

*The Illusion of Return – a novel by Samir El-Youssef.  
Halban publishers Ltd, 2007.*

*The Illusion of Return is a short novel, concerning the fate of four Lebanese friends, two of whom leave that country for Britain and America and two of whom are struck by personal tragedy emanating from the broader tragedy of Lebanon, squeezed to near-death by a combination of civil war and Israeli occupation.*

*In spite of the fact that Samir El-Youssef is a Palestinian, born in a Lebanese refugee camp, and living in London since 1990, there is nothing predictable about this novel, no overt polemic, or overt politics; The Illusion of Return is a very human story, and one of its strengths is that it shows how, in spite of the difficult situations in which they may live, human beings still have everyday concerns and everyday issues and challenges with which they have to deal.*

*This is a story of resilience, and, in a wholly unexpected way, of hope too, and is well worth reading as a fresh voice emanating from the sad morass that is the modern Middle East.*

*Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh*