

THREE WISHES

Palestinian
and Israeli
Children Speak

THREE WISHES

Deborah Ellis

Groundwood Books
House of Anansi Press
Toronto
Berkeley

All images are courtesy of the author except for the following: cover (top) © David Turnley/CORBIS/MAGMA, (bottom) © Micah Walter/CORBIS/MAGMA; page 6 © Foundation for Middle East Peace/cartographer Jan de Jong; pages 9, 25, 29, 35, 63, 92, 101 courtesy of Richard Swift; page 22 courtesy of Yad Vashem; page 52 © Dave Bartruff/CORBIS/MAGMA; page 57 AFP/Jaafar Ashtiyeh; page 58 AFP/Fayez Nureldine; page 65 © PENGON; page 74 AFP/Avigail Uzi; page 83 © Reuters NewMedia Inc./CORBIS/MAGMA; page 88 AFP/Eyal Warshavsk; page 95 AFP/Ayman Mansour.

Text copyright © 2004 by Deborah Ellis
Seventh paperback printing 2007

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written consent of the publisher or a license from The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright). For an Access Copyright license, visit www.accesscopyright.ca or call toll free to 1-800-893-5777.

Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press
110 Spadina Avenue, Suite 801, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2K4

Distributed in the USA by Publishers Group West
1700 Fourth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

We acknowledge for their financial support of our publishing program the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Media Development Corporation's Ontario Book Initiative.



Library and Archives Canada Cataloging in Publication
Ellis, Deborah

Three wishes: Palestinian and Israeli children speak / by Deborah Ellis.
ISBN-13: 978-0-88899-554-4 (bound) – ISBN-10: 0-88899-554-7 (bound).
ISBN-13: 978-0-88899-645-9 (pbk.) – ISBN 0-88899-645-4 (pbk.)
1. Arab-Israeli conflict—Juvenile literature. I. Title.
DS119.7.E43 2004 j956.04 C2003-906919-2

Printed and bound in Canada

**In World War I, 15 percent of all
casualties were civilians.
In World War II, 50 percent of all
casualties were civilians.
In 2004, 90 percent of casualties
in war are civilians.**



Introduction

The children and young people in this book share a very small piece of land on the Mediterranean Sea. This land, once called Palestine, is a land sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians, but the area has been at war for more than fifty years.

The genocide that took place during World War II caused many Jews to believe that they could not count on governments in the world to protect them. So they would protect themselves in their own land of Israel, where they could live without fear of persecution or extermination. There was, however, a huge problem. Palestinians, as the Arabs of the land are called, were already living there. Their families had been there for generations, raising crops and livestock, and establishing businesses and cities.

Both Jews and Arabs have deep roots in the area – roots that go back thousands of years. And in the past they have often coexisted peacefully. But problems have arisen in the past hundred years, as Arabs felt that they had a right to the same land that the Jews were granted for their new state.

In 1947 the United Nations created a plan to separate Palestine into two states – one Jewish and one Arab. The Palestinians and the neighboring Arab countries rejected the

plan, but in May 1948, Israel declared its independence and forces from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq invaded, sparking the Israeli War of Independence. When the war ended, Israel controlled most of Palestine, and many Palestinians had fled to neighboring countries or now lived in refugee camps on their own land.

More wars took place, and tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors grew, culminating in 1967 in the Six Day War. By the end of the war Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, and had captured the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. The end result was that Palestine is now divided between Israel and the two areas (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) known as the Palestinian territories. Ever since, the UN has called for Israel to withdraw its forces, but the two sides have been unable to agree on how this might happen.

The ongoing fight over this land means the children who live here spend their lives in a place of constant war. Sometimes this means living with explosions, gunfire and the sound of helicopter gun ships overhead. Sometimes it means having friends blown up when they get on a bus.

The war is impossible to escape. It has divided families, turned neighbors into enemies and made innocent people fear each other.

I spent some weeks in Israel and the Palestinian territories in November and December of 2002. The months preceding my visit had seen a number of suicide bombings by Palestinians, and the Israelis had responded by sending their army into Palestinian villages and refugee camps and placing virtually all Palestinians under house arrest or curfew.

