girl. "The girl wandered the streets dirty, barefoot, hungry. Only one family took her in, an Arab family that lived at the end of the street. To this day she remembers the heavy-set woman who hugged her, washed her, shampooed her hair, fed her, this woman who caressed her, perhaps the only caress she received as a child ... Once, the woman hid her for a week after her stepmother beat her cruelly. Her father had to return from Jerusalem in order to remove her from the neighbors' home. The girl shouted, cried, bit, clung fiercely to the large, heavy Arab woman, holding on to her like she was her last hope." For many years the woman was afraid of walking around Akko and when she was bold enough to do so she discovered that the Arab woman had died several months before, after lying in bed, and that no one had come to help her. "I myself abandoned that old woman."

(17, **What is the Interpretation? – Comprehension B** pp.184-188).

There is a story about a friendship between a Jewish boy and an Arab of Sudanese origin who sold peanuts near the Western Wall.

"The British forbade the Jews to blow shofars next to the Wall ... but the Jews did not give up the blowing and the British arrested those who blew shofars. When a British soldier came to arrest one of the blowers, the latter gave the shofar to the boy. The British soldier approached the boy, but before he could take the shofar away from him the Sudanese grabbed the shofar from his hand and hid it in the peanut roasting machine. When the British soldier reached the boy's hands, they were empty and the shofar was not confiscated."

(146, **Strings**, sixth grade reader, 1997, pp.21-24).

There is a story about a Bedouin who led two Jewish hikers who got caught in the desert and were searching for water. The Bedouin led them to a hidden spring, despite the fact that he was forbidden to reveal its location.

(29, **New Israel Reader**, for fourth grade, pp.88-90).

A Child Saved by God

"A three-year-old boy from B'nei Brak disappeared in the field. A rumor began circulating in the community that a wolf had killed him. At the same moment, his eye caught something white fluttering in the air from far away, walking and approaching the community. After several moments it was already in it and it was possible to see the figure of a man with a white turban wrapped around his head and riding on a horse. The father's heart began to pound strongly and a thousand thoughts passed through his head at the same time. All at once, his thoughts became frazzled and his mind was shaken. At the same moment, the voice of the Arab was heard who saw a Jew from the town. He addressed him: Hello, 'oh hawaja (Arabic word for sir). I found this Jewish boy (here he turned to Avreme'le who stood by his side) lying far from the community and I came here to return him; here, take him and return him.' And when Avreme'le's parents tried to thank the Arab and reward him, he did not want to tarry for even a moment. In the blink of an eye, he mounted his horse once more and galloped off to the dunes, until it was almost impossible to see him any more, and only a shining white dot could be seen for a long time in the dark of the night ... For many days, Avreme'le still felt the effects of that event. For a month, he lay sick in bed, and even after that he did not rush to leave home. Later, however, Avreme'le would tell the story of that event with special enthusiasm, feeling himself to be a hero and someone who had been miraculously saved by the grace of God." (331, **Our Childhood 5**, 1997, p.247).

A story about Abu Hamis, the "most famous seaman in Jaffa." The young Ben-Zion loved the sea and became caught in a storm with his boat. From afar, he sees Abu Hamis' boat. "He came to help us. I knew that he would not let us drown. The rope was thrown, brave arms clutched Ben-Zion and Abu Hamis mumbled: "My God, why have you made me crazy – am I not your beloved?"

The story is illustrated by the picture below:



(78, **I Understand**, Reading Comprehension, 1993, p.222).

A Wrong Suspicion

A boy walking in the field encounters an Arab. At first, he is afraid of him. "An Arab! Perhaps he is an infiltrator? Maybe a bandit? After all, he could murder him! He would certainly murder him here, in the field, when there is no other living person around. He must flee ... The Arab explains to him how to reach Hadera. He calms himself with the song, 'An Old Arab, Limping and Wretched.' On his way, he falls and twists his ankle. He could slaughter me like a 'lamb.' 'Why did you run in the field? I told you to walk to the corn. There is a path there.' Eran calmed down. Now it seemed to him that the danger was not as great as he had first thought. The old Arab sounded friendly. Now he was certain that the old man would not harm him, since if he had wanted to, he would not have volunteered to bring him help. The old man pops the bone back into place and feeds the boy. Eran was ashamed of his previous fear. How could I suspect this nice, old man? What an idiot I am! The boy who ran away from home offers to stay with the old man and help him guard the watermelon field."

(27, **New Israel Reader**, for fifth grade, pp 82-86).

"Kibbutz Abu Isa" is not marked on a map of the Hefer Valley, but it exists. It is sort of a tiny nature reserve in the Hefer Valley, which disappeared and no longer exists. On the eve of the establishment of the state, when all the Arabs in that valley one day uprooted themselves and moved eastward, toward Tulkarem, Abu Isa did not move. He remained. He is the last remnant of the Arabs of that entire area.

