DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the similarities between this “problem” and the historical problems of prejudice in this country against African Americans, Native Americans, and Japanese Americans. What about differences? How do you see the future of Arabs and Muslims in America? What’s our next step?

2. What surprised you most reading this book? Were there any misconceptions you personally had about Arabs or Muslims that were addressed?

3. Which of the individuals profiled here did you most identify with? Why?

4. If you’d been on the bus with Yasmin, would you have defended the woman with the baby? How could that situation have been handled better?

5. One way Jews coped with accepted anti-Semitism was to assimilate as much as possible. Similarly, several people in the book mention either passing as Hispanic or another nationality (ethnicity?). In what ways is this a good tactic? In what ways is it destructive?

6. Discuss your impressions of Brooklyn. In what ways do you think the story would have been different if the author had chosen another location?

7. The author discussed the phenomenon of “middlemen minorities” (p. 122). What are some other examples? How do you think you would fare working extremely hard for a specific, and sometimes short-term, payoff?

8. Omar discusses people’s reaction to his working for Al Jazeera. What is your impression of or opinion about that news organization? Have you ever seen their reporting? If not, what is informing your opinions?

9. It is suggested that congress will eventually have to apologize to Arab Americans for the government’s treatment of them post-9/11. Do you foresee that happening? If so, when? Recall that congress did not officially apologize for slavery until July of 2008. If the government did eventually try to make amends, what would be suitable?