The curfew continued, off and on, during my time in the area, limiting my own movement and canceling many of the interviews I had set up before leaving Canada. It was a good



A view of the land.

lesson on the frustrations faced daily by people living there, when plans made in good faith can be changed in an instant by outside forces.

I asked the children I met to tell me about their lives, what made them happy, what made them afraid and angry, and how the war has affected them. They told me about their wishes for the future. Some of their stories are hopeful. Some are disturbing, even shocking. But they reflect the world these children live in.

Some of the children I talked with by chance, such as when I stopped in at a McDonald's for a cup of coffee, or visited a hospital. Other children were introduced to me by organizations such as those working against house demolitions or assisting Israeli children traumatized by the violence. All of the children had their parent's or guardian's permission to talk with me. Sometimes that permission was revoked when the grown-ups found out I was interviewing both Israelis and Palestinians. Those children do not, therefore, appear in this book.

The war in the Middle East has been going on for so long, and in so many forms, that it often seems as if it will continue

forever. But war, like almost everything else humans do, is a choice. Creating weapons is a choice. Allowing a child to go hungry or to drink poisoned water is a choice. Sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing to stop something that's wrong is a choice.

The children in this book talk about how the choices other people have made have affected their lives. The history of the area and its people is a weight that has been placed, none too gently, on their shoulders.

Deborah Ellis
Toronto, 2004

Since the beginning of the war in the Middle East in 1948, 120,000 people have died. Between September 29, 2000, when the second Intifada, or Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, began, and March 7, 2003, 3,399 people were killed. Of these, 429 were children under the age of eighteen.

Here are their names:

Khalid al-Baziyan, 15
 Mohammed Jamal Mohammed al-Durra, 12
 Samer Tabanjah, 12
 Iyad Ahmed al-Khashee, 16
 Hasan Bakhit, 17
 Musleh Abu-Jarad, 17
 Wa'el Mohammed Qattawi, 16
 Hussam Ismael al-Hamshari, 16
 Mohammed Abu-Assi, 12
 Majdi Samer Maslamani, 15
 Yousef Khalaf, 17
 Sami Hassan Salmi, 17
 Sami Fathi Abu-Jazar, 12
 Moayad Osama Ali Javarish, 14
 Ala'a Bassam Bani Nimreh, 13
 Samer Iweissi, 15
 Tha'er Daoud Mualla, 17
 Mohammed Adel Hasan Abu Tahoun, 16
 Omar Ibrahim al-Buheisi, 16
 Majib Ibrahim Hawamdeh, 15
 Wa'el Hassan a Nashit, 12
 Salah Eddin Fawzi Niejem, 15
 Sa'ed al-Tanbour, 17
 Ashraf Habayeb, 15
 Nidal Zudhi al-Dbeiqi, 17
 Iyad Sami Sha th, 14
 Ala'a Mohammed al-Jawabeh, 14
 Bashir Saleh Mousa Selweit, 15
 Hussni al-Najjar, 14
 Tha'er Ibrahim Abu Zeid, 17
 Ahmad Suleiman Abu-Tayeh, 14
 Mohammed Hajay, 14
 Ibrahim Omar, 14
 Yazan Halayquah, 15
 Khaled al-Khatib, 17
 Rami Ahmad Abdel-Fattah Muae, 15
 Maher Mohammed al-Sa'idi, 16
 Mohammed Nawaf al-Ta'aban, 17
 Wajdi al-Hattab, 13
 Fares Odeh, 14
 Kalil Abu Sa'ad, 15
 Ibrahim Qassas, 13
 Raed Dawoud, 14
 Mohammed Ghali, 15
 Khaled Zahra, 17
 Mohammed Abed Sharab, 17
 Osama Salem Azouqa, 15

