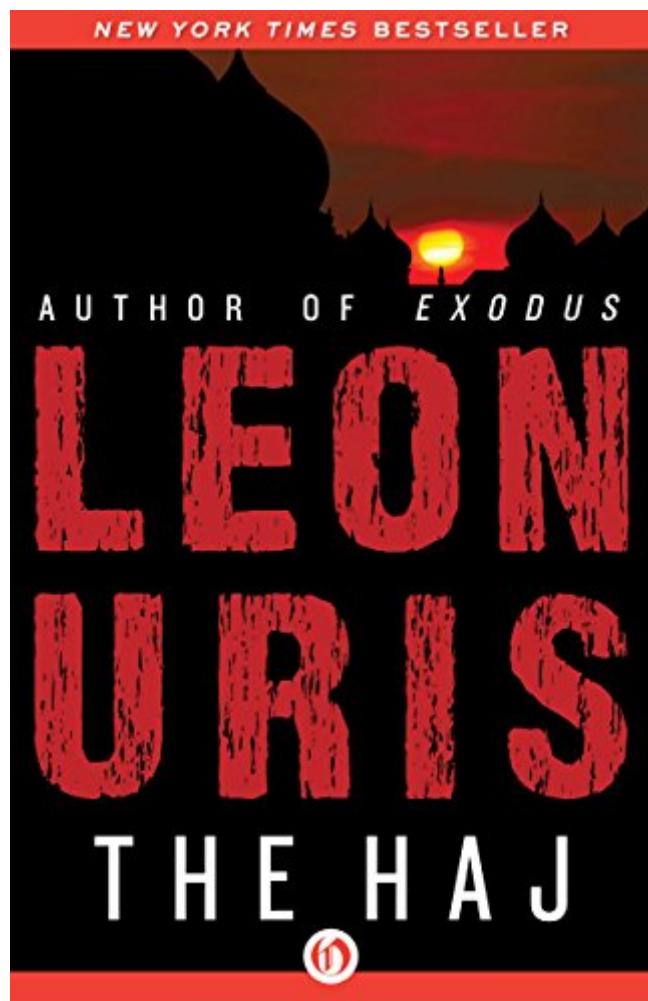


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## The Haj



## Synopsis

A proud Arab family in Palestine struggles to hold on to its identity during the birth of the State of Israel. In the early 1920s, young Ibrahim al Soukori has achieved his dreams of heading his small Palestinian town, becoming a proud father, and making the pilgrimage to Mecca. But his family's journey has just begun, and soon global war and Israel's formation force them on a path to possible dissolution. Ibrahim's sons and daughters squabble and find peace with the nearby kibbutz, suffer betrayals, and hold together even when displaced to distant refugee camps. Written by an author best known for his sympathetic portrayal of Israel's difficult birth, *The Haj* speaks to the history of a troubled region from the perspective of a remarkable Arab dynasty. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Leon Uris including rare photos from the author's estate.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Writing a historical novel about any period of time can be quite a challenge. It requires a balance of facts with the need to tell a compelling story that catches a reader's attention much like any other novel. Usually what happens is that historical novels fall somewhere within the truth/entertainment continuum and will either get criticized for being too factual and boring or on the other hand it gets

blasted for playing fast and loose with historical facts. The stakes get higher if the historical novel takes on something that is particularly controversial or still in the news. Leon Uris' *Haj* is a perfect example. Take a look at all of the reviews from other readers. There are those who blast Uris for being pro-Israel. These people claim that the novel is historically inaccurate and hateful towards Arabs. (Most of these reviews are penned by people who refer to themselves as an .com customer and refuse to identify where they reside.) I'll be the first to admit that this should not be the only book that you should read about the Middle East, but it should be one of the first. First off, eliminate the politics and read this for the great story. There are vivid characters in this book which begin with Haj Ibrahim and the countless others he encounters in his life. Along the way you get a lit bit of everything you would ever want in a novel including love, treachery, suspense and conflict. Along the way you also learn a great deal about the Middle East. Sure some of it is bound to be controversial but that's especially important in the post September 11 world we inhabit. This book is set in the late 1940's but how much has really changed.

Now is the time to read '*The Haj*'. This is a bit long so have patience... Now that more and more people are hearing daily on the news: 'Middle East Crisis', 'Israel', 'Palestinians', 'Suicide bombings', 'Terrorism', 'Fundamental Islamic groups', etc. this book can give a detailed "Big Picture" of the mess that is the Middle-East. It is not enough but a very good introduction. I am an Israeli Jew living in Jerusalem, but first and foremost dear reader, like you - I am a Human Being. Like others living in this country, I see (and feel) what others only see and hear on the news channels (which are always inclined to show what makes good rating). I try my best to understand what it feels like to be not only an Israeli Jew but also an Arab (especially Palestinian) and Moslem, as well as a Christian. While I agree the book is fiction, many details are fact. How do I know? If you lived and studied here for 33 years, if your grandparents were Holocaust victims, if your father fought in all the wars of Israel and if you yourself were a soldier at 18, serving in Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and many of the places mentioned in the book, you too would have a pretty good idea. It is too easy to judge from the comfort of your living room. Having said that, I have Palestinian friends and am fully aware of both their plight and Israel's partial blame for this. However, I have no doubt that the Arab leaders as well as the corrupt Palestinian Authority are 99% to be blamed. They have used (and continue using) the poor Palestinian refugees for their "Jihad" ("Holy War") on Israel and the Jews (p.s. What is so Holy about War?)

"*The Haj*" by Leon Uris is an important book (in print or audio form) for understanding the negative

aspects of Arab culture and little known aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict that the great majority of the media won't share with us. Specifically, "The Haj" is historical fiction about a Palestinian-Arab family before and after the 1948 War for Israeli independence (From about 1922 to sometime around the 1960's or 1970's). Leon Uris wrote this about the book (in the beginning of "The Haj"):"Many of the events in The Haj are a matter of history and public record. Many of the scenes were created around historical incidents and used as a backdrop for the purpose of fiction. There may be persons alive who took part in events similar to those described in the book. It is possible therefore, that some may be mistaken for characters in the novel. Let me emphasize that all of the characters in the Haj are the complete creation of the author, and entirely fictional. The exceptions, of course, are the recognizable public figures who were associated historically with this period, such as David Ben-Gurion, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Abdullah, Yigal Allon, and others."There is no question that this book is fiction regarding the details its' story tells, but the story itself is a real one. Arab refugees did stream out of Israel during the 1948 war and Arab leaders telling them to do so (there are taped broadcasts of these calls) was definitely one of the major causes of the plight of the Palestinian-Arab refugees. There was also very definitely a very active terrorist movement among the Arabs in the Middle East, which survives to the present day (witness groups like Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, the PLO / Palestinian authority, and others).

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