

SEEING THROUGH THE WALL

Meeting Ourselves in Palestine & Israel

"The identity of a nation is rooted in its collective memory, and the collective memories of peoples, like the private memories of individuals, often calcify around a remembered trauma. Understanding and acknowledging the wounds and scars of each other's histories is critical to any genuine reconciliation and peace."

Jo Roberts Author, Anthropologist

There is a great deal to be said about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was only touched upon in this film. At the end of these discussion questions, we have provided links to background material you may need if you wish to understand the complex history of this conflict, which has been going on since the early years of the 20th century.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Suggestion to discussion leader. Be sure to let the film play to the end of the credits. This will give the audience members a moment to sit quietly with their feelings and thoughts before they start to find words for the discussion.*

*** There is no need to "cover" all these questions. Your audience may not get past the first question, which would be fine! The questions are here only if you need them*

1. What is your overall response to this film? What struck you the most? Who impressed you? What were your feelings as the film came to an end?
2. The title of the film is *SEEING THROUGH THE WALL, Meeting Ourselves in Palestine and Israel*. Did you "see" anything through the wall? In what way did the tour participants "meet themselves"? Is there any way in which you "met" yourself during this film?
3. Sadek Shweiki, the Palestinian Youth Counsellor, said, "Do I bring in a trained army to fight a 15-year old"? How would you answer his question? Do you understand why the violence continues? What should Israel do about it?
4. One of the group members said, "we prefer not to look at those things." Now that you HAVE looked at them, what would you say to someone who told you, "nothing can be done."?
5. Several people in the film (Israelis and Palestinians) suggest that Americans hold the key to a resolution of the conflict, and that Americans should stop funding Israel. What would you say about that?
6. Several of the tour members referred to the stories they would bring back to their communities. Would you have a story to bring to your community/family after seeing this film? What might it be?
7. Several people who have seen this film have talked about the difficulty of talking about this subject with their families and friends. For Jews, the anxiety seems to be that they will appear disloyal, i.e. "traitors." For non-Jews, the anxiety is about appearing anti-Semitic for criticizing Israel. Can you relate to either of those feelings? Would it stop you from speaking up?
8. If there were one scene that you could play at your synagogue/mosque/church, what would it be? Why THAT scene? What does that say about you? About your place of worship?
9. How can Americans work for a more just Israel? How can Americans work for Palestinian rights?
10. Any other comments, thoughts, feelings or questions?

To purchase a DVD of SEEING THROUGH THE WALL, or other films by Old Dog Documentaries, please visit www.olddogdocumentaries.org. If you would like to have a filmmaker/producer present at a screening in your community, please email us: info@olddogdocumentaries.org

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

1. **Everything you need to know about Israel-Palestine: A guide to the most controversial conflict, from the very basics right up to what's happening today.** A short and simple summary of a complex and painful subject. Edited by Zach Beauchamp) <http://www.vox.com/cards/israel-palestine>
2. **9 Facts about the Israel-Palestine conflict on which we can all agree:**
An interesting and even-handed look at the moral complexities of the conflict by Muslim Scholar Qasim Rashid:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/qasim-rashid/9-israel-palestine-facts_b_5643077.html
3. **History and current issues: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- 1) **Connecting with the Enemy**
A Century of Palestinian-Israeli Nonviolence
By Sheila M. Katz

"This is a profoundly important study of the history and ongoing efforts for Israeli-Palestinian peace by ordinary Israelis and Palestinians. It is by far the most comprehensive history of this aspect of the conflict I have ever read. It offers a genuinely balanced perspective."

From a review by Stephen Zunes, University of San Francisco

<https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/katz-connecting-with-the-enemy>

- 2) **My Promised Land**
The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel
by Ari Shavit

"The author of "My Promised Land" is a dreamer with an addiction to reality. He holds out for affirmation of Israel without illusion. Shavit's book is an extended test of his own capacity to maintain his principles in full view of the brutality that surrounds them. "For as long as I can remember, I remember fear," his book begins. And a few pages later: "For as long as I can remember, I remember occupation." I admire him for never desisting from this duality of "existential fear" and "moral outrage." No satisfactory account of the Israeli situation can be given without this double-mindedness, not least because the present-day debate about Israel consists largely of an argument between those who wish to ignore one of the terms and those who wish to ignore the other.

From a NY Times review: Leon Wieseltier

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/books/review/my-promised-land-by-ari-shavit.html>

3) **Fatal Embrace**
Christians, Jews and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land
By Mark Braverman

"Mark Braverman offers us a profound, courageous, and illuminating encounter, from a deeply felt Jewish perspective, with the tragic and intractable conflict in Palestine. It is unsparing in its rejection of Jewish exceptionalism and the practices of the Israeli state, as well as of Euro-American and Christian complicity in the dispossession and violation of the rights of Palestinians. This book is essential reading for all who genuinely care about the future of Israel and the suffering of the Palestinian people."

From comments by Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law, Princeton University, and UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territories

<http://markbraverman.org/>

4) **Contested Land Contested Memory**
Israel's Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe

By Jo Roberts

"Just as we might be tempted to think there is nothing new to learn about modern Israel and the Palestinian conflict, or that the situation is too intractable for a solution, comes this lyrical and balanced book advocating a path towards reconciliation based on the notion that a fractured relationship can only heal when both parties open themselves to regard the pain of the other."

From a review by Faith Adiele, 2014 finalist judge: Dayton Literary Peace prize

<https://joroberts.org/>

5) **Lemon Tree**
An Arab, a Jew and the Heart of the Middle East

By Sandy Tolán

"In 1967, Bashir Khairi, a twenty-five-year-old Palestinian, journeyed to Israel with the goal of seeing the beloved stone house with the lemon tree behind it that he and his family had fled nineteen years earlier. To his surprise, when he found the house he was greeted by Dalia Eshkenazi Landau, a nineteen-year-old Israeli college student, whose family left fled Europe for Israel following the Holocaust. On the stoop of their shared home, Dalia and Bashir began a rare friendship, forged in the aftermath of war and tested over the next half century in ways that neither could imagine on that summer day in 1967. Sandy Tolán brings the Israeli-Palestinian conflict down to its most human level, demonstrating that even amid the bleakest political realities there exist stories of hope and transformation."

<http://sandytolan.com/the-lemon-tree/>

6) **The Israeli Mind**
How the Israeli National Character Shapes our World

By Alon Gratch

"Israelis are bold and visionary, passionate and generous. But they can also be grandiose and self-absorbed. Emerging from the depths of Jewish history and the drama of the Zionist rebellion against it, they have a deeply conflicted identity. They are willing to sacrifice themselves for the collective, but also to sacrifice that

very collective for a higher, and likely unattainable, ideal. Resolving these internal conflicts and coming to terms with the trauma of the Holocaust are imperative to Israel's survival as a nation and to the stability of the world. Alon Gratch, a clinical psychologist whose family has lived in Israel for generations, is uniquely positioned to confront these issues. Like the Israeli psyche that Gratch details, *The Israeli Mind* is both intimate and universal. Intelligent and forthright, compassionate but sometimes maddening, it is an utterly compelling read. Drawing on a broad cultural and historical canvas, and weaving in the author's personal and professional experience, *The Israeli Mind* presents a provocative, first-hand portrait of the Israeli national character."

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/alon-gratch/the-israeli-mind/>