Osama Sameer Jarjawi, 17
 Mousa Ibrahim, 14
 Bassel Abu Kammer, 15
 Mahmoud abu Naji, 15
 Yehya Abu Shamaleh, 17
 Sabir Barash, 15
 Mohammed Khater Mohammed Ajleh, 13
 Jadia Abu Kbash, 15
 Ibrahim Abdel Jaadi, 15
 Ahmed Sha'aban, 17
 Muhammed Abu Rayan, 16
 Abdel Dahshan, 14
 Ibrahim Ahmed Othman, 16
 Yasser Nabatite, 16
 Ibrahim Muqannen, 14
 Ayssar Hasseis, 14
 Majdi Abed, 15
 Mahmoud Mansour Adwan, 16
 Mahdi Jaber, 16
 Kareem el Kurd, 14
 Mohammed Abdallah Mashharawi, 14
 Waleed el Badan, 17
 Mohammed el Aya, 12
 Medhat Mohammed Jadallah, 14
 Mahmoud Yehya, 17
 Amar Samir Mashni, 16
 Mu'ataz Telakh, 16
 Salim Mohammed Hamaydeh, 12
 Ahmed Qawasmi, 14
 Mohammed Amin Mohammed Daoud, 17
 Hani al-Soufi, 14
 Arafat Jabarain, 17
 Mu'ath Ahmed Hadwan, 12
 Benyamin Bergman, 15
 Ofir Rahum, 16
 Shalhevet Pass, 10 months
 Eliran Rosenberg-Zayat, 15
 Naftali Lanzkorn, 13
 Yossi Ish-Ran, 14
 Kobi Mendell, 14
 Marina Berkowizki, 17
 Anya Kazachkov, 16
 Katherine Kastaniyade-Talkir, 15
 Alesksei Lupalu, 16
 Mariana Medvedenko, 15
 Irina Nepomneschi, 16
 Yulia Nelimov, 16
 Raisa Nimrovsky, 15
 Liana Sakiyan, 16
 Maria Tagilchev, 14
 Avraham Nahman Nitzani, 17
 Yevgenia Dorfman, 15
 Yehuda Shoham, 5 months
 Ronen Landau, 17
 Michal Raziell, 16
 Malka Roth, 15
 Raiaya Schijveschuurder, 14
 Avraham Yitzhak Schiveschuurder, 4
 Hemda Schijveschuurder, 2
 Tamara Shimashvili, 8
 Jocheved Shoshan, 10
 Aliza Malka, 17
 Shoshana Ben Ishai, 16
 Menashe Regev, 14
 Assaf Avitan, 15
 Israel Ya'akov Danino, 17
 Yair Amar, 13
 Golan Turgeman, 15
 Adam Weinstein, 14
 Ido Cohen, 17
 Omar Khaled Farouq, 10
 Mohammed Sharef, 15
 Safwat Isam Qeshtah, 16
 Issa Ibrahim El Amori, 14
 Ahmed Abdel Razek Abu Huli, 15
 Hussan Imad El Diesi, 15

