

## *The Other, Part II*

I was beginning a new song with my seven-year old student, the youngest in the Sahadi family, in suburban Phoenix. Introducing sharps and flats was fun with "Havah Nagilah", a Jewish folk dance. As the song began, I sensed a presence in the room – it was Mr. Sahadi, whom I had not yet met. Suddenly a terror came upon me, and the hairs on my neck raised up. He's an Arab, and I am teaching his son a Jewish song!

But Mr. Sahadi smiled as I attempted to apologize. He told me he and his family were Palestinian Christians, and hearing "Havah" brought back beautiful memories of just a few years back, when they were farmers in the Sinai. The local people – Christian, Jew, Muslim, Arab, nonbeliever, always helped each other with harvest, and they had huge bonfires and danced arm-in-arm in a circle, doing the *hora*, singing Havah Nagilah at the top of their lungs into the night.

The people historically were neighborly to each other; it was the leaders who made it impossible to remain there; hence, they now resided in the welcome of the United States.

"Thank you, thank you for teaching this song. Play it again, please!"