



Children of Dust: A Portrait of a Muslim as a Young Man

By Ali Eteraz

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“[Eteraz’s] adventures are a heavenly read.” —*O*, the Oprah magazine

“In this supremely assured, lush, and rip-roaring book, Eteraz manages to do the impossible, gliding confidently over the chasm that divides East and West. Wildly entertaining...memoir of the first order.” —Murad Kalam, author of *Night Journey*

Ali Eteraz’s award-winning memoir reveals the searing spiritual story of growing up in Pakistan under the specter of militant Islamic fundamentalism and then overcoming the culture shock of emigrating to the United States. A gripping memoir evocative of *Persepolis*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and the novel *The Kite Runner*, Eteraz’s narrative is also a cathartic chronicle of spiritual awakening. Yael Goldstein Love, author of *Overture*, calls *Children of Dust* “a gift and a necessity [that] should be read by believers and nonbelievers alike.”

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Eteraz opens his memoir with a vivid description of his father promising Allah that if God bestowed him with a son, that boy will become a great leader and servant of Islam. The rest of the book finds Eteraz, whose given name is Abir ul Islam (which translates as Perfume of Islam) trying to come to terms with his father's *mannat*, or covenant, and understand the role that Islam will play in his life as well as the role he will play for Islam. Born in Pakistan but raised in the U.S. from age 10, Eteraz moves easily between describing the holy history and tenets of his faith while exploring and explaining the differences between the Islamic world and Western society. As Eteraz's feelings for Islam change to fit his evolving personal, political and religious views, readers get a glimpse of all aspects of this hot-topic religion, from fundamentalism to reformism, salafism and secularism. A gifted writer and scholar, Eteraz is able to create a true-life Islamic bildungsroman as he effortlessly conveys his coming-of-age tale while educating the reader. When his religious awakening finally occurs, his catharsis transcends the page. (*Oct.*)

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Review

[Eteraz's] adventures are a heavenly read. (O, The Oprah Magazine)

Wildly entertaining, *Children of Dust* is memoir of the first order, as genuinely American as Muslim, unraveling the perilous mystery that is modern Pakistan as only memoir can. Unlike others, Eteraz has truly 'been there,' and we are all the better for it. (Murad Kalam, author of *Night Journey*)

The gripping story of a young man exposed to both the beauty and ugliness of religion. (Laila Lalami, author of *Secret Son*)

A love letter to one man's fading faith, *Children of Dust* is a gift and a necessity, and should be read by believers and nonbelievers alike. Sure to deepen our collective conversation about religion and reason, loyalty and universality, and our geopolitical aims, it's also just plain fun to read. (Yael Goldstein Love, author of *Overture: A Novel* and *The Passion of Tasha Darsky*)

"In *Children of Dust* . . . we follow the journey of a soul determined to reconcile the many worlds that live inside him. In a time rife with cultural misinterpretations and generalizations, sensitive accounts such as *Children of Dust* are invaluable assets." (Laleh Khadivi, novelist, author of *The Age of Orphans*)

An astoundingly frightening, funny, and brave book. At a time when debate and reform in the larger landscape of the Muslim world, and in countries like Pakistan in particular, are virtually non-existent, *Children of Dust* is a call to thought. (Fatima Bhutto, poet and writer)

This elegantly written memoir traces [Eteraz's] relationship with the religion of his birth, from his childhood in Pakistan, where he feared beatings at the madrassa, to adulthood in the U.S. . . . Thoughtful and wry, he offers glimpses of a changing Pakistan and a U.S. immigrant's journey, too. (Booklist)

"A gifted writer and scholar, Eteraz is able to create a true-life Islamic bildungsroman as he effortlessly conveys his coming-of-age tale while educating the reader. When his religious awakening finally occurs, his catharsis transcends the page." (Publishers Weekly)

“A ...complex story of a young man’s journey into the heart of his own faith.... Knowledgeable, humorous and personable, Eteraz is an engaging storyteller.” (San Jose Mercury News)

Compelling. (Washington Post)

“Eteraz’s memoir is a fascinating, elucidating account of Muslim mores and education. In these times when fears of Islam are high, it is well worth reading.” (The Providence Journal)

“Children of Dust is a coming of age story, filled with warmth and humour, but it also explores some very serious questions... a powerful and marvellous personal memoir.” (EnterStageRight.com)

“...Not only for people who are interested in Pakistan or Islamic issues, but for anyone looking for a compelling personal story. Because ultimately, this memoir isn’t about religion but about a fascinating quest for selffulfillment.” (PickledPolitics.com)

“Written with vivid descriptions, a smattering of urdu words and a very strong sense of nationalism... Children of Dust is an apt description of a thinking muslim.” (TheFourthArticle.com)

“Ali’s story is long and heart-rending, sometimes funny, sometimes frustrating, and his willingness to share it makes us all better off in the telling and re-telling as we reflect on our covenants and baggage.” (Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies)

From the Back Cover

An extraordinary personal journey from Islamic fundamentalism to a new life in the west

In this spellbinding portrayal of a life that few Americans can imagine, Ali Eteraz tells the story of his schooling in a *madrassa* in Pakistan, his teenage years as a Muslim American in the Bible Belt, and his voyage back to Pakistan to find a pious Muslim wife. This lyrical, penetrating saga from a brilliant new literary voice captures the heart of our universal quest for identity and the temptations of religious extremism.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Henry Robinson:

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