- Obi Mohammed Daraj, 9
 Mohammed Malmoud Halss, 13
 Murtaja Amir, 17
 Mahmoud Aldrawesh, 11
 Yehya Fathi el Sheikh Eid, 12
 Mahmoud Abu Sheihadeh, 16
 Ahmed Maraheil, 16
 Lo'ay el Tamimi, 11
 Ahmed el Assar, 16
 Sawkat Hassan Alami, 14
 Hamzah Khader Obed, 14
 Rami Mousa Ghareb, 16
 Bara el Sha'er, 10
 Mohamad Mhareb, 11
 Iman Hameed Hijo, 4 months
 Hussam Tafesh, 16
 Mohammed Salem, 15
 Ala Adel e Buji, 15
 Ahmed Saleh Abu el Helou, 17
 Ali Abu Shaweish, 10
 Adel Muqannen, 16
 Ahmed Yassin, 15
 Murad Al Masri, 14
 Khalil Ibrahim Al Mughrabi, 11
 Tariq Abu Dab at, 17
 Rifa Al Nahal, 15
 Bilal Abdel Mun'em, 9
 Ashraf Abdel Mun'em, 6
 Muhamad Subhi Abu Arar, 13
 Enas Zeid, 7
 Muhamad Al-Ajouz, 15
 Ibrahim Saraf, 14
 Tamer Riyad Zo'rab, 17
 Mohammed Samer Abu-Libdeh,
 15
 Balqees Fathi Al-qaida, 12
 Ramzi Khalel Hasonah, 17
 Emad Atta Zo'roub, 15
 Mahmoud Jalal Qeshta, 16
 Mo'aweya Ali Alnahal, 14
- Mohamed Fathi Altarayera, 10
 Mahmoud Ali Soukar, 16
 Musen Fahed Arar, 17
 Reham Abu Elward, 10
 Basel Elmobasher, 13
 Yousef Abayaat, 15
 Ahmad Yousef Abu Mandeel, 17
 Naseer Hani Qur'an, 13
 Fouad Al Dahshan, 17
 Ahmad abu Mustafa, 13
 Mohammed Naem Kareem Al-
 Astal, 13
 Akram Naem Mohammed Al-
 Astal, 6
 Anees Edrees Mohammed Al-
 Astal, 10
 Omar Edrees Mohammed Al-
 Astal, 12
 Mohammed Sultan Mohammed
 Al-Astal, 11
 Wael Ali Radwan, 15
 Aayat Al-Akhras, 17
 Kefah Khaled Ebeed, 14
 Mohammed Abu Marsa, 15
 Borham Ibrahim Al Hemoni, 3
 Shadi Ahmad Arafeh, 13
 Ahmmed Al-Masri, 15
 Yousef Al Najar, 11
 Ammar Mohammed Al Ghalet,
 16
 Yaseer Sami Al Kasbeh, 11
 Mohammed Jam'an Hnedeq, 12
 Ahmad Mohammed Banat, 15
 Mohammed Ahmad Lbed, 16
 Mohammed Al-Madhoun, 16
 Nehemia Amar, 15
 Rachel Thaler, 16
 Liran Nehmad, 3
