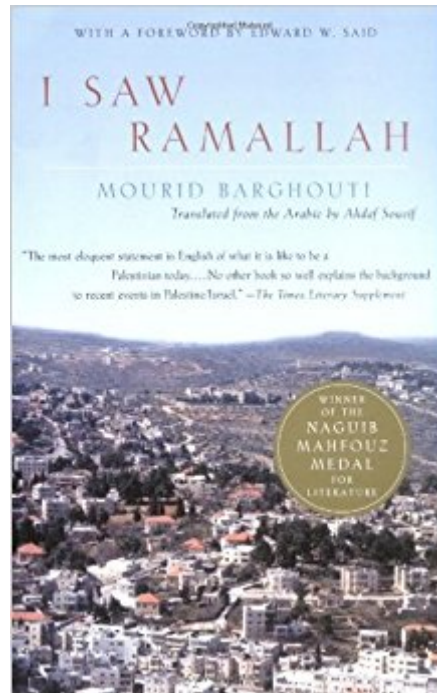




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# I Saw Ramallah



## Synopsis

WINNER OF THE NAGUIB MAHFOUZ MEDAL FOR LITERATURE A fierce and moving work and an unparalleled rendering of the human aspects of the Palestinian predicament. Barred from his homeland after 1967's Six-Day War, the poet Mourid Barghouti spent thirty years in exile—shuttling among the world's cities, yet secure in none of them; separated from his family for years at a time; never certain whether he was a visitor, a refugee, a citizen, or a guest. As he returns home for the first time since the Israeli occupation, Barghouti crosses a wooden bridge over the Jordan River into Ramallah and is unable to recognize the city of his youth. Sifting through memories of the old Palestine as they come up against what he now encounters in this mere idea of Palestine, he discovers what it means to be deprived not only of a homeland but of the habitual place and status of a person. A tour de force of memory and reflection, lamentation and resilience, *I Saw Ramallah* is a deeply humane book, essential to any balanced understanding of today's Middle East.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

You can never go home again. That's the message in this impressionistic memoir by a Palestinian poet returning to the West Bank after 30 years of exile. Barghouti was in Cairo at the university when Israel won the Six-Day War and didn't return home until 1996, when the now-defunct Oslo Accords allowed him to go back. As one might expect, his return to see his birthplace and his family is fraught with problems, as he attempts to reconnect with relatives and friends. The people living in

Ramallah and its physical geography have changed in ways that make Barghouti feel as displaced at home as he does abroad. The changes he blames partly on the weakness of his own people, but mostly on the Israelis. The truth of Palestinian faults "does not absolve the enemy of his original crime...." Indeed, the anger he feels at Israelis on both the left and the right helps explain why the Oslo peace process failed and why peace seems as elusive as ever. But this is as much a personal journey as a political one. Using a poet's eye for detail and language (the book is beautifully translated), Barghouti, who now lives in Cairo, intersperses the story of his homecoming with his history of journeys across the Arab world. "The displaced person becomes a stranger to his memories and so he tries to cling to them." His deft mind and words show how, for many Palestinians, politics have swallowed up the personal. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Poet Barghouti puts a personal face on the plight of displaced Palestinians in this account that is as much politically tinged lament as memoir. Thirty years--and nine volumes of verse--after being deported from his home in Cairo, he was permitted to return to the home of his youth on the West Bank in 1997. "Displacement is like death," he states. "One thinks it happens only to other people." Yet he describes himself as just one of four million displaced Palestinians who have no airline, police, TV, or government. Several months after the Six Days War, when his son was just five months old, Barghouti was taken for "preventative deportation" and separated from his family for most of the next 17 years before being allowed back in Egypt. He targets Anwar Sadat, responsible for the deportation that deprived him of having other children, and various Israeli leaders, who headed the occupation he calls a crime. Interspersed vignettes portraying the author's life are often charming but sometimes confusing in terms of chronology and emphasis--only at midbook is his deportation detailed, and even then it's not fully explained--and repetition dulls the message. Still, this relentless account, first published in 1997 in the Arab world, reflects the acuity and sensitivity of a poet (with an occasional verse included) and provides an underrepresented point of view. Michele LeberCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book is not fiction but it gives a point of view and is very expressively written. I read it along with *My Promised Land* by Ari Shavit and I am so glad I read them both. The styles are very different and they see pretty much the same picture from opposite points of view. I had no idea how much I didn't know about a place that's been in the news so much for so long.

A human face to Palestine from a man with poetic sensibilities. Damn the politics !!! Palestine has a very legitimate argument concerning their rights and the wrongs they suffer daily. Politicians perform in difficult circumstances I understand. But the human face should never be forgotten for both sides. Read the book. Then your views will be influenced by his story. Thank you, Mr.Barghouti for this excellent book

Movingly written prose that betrays Barghouti's primary profession of "poet", this fine book provides the reader with a window into the conflicted life of a Palestinian refugee. Expect the experience of walking in another's shoes.

I enjoyed the book. I was impressed by author ability of story telling

Very poignant and poetic! I enjoyed it and it gave me more understanding into the plight of the Palestinian.

Very good book. Describes the Palestinian refugee feelings when he comes back to the Homeland.

Quality book in fine condition delivered in a timely way. Thanks.

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