



The Language of Tears: My Journey into the World of Shi'i Muslim Women (Islamic Encounter Series)

Bridget Blomfield

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The Language of Tears details the engaging five-year experience of a gifted American scholar throughout her journey teaching and participating in a Shi'a Muslim community in Southern California. As a teacher in a Muslim school, she participates in the lives of Iranian, Iraqi, and Pakistani women as they perform their religious rituals. Initially thought to be an FBI informant, Blomfield builds trust as she participates in every aspect of their lives.

Only a few weeks after she starts teaching, the fifth-grade girls invite her to attend a religious ritual after school. Sitting, covered in black, she starts to engage: hearing the laments of the women, she too starts to weep. She is invited into the women's homes, where they share their hopes, dreams, and fears. She dances at weddings, baby showers, and a Mother's Day "women's only" swim party. She is deeply honored when she is invited to ritually wash and bury an old Iranian woman's body, erupting a love for her own mother and her imminent death. Finally, she travels to Iran for a surreal religious pilgrimage where she becomes Shi'a "in her heart," becoming more fully human.

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