 Lidor Ilan, 12
 Ya'akov Avraham, 7 months
- Avia Malka, 9 months
 Rachel Levy, 17
 Adi Shiran, 17
 Elmar Dezharielov, 16
 Netanel Riachi, 17
 Avraham Siton, 17
 Hadar Hershkowitz, 14
 Galila Bugala, 11
 Neria Shabo, 16
 Avishai Shabo, 5
 Sarah Tiferet Shilon, 8 months
 Osnat Abramov, 16
 Hadas Turgeman, 14
 Hodaya Asraf, 13
 Yafit Ravivo, 14
 Noy Anter, 12
 Gavriel Hoter, 17
 Yael Ohana, 11
 Karen Shatsky, 15
 Shiraz Nehmad, 7
 Shaul Nehmad, 15
 Oriah Ilan, 18 months
 Avraham Eliahu Nehmad, 7
 Atara Livne, 15
 Gal Ron, 15
 Danielle Shefi, 5
 Sinai Keinan, 5 months
 Gilad Stiglitz, 14
 Adi Dahan, 17
 Shani Avi-Zedek, 15
 Gal Eisenman, 5
 Zvika Shabo, 12
 Yonatan Gamliel, 16
 Linoy Saroussi, 14
 Gaston Perpinal, 15
 Ilan Perlman, 8
 Michael Sharshevsky, 16
 Dvir Anter, 14
 Mohammed Ali Joudeh, 16
 Samer Sami Alkasbeh, 15
- Lo'ai Mohammed Adeli, 15
 Fadi Al'Azizi, 16
 Samir Abu Myala, 13
 Mas'od Abu Jalal, 17
 Muna al-Ja'aysah, 10
 Mohammed al-Nims, 17
 Nurah Jamal Shalhub, 16
 Lu'ay Thabaiah, 16
 Mahmoud al-Talalqah, 7
 Inas Ibrahim Salah, 9
 Ahmad Hashash, 15
 Bara Abu Kwaik, 17
 Mohammed Abu Kwaik, 8
 Arafat al-Masri, 7
 Sa'ed Ali Subaih, 16
 Shayma Emad Al-Masri, 7
 Yousef Shihada, 17
 Tariq Abu Jamoos, 17
 Mahmoud Ma'moun al'Bitar, 9
 Sayyed Faiz Abu Sayfein, 14
 Mahmoud Tayseer Ghanim, 15
 Rawan al-Jabrini, 15
 Amani al Awawdah, 16
 Salem al Awawdah, 9
 Tariq al Awawdah, 8
 Sha'ima Sa'yed Hamad, 11
 Mujahied Abu Shabab, 2
 Mohammed al-Maghibi, 10
 Riham Abu Taha, 4
 Mahmoud Abu Yasien, 13
 Hamadah Akram al-Siqali, 14
 Khaled Ra'rour, 17
 Faiz Khaled Salah, 13
 Issa Da'doub, 15
 Hani Abu Irmali, 16
 Mohammed Hawashien, 13
 Dina Sawaftah, 13
 Rubien Jamil al-Khadour, 15
 Salwa Hamed Dahliez, 12
 Sumaya Najieh Hassan, 6