Abu Isa works as a forest ranger for the Jewish National Fund. He is a good neighbor, a pursuer of peace. If someone from one of the nearby kibbutzim needs a loan – all roads lead to Abu Isa. It's the only kibbutz that gives a loan to anyone who asks, without interest or a note."

(26, **New Israel Reader**, for third grade, 1986, pp.92-93).

The Best Advice

There is a story about the members of a kibbutz who approach Abu Hassan, an Arab hunter, a "splendid figure," with a request that he give them advice on how to hunt the wolves who attacked the kibbutz' sheep and killed them cruelly. The story describes the joint hunt that took place out of cooperation between the kibbutz members and the Arab. (29, **New Israel Reader**, for fourth grade, 1986, pp.110-114).

A story is told about Abu Rafa, a villager from Beit Netufa, who, although he did not study in school and conducted no geological research, every year could still predict – without fail – whether rain would fall or whether there would be a drought. He was expert at knowing the different types of soil. "Abu Rafa's experience is equal to many years of study at an agricultural school." The narrator and his father consult with Abu Rafa every year about the coming planting season and the various types of soil, according to the estimated amount of water that will fall in those places.

(26, **New Israel Reader**, for third grade, 1986, pp.107-108).

There is a story about Jews who immigrated to Israel during the period when the Turks ruled the land. They arrived at the Jaffa coast in a ship. Arabs came up on deck to take the suitcases. "They were quite alarming... they acted extremely wild and I was sure that they were pirates." One Arab led the narrator to the pile of suitcases and told him to go down a rope ladder to the boat, where Arab seamen awaited him. "I calmed down. I understood that I was dealing with Arab seamen and not with pirates."

(170, **Journey to the Kibbutz**, 1991, pp.50-51).

In a history book about the first settlements, several stories are related about the displays of affection and help given by Arabs to Jews. One story about new immigrants tells of an Arab who sold a Jew "a brownish-black liquid. The man called to a girl: 'Come here, girl. You are surely thirsty. Have a little drink.' 'No thank you!, I said, and I didn't even touch the glass. I thought it was poison. The Jew apparently understood me. 'It's O.K. girl, don't be afraid. It's date juice. Good, sweet juice ... I drank some of the juice and I enjoyed it very much'."

(188, **Journey to the First Settlements**, 1992, p.18).

Saving Life

"Mira'le, what happened to you? What are you doing here?"

You won't believe it, but that was the Arab neighbor woman, the wife of the Arab peasant farmer who taught my father how to plow. She was standing in her yard next to the oven. When she saw me, she invited me in. I went inside. I found her baking pita bread in the oven. The thin dough became a thin, fragrant pita. It was the best smelling pita in the world. The pita smell was driving me crazy, to the point where I almost fainted from it, but I did not say anything, since I did not enter her home to beg for handouts. The neighbor was very nice to me; apparently she liked me and she gave me a pita. At that moment, it was difficult to resist. I forgot all of the manners I learned from my mother, grabbed the pita from her hand, stuffed it into my mouth and I ate and cried, cried and ate – because hunger is a terrible thing. The worst thing in the world. The neighbor understood that I was hungry. She offered me another pita and added a little onion, and that was the best thing that happened to me that day."

In the same story, the girl's father tells of how Arabs saved him from drowning: "I disappeared because of the flood. The rainwater filled the river bed and it was impossible to cross. Once, I did manage to cross the river, I even went into it. But the Arab passengers who sat on the side and waited for the flood to be over were afraid, from what they saw. They were certain that the flow of water would wash me away and that ultimately I would drown. Then they jumped into the river after me and pulled me out, and they made me wait. That's how I sat for three days and waited, until the flood had subsided."

(188, **Journey to the First Settlements**, 1992, pp.66-68).

There is a story about a friendship between a Jewish child and an Arab child in a mixed neighborhood in Baghdad, in which Christians, Muslims and Jews lived. Over time, the Christians and Muslims abandoned the neighborhood and only one Muslim family remain, that of Naif, whose father was a senior police officer.

Naif tells his Jewish friend, Nuri, that his family is about to leave the neighborhood and move to "a neighborhood where there are no Jews. 'Nuri, all of you are about to be slaughtered ... you have no chance ... you will all be slaughtered. They're going to kill all of you – that's what my father says.' 'So what do you want from me?', Nuri asked. Naif stood silently. Vaguely, he tried to say only one word, but it was precisely that word that was missing from his vocabulary. No one from his family, no one of his people, had taught it. His entire being tried, with complete honesty, to say 'I'm sorry,' but his people generally said that only when surrendering, when the sword was already poised over the neck, only to ask for mercy. At that time, Naif did not seek mercy, rather he wanted to express love for his friend. At the same time, the word was etched in burning letters on his honest face."

(27, **New Israel Reader**, for fifth grade, 1987, pp.176-180).