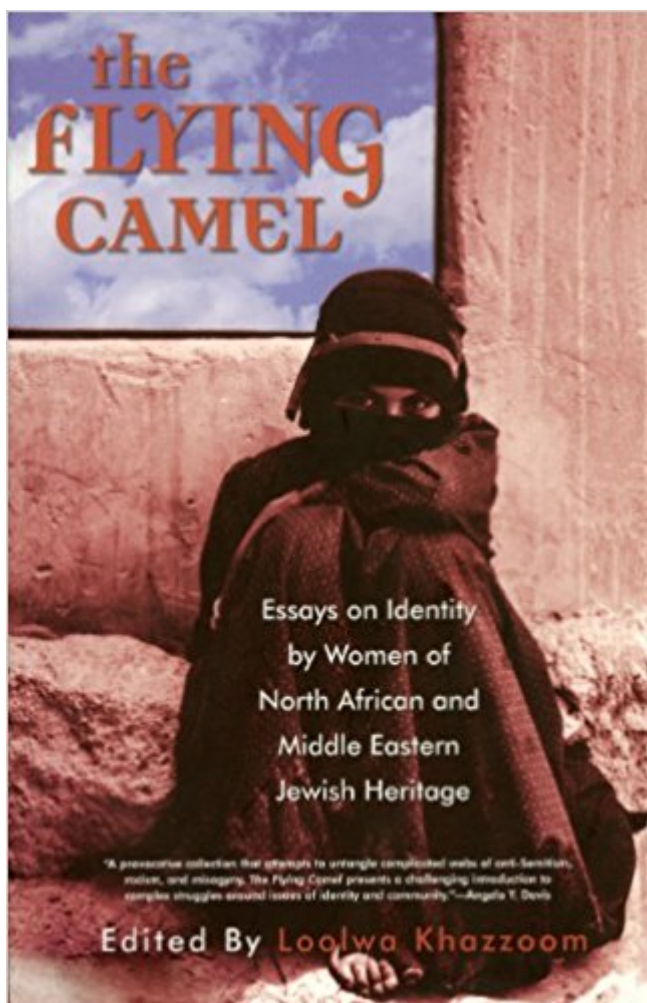


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# The Flying Camel: Essays On Identity By Women Of North African And Middle Eastern Jewish Heritage (Live Girls)



## Synopsis

Many of us have stereotypes of what "Jewish" looks like<sup>1</sup>; and for many of us that image is white and European. Yet with the blossoming Jewish multiculturalism movement, led by the dynamic Loolwa Khazzoom, the myth of a "monolithic Jewish community" is about to be debunked. Focusing on the experiences of Jewish women of two rich and varied regions, *At Home in Exile* reveals the hidden worlds of Jewish women often misunderstood or maligned by both the cultures in which they live and the European-Jewish community. Stories include one woman and her family's flight from persecution in Libya, a writer's exploration of the category "Arab Jew," and a light-skinned, Moroccan-born woman trying to "pass" in order to gain acceptance among European Jews in Tehran.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A provocative collection of writings that attempt to untangle complicated webs of anti-Semitism, racism, and misogyny, *The Flying Camel* presents a challenging introduction to complex struggles around issues of identity and community." "What a treasure this book holds! For many of us whose Eastern European culture has for so long been taken as the Jewish norm, *The Flying Camel* provides the missing tiles in the mosaic puzzle which is the global story of Jewish women's lives."

I am one of the "dark" Jews. I remember going through the disbelief of my "Jewishness" at work. I have 3 Jewish co-workers, and they all were told for 12 years "I'm Jewish" whenever they'd be

talking about Jewish things. I always got "YOU ARE??? oh, that's right, I forgot" How can people "forget " for 12 years, I ask you?I was also trying to explain to the doctor at the lab one day, when I had to have dye for the CT scan that I was Jewish, and I had understood that the dye is made from shell fish, was this correct? So, he looks at me and says "what kind of Jew are you?" So, no, this is not something that happened ages ago, the doctor "incident" happened 3 months ago; and no, I am not whining just because I am \*stating\* things that have happened to me.Thank you so much Loolwa, for presenting the thoughts feelings and words which I had not been able to bring from my heart.

these essays directly speak to my own life and experience.....i am astounded and somewhat saddened while reading. is it possible that we can share so much? i am happy to relate that in one generation, our daughters have broken free. no more hiding, no more need to deny their superior intellect.

I have enjoyed reading most of this book I love learning about the writers lives in their countries of origin, and their struggle to reach America or Israel. Yet I did get annoyed with some of the writers. Not all American Jews are ignorant of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews. Most of my peers and my family have been very open to learning about Mizrahi Jews. Maybe these writers didn't look for opportunity to enrich those around them? Many of the Mizrahi Jews I knew in Israel hung out in a very mixed crowd, and it didn't seem to impede their lives. In fact they would often jokingly make fun of us poor white skinned ashkenazis when we went to beach! There have to be more positive aspects to the way Ashkenazi Jews interact with Mizrahi Jews. We are all one people.

Really found the subject matter very interesting and thought provoking. I was unaware of the problems faced by Mizrahi and Sephardi women here in the US, in Israel, and, in other Middle Eastern countries. This is well worth reading.

I got the chance to hear author Khazzoom give a concert of Judeo-Arabic music and a lecture about the Judeo-Arabic experience while visiting Seattle recently. The author, raised in Palo Alto, California, is the daughter of an Iraqi-Jewish father. So she was raised, not with the more familiar Ashkenazi (European) Jewish traditions, customs and music, but with those of the Middle East. She explained about Sephardim ("Spanish" Jews who left the Mideast and returned later in history)and Mizrahim, Jews who never ever had left the Mideast. And there is strife among the groups, who

engage in discrimination based on widely different cultural values and lifestyles, though all believe in the same G-d and follow the same scriptures. The essays go into much detail about individual lives of women who experienced this discrimination or outright, terrible oppression at the hands of local people in their homelands -- Iraq, Iran and other places. Some of the stories are frightening; in one essay, the writer describes a horrifying massacre in Iraq. Her parents were then left literally stateless, their passports invalid and no land accepting them for refugee status. It's hard not to cry while reading this story. Others talk about a shameful treatment of returnees to Israel, and the division in the communities there. Some of the writers tried to "pass" as French Jews rather than Moroccan, to avoid being treated as an underclass exactly as African-Americans experience in the United States. These stories made me so angry. The essays are also a unique view inside Jewish traditions that are probably as unfamiliar to most Jews as they would be to non-Jews. It was a revelation that some Hebrew is spoken with an Arabic accent, using Arabic words. I couldn't put this book down, and I think anyone interested in the struggles in the Mideast ought to read this, and definitely, if you are Jewish, you should not pass up this book. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

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