- Esra Othman, 10
 Asad Faisal Qarini, 10
 Saed Subhi al-Wahesh, 10
 Amjad Ahmad Abdah, 11
 Mofasim Rahal, 16
 Ahied Abu Ebad, 5
 Abdallah al-Shabi, 8
 Azam al-Shabi, 7
 Anass al-Shabi, 4
 Qussi Farah Abu Eishah, 12
 Haitham Abu Shouqa, 16
 Mahmoud Fadel Abu Zahriah, 9
 Tabaruk Jaber Odeh, 4
 Ali Qashier, 14
 Mahmoud Abu Shawqa, 15
 Farah Hikmat Adwan, 4
 Aryn Ziad Thawabtra, 13
 Anwar Hamduna, 13
 Yousef Basseil Zakut, 14
 Ismail Abu Nadi, 13
 Assad Faisal Assan, 12
 Eman Mohammed Abu Khousa,
 17
 Osama al-Jabarien, 16
 Huda Abu Shalof, 2
 Abed Ismail, 11
 Fadi Hassan al-Ajlouni, 7
 Tamar Abu-Serrieh, 9
 Majdi Mohammed Ibrahim, 17
 Salem Sami el-Shaer, 15
 Mohsen Atiyeh Jabr, 17
 Ameer Abu-Seer, 7
 Mohammed Talal Kassab, 17
 Habash Sameer Hanani, 17
 Murad Abu Alkam, 16
 Ali'abu Sitta, 17
 Jamil Abu Aziza, 12
 Ahmed Yousef Abu Aziza, 6
 Firas Hussam al-Sadi, 13
 Sujoud Ahmad Turki Fihmawi, 6
- Abdel Shamlakh, 10
 Bassam al-Sady, 7
 Mohammed Ayes, 17
 Mohammed Ahmad Mubark, 14
 Nour al-Hindy, 2
 Shukri Fa'ed Abdel-Haj, 6
 Moen Ali Al-Adini, 13
 Ahmad Jawad Abu-Radaha, 13
 Iman Shihada, 15
 Ayman Matar, 18 months
 Mohammed Matar, 4
 Diana Matar, 5
 Subhi al-Huwaiti, 4
 Mohammed al-Huwaiti, 6
 Ahmad al-Shawa, 6
 Alaa' Mohammed Matar, 5
 Dina Matar, 2 months
 Saed Hanani, 17
 Niveen Silmi, 3
 Asma Ahmad, 9
 Hamza Dweekat, 13
 Adel Ghiben, 17
 Ayman Basem Fares, 5
 Ayman Zo'roub, 15
 Mohammed Abu Odah, 14
 Nihad Othman al-Hajeen, 17
 Abdel-Hadi al-Hamaideh, 13
 Bahira Daraghmeh, 6
 Osama Daraghmeh, 8
 Sari Suban, 15
 Yazan Abdel Razeq, 15
 Abdel Sadi, 16
 Abdel Hamail, 10
 Abdel Salam al-Gharbali, 14
 Waled al-Mghani, 14
 Gharam Mana, 14
 Rami Barbari, 10
 Mahmoud al-Zaghloul, 10
 Mohammed Zaid, 16
 Ammar Rajab, 16
- Ahman Al-Astal, 17
 Mohammed al-Astal, 15
 Maisa Imad-Zanoun, 12
 Mohammed Asher, 16
 Ihab Al-Mughair, 17
 Thaer al-Hut, 12
 Tawfic Braikeh, 4
 Shayma Shamalah, 7
 Mohammed Hilal, 12
 Ahmad Abu Jafar, 12
 Mahmoud Abu Mour, 16
 Salem Al Shaer, 13
 Fouad Abu Ghali, 15
 Ahmad Anbass, 16
 Eyad Abu Tah, 17
 Nafeth Khaled Mashal, 2
 Mohammed Abu Al Nijah, 8
 Hamed Asad Al-Masri, 4
 Mohammed Taher Iwajan, 17
 Omran Moustafa, 17
 Ibrahim Al Sadie, 17
 Eihab Al Zaqlah, 15
 Amrou Al Qudsi, 15
 Mohammed Balalou, 11
 Abed Allah Al Natsheh, 16
 Jihad Al Faqih, 8
 Abbas Al Atrash, 3
 Hatem Rizek Al Agaleh, 16
 Mo'ataz Kamal Odeh, 16
 Jawad Zidan, 15
 Ala'a Alsadodi, 15
 Nada Madi, 15
 Hanin Abu Sillah, 13
 Mohammed Fekr Braik, 14
 Abed Salameh, 8
 Imran Abu Hamdeyah, 16
 Kamar Abu Hamed, 12
- Smadar Firstater, 16
 Daniel Haroush, 16
 Tom Hershko, 15
 Tal Kerman, 17
 Yuval Mendelevitch, 13
 Elizabeth Katzman, 16
 Abigail Litle, 14
 Azzaf Tzur, 17
 Mohammed Dawas, 16
 Tareq Dawas, 15
 Jihad Abed, 15
 Tareq Abu Jado, 15
 Mohammed Kawarea, 15
 Iyad Abu Sa'er, 12
 Haza'a Al Afifi, 17
 Khaled Salouf, 17
 Ali Taleb Aziz, 7
 Amjad Al Hatab, 16
 Sami Azurba, 17
 Mostafa Odwan, 10
 Hassan Goul, 8
 Adnan Besharat, 13
 Ahmad Zahra, 17
 Ahmad Afanah, 17
 Bara'a Al Afifi, 17
 Mohamad Al Kahlut, 15
 Mahmoud Zaherah, 14
 Nasser Ja'ara, 14
 Ahmad Abou Olwan, 13
 Abed Jad Allah, 9
 Tariq Sadi Aqel, 13
 Ehab Nabahat, 14
 Mohammed Jamal Mohsen, 14
 Thaer Rehan, 13
 Tarek Al Najar, 14
 Imzeh Jabrel Farmot, 17
 Baker Saeed Hawash, 15

THREE WISHES

Palestinian
and Israeli
Children Speak

Artov, 15

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, long before the state of Israel was created, many Jewish immigrants came to Palestine from Russia and Eastern Europe. These immigrants were seeking a place where they could live as Jews, away from the anti-Semitism and persecution that plagued them. Many had lost everything in the pogroms, which were campaigns to destroy Jewish communities. Under the Russian tsar, pogroms were commonplace, but even after the tsar was overthrown in the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Communist regime frequently targeted Jews for abusive treatment. Today, many Jews still move to Israel because of the anti-Semitism in their home countries.



Israel's policy is that any Jewish person has the right to live there. The government encourages immigration, and Israeli society is a mixture of people who are born in the area and those who have come from more than eighty other countries. When these people move to Israel, they are given help to learn Hebrew and to otherwise settle in.

Artov is a recent arrival in Israel. He is touring Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem. Footpaths through the 45-acre park join the museums, art galleries and monuments that commemorate the six million Jews killed by the Nazis.

I have been in Israel only three months. I am from Russia. I miss Russia very much, even though Israel is very beautiful. I especially miss the food. My favorite food is plov, a special dish from Uzbekistan. There are a lot of Russians in Israel, so I can get Russian food here, but it doesn't taste the same as it does at home.

I came to Israel with my family. I have one sister. She is

older. Sometimes she is nice, sometimes she is tiresome. She likes being here, but I think she also misses being at home.

My parents wanted to come here. They wanted to live as Jews in Israel. Even though they loved their home in Russia, they still wanted to be in Israel. A lot of Jews have left Russia and come here.

Russia hasn't liked Jews. Many Jews have been killed there. My grandparents told me about the pogroms, where Jews would be driven from their homes and killed, just because they were Jews. That's why a lot of Russian Jews moved to Israel, so they would have a place where they could live and be safe. Even nowadays, it is not very safe to be a Jew in Russia. We hear stories on the news. Some people put up big signs along the roads. The signs say "Death to Jews," and "Jews are garbage." When someone tries to take them down, the signs blow up, because they have a bomb attached. Jewish cemeteries in Russia have been destroyed, too, and rabbis have been beaten up.

We live in Netanya now. It is on the Mediterranean Sea, north of Tel Aviv. It is lovely to live near the sea, and it is warmer here than in Russia. I like school. It makes me happy to see and learn new things. Phys ed is my favorite subject. I also love playing computer games, particularly one called Dragon.

I came to Yad Vashem today with my teacher. It is a place where Jews who were killed in the Holocaust are remembered. We have been to all the buildings, and now we are in the Historical Museum. This is the last building to see. There are glass cases on the bottom floor of this building with toys children played with in the concentration camps – dolls made out of straw, things like that. Seeing them made me think of what I would play with if I'd been in a camp.

This whole place is like a park. Trails lead through trees



Statues on top of the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem.

from one building to another. Each building is for a different type of memory. The Hall of Remembrance is a big room with a fire burning all the time in the middle of it. On the floor around the fire are the names of the camps where Jews died. The Hall of Names lists the people who were killed.

There is also an old train car, the kind used to ship cattle to the slaughterhouse. This one was used to ship Jews to the camps. It's up on a railway bridge, but the bridge stops, and the car is right on the edge, with nowhere to go.

I feel very Jewish being here, like I am connected to these people, even though my life is very different from the way theirs was. I understand a little better just why my parents wanted to move here.

The Children's Memorial was the hardest to see. You go into it the way you go into a cave. When you first go in, every-

thing is dark and silent. You follow a path, holding onto ropes, until you start to see the lights.

Small candles are lit everywhere, reflected over and over in mirrors, so that it looks like the little lights go on and on. The lights stand for the Jewish children who were killed by the Nazis. The lights look like stars. Above, through a speaker, a quiet voice reads out the names and ages of the children who were murdered.

I can't talk about this anymore just now. I will cry if I do.

Before we moved to Israel, we heard about the war that is going on here now. We knew it would be dangerous, but we wanted to come anyway.

I will become a citizen of Israel and so I will serve in the army. It scares me a bit, thinking of becoming a soldier. We see on the television the terrible dangers soldiers are in. It is frightening what people can do to each other. When I finish with the army, I want to be a veterinarian, or a magician.

I know a little bit about the Palestinians from the news. It seems that they all hate us, but I don't know why. I have not met any yet. It is impossible for us to meet. We are separate people.

My teacher says that two years ago there were a lot of Palestinian students in Israel. She says it was good when Jews and Palestinians could meet and get to know each other a bit, so they wouldn't be afraid of each other. But they don't come into Israeli territory anymore. Now it is too dangerous for them to come. The Jewish people will think they are terrorists, and their own people will think they are traitors. So they stay with their own people, and we stay with ours.

Nora, 12

Nora is a student at the Princess Basma Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children. This is a school where children can receive both an academic education and special treatment for their disabilities. It sits on the top of the Mount of Olives, a high hill overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem. The halls and classrooms of the large white cement building are designed to make it easy for the children to move around on crutches and wheelchairs. The children use their various abilities to help each other down hallways or out to the playground — pushing wheelchairs or providing a stronger shoulder to lean on.



Nora's classroom is down a long ramp to the basement.

I am from Beit Safafa, to the south of Jerusalem, in Palestinian territory. I am a Palestinian.

I have three brothers, but no sister. I wish I did have a sister. I sometimes think about all the things we could do and talk about. If she were close to my age, we could wear each other's clothes. Then it would be like we had twice as many clothes. My brothers are nice, but they are all younger than me, and they can be very noisy. They bother me sometimes. Of course, I bother them right back, but because I'm the oldest, I'm supposed to be better behaved. At least I have my own room. Pink is my favorite color, so I have a lot of pink in my room.

I love my brothers, but they can sometimes give me problems, like the day when I went to shop by myself. I was born with something wrong with my legs. I've always been in a wheelchair. I get around in the chair just fine. The wheels are like my legs.

I'm not supposed to go out by myself because my mother

thinks I won't be able to move fast enough if the soldiers come. There are a lot of soldiers where I live. They watch us all the time. We can't do anything without being watched by them. They carry guns, and they give me nightmares. We would like them to go away, but they don't care about what we want.

The soldiers are always around, but sometimes they move into the streets, and then everybody runs to get out of their way. If they feel like shooting, they will just go ahead and shoot. They don't care if they shoot at a child or an older person.

My mother is afraid they will shoot at me for not getting out of their way fast enough. I think I could throw stones like the other children and still get away quickly, but I can't throw stones if I'm with my mother.

The streets aren't always smooth, though. Sometimes there are a lot of rough places where the army has blown something up. I can't move my chair on my own over places like that. Someone has to push me. My mother doesn't allow me to go out by myself, but I went anyway one day when she wasn't paying attention.

It was fun to be out by myself. I felt scared that she would



A view of the Old City of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

catch me, but it was an adventure, too. I felt brave and scared at the same time.

I went to a little shop not far from our house. I bought some chewing gum. My mother doesn't like me to have chewing gum, either, but I like it, so that's what I bought.

I made it back home without being caught. Everything would have been fine, but then I told my oldest brother what I had done. I wanted to brag, I guess. My brother thinks he's so great. I should have known better. He went and told on me to my mother. She lectured me in front of him, about how I should be smarter than that and set a good example for my younger brothers. I didn't like that, but I did like the gum.

I'm usually late for school, but that doesn't have anything to do with me being in a wheelchair. There's a van that goes to the Palestinian towns and camps and picks up kids like me to come to the school here. We're supposed to be let through the checkpoints because we have a special permit. Even if there is a curfew on, we are supposed to be able to get through, but the soldiers always hold us up. Even though they know us, even though they see the same faces every morning, they still ask for our identification papers. They count all the kids and ask us a lot of questions. They don't care if we're late for school or not.

Many of the kids in my class come late. School is supposed to start at eight-thirty, but kids come in at all times during the morning. It's hard to concentrate with kids coming in all the time. The teachers are often late, too.

We're celebrating Ramadan now. We fast during the day. Not all Palestinians are Muslims, but my family is. At the end of Ramadan, we celebrate Eid. Eid is a wonderful holiday, and I can't wait. First I will go to the mosque with my mother and we will pray together. Then we will go to visit other members of our family.

We can't go to visit my grandparents, though. They live in

a town in the West Bank, and the Israelis won't let us go through the checkpoints to visit them. They live so close to us, just a few miles, but they might as well live far, far away. That's what would make me the happiest, to see my grandparents again. I haven't seen them in over two years.

I don't know any Israeli people other than soldiers, and they are all very mean and very tough. The children are probably the same as the adults. They might be nice like me at the beginning, but they would change. They want our land, and that makes them mean.

I know there are other children in the world who suffer a lot. They get shot at even more than we do, and they get sick and go hungry. Some day I'd like to do something to help them. If I had three wishes I would become a doctor and I would be famous, maybe as a writer. And I would be able to walk.