

My Meeting with the Broken at Cape Town 2010 Judith Mendelsohn, Rood Biola University, California

Introduction

I have been asked by the organizers to speak on “My Meeting with the Broken at Cape Town 2010.” My presentation today is therefore on “Apostates,” specifically the Muslim Background Believers living in the Muslim world, who are suffering from the social death so familiar to Jewish Christians.¹ Muslims, like Jews, have a rich and layered identity that entails much more than religion.

Caught between the Muslim and Christian worlds, these believers suffer because of their extreme isolation. In the Muslim world, this isolation is compounded because indigenous Christian communities fear the consequences—Muslim rage— if they accept a convert into their community. Their already precarious situation can worsen if they are perceived as evangelistic. Historically, many traditional Christians (Catholics, the Orthodox) despise evangelicals because they view them as a threat to their authority and the continuity of their own churches. The tragedy of the new believer who can no longer find acceptance in his own culture is thus compounded by his rejection by local Christians who refuse to welcome and disciple the new believer, or even to accept him as part of their community.

Although we in the West do not have to fear the consequences of accepting Muslim converts into our churches, we often put up barriers to new believers because we are insensitive or threatened by their ethnic identities. This problem has been at the very heart of the troubled relationship of the Jew to the Church. The Messianic Movement’s complicated relationship with the Church ought to sensitize us to the issues facing Muslim Background Believers and to help to equip and support them in the work that they have to do.

Theological Imperatives

In Cape Town, the scripture at the focus of our daily inductive bible study was Ephesians. Each day began with a study of one of the chapters, but to our great sorrow, the central issue of the book— place of the Jewish people in the Church— was suppressed. Those who led the study missed the richness of Ephesians in helping us to understand the wonderful ethnic diversity of the Church. Ephesians points to the difference between the nations and the Ecclesia in this dispensation, one of the central themes of the Congress that failed to deal with the question of Israel and the Church. The role of Jewish Christians in the Church is clear: we are to remind them of the First Commandment and the Jewishness of Christ. We must warn our brothers and sisters in Christ to exegete it properly, bringing attention to the marvelous passage Ephesians 3:6 (NIV) *This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

Moreover, the Congress did not recognize Judaism as a world religion, and the issues of the Jewish people and Israel were avoided entirely. The leaders of the Congress made room for reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis in the name of Christ, but the

participants literally broke down the walls constraining interaction between Israelis and Arabs. The deep message of the Congress was left unspoken: that in God our particular identities are redeemed and we are made One. The Cape Town Commitment makes it clear that the Church is a special creation constituted by a plurality of redeemed individuals from all of the nations, adopted as heirs along with Israel. Reconciliation is possible only when the true identities of the reconciled are mutually recognized.

When we first became involved in LCJE, I had no intention to focus upon my Jewish identity and my mission in the Church as a Jewish woman. Yet I have discovered that that has been my calling. Our trip to Hungary in 2007 was the first step in a series of trips that would take me to Bethlehem, Cape Town, and Portland in a quest to relate to my sisters and brothers in Christ as a Jewish believer. I had to go through a process of healing and redemption in order to be able to realize my true identity in Christ. This journey has helped me to understand that I am a daughter of the Great King, who stands on equal ground with my brothers and sisters in the Church; that I am no more or less important than any other believer, and that my particular identity brings a unique color into the palette that makes up the Church. And it is in this context that I will be sharing with you about what I have learned about the suffering of Muslim Background Christians and how our experiences in Jewish evangelism enable us to play an empathetic and compassionate role in helping those who are isolated and alone in a world that hates.

Earlier last year I travelled to Bethlehem to attend the “Christ at the Checkpoint” theology of the land conference organized by the Bethlehem Bible College. For the most part, the “fulfillment” theology sounded awfully close to the “replacement theology” that has blinded so many Christians to the truth of God’s work in history. It became clear to me that the teaching of Holocaust history has affected the way that some Palestinian Christians now perceive Israelis. And, as a Jewish believer, I was deeply blessed by the organizers’ invitation to serve the bread at the communion service held in Bayt Sahour, the Shepherds’ Fields, where Boaz saw Ruth and where the shepherds beheld the star. The reconciliation of Jewish and Palestinian Christians symbolized by my participation in that service helped me to understand the importance of the Jewish Christian presence and witness to the Church. Later that year, I travelled to Washington, D.C. to speak to the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation, a Palestinian-American group dedicated to fostering improved understanding between Palestinian Christians, especially Catholics and Orthodox, and American Christians. When I brought my message about the uses of memory and history in the honest telling of the narrative the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, I was actually booed. However, many more people thanked me for speaking about the Holocaust and the Arab-Israel conflict. My message today is one of hope and redemption, for our faith is in the God of our Fathers, who helps us to overcome the darkness of our world. Our calling is to help others from non-Christian backgrounds to find their true identities in Christ. And I believe that only when Muslim Background and Arab Christians understand Jesus as the God of Israel will they find restoration and blessing; and that only when Jewish Christians accept and love their neighbors as themselves will they find acceptance in the Middle East.

Muslim doubts: The Qur’an, the children of Israel, and the One True God

Today many Muslim scholars and laypeople have doubts about the historicity of the Qur'anic text and the sources of Islamic law. Specifically, Muslims are repudiating the Islamist doctrines of abrogation, dissimulation, jihad, and the uncreated Qur'an. Muslims, responding to Christian apologetics, are reexamining the issues of the identity and attributes of Allah, the sonship of Jesus, the resurrection, and the relationship of the Qur'an and the Bible. As a result, many Muslim scholars have become atheists, while many others have joined the millions of Muslims who have a modern, secular outlook on politics, culture, and society.² The untold story is that Muslims are turning to the God of Israel and accepting His son, Yeshua, as their savior. The Bible, Tony Maalouf has shown in his *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel*, contains good news for Muslims and Arabs, and increasingly, they are finding their true identity in the God of Israel.³ And in the process, their view of the Jewish people, Israel, and the future is radically transformed. Our witness in the Muslim world must begin there.

In Cape Town, Brother Daniel said that he believes that Muhammad was trying to help his people to recognize the God of Israel, and so he works with Muslim scholars to provide answers about their own salvation and ultimate fates. BD discussed Jewish and Muslim belief in good deeds vs. sin as an impediment to the faith. He said, "We get scholars who believe that Christ is God, but they must be pulled aside from their society for six months to two and a half years for intensive bible study. The Word of God is powerful, so we bring them to our homes, where there are no distractions like TV or radio, but only the Bible and the Qur'an. We study every day for eight hours with scholars who accept the sonship of Christ, even though they are rebelling against those whom they love and trust the most." He says that the evidence of their changed lives can only be achieved by using the Qur'an, because that is where they begin, and can be shown that the People of the Book are respected as resources for Muslims who want to know more about the God of the Bible. Thus Brother Daniel defended contextualization in order to teach from Genesis about sin, and from there, the entire gospel. For example, he shows Muslims that the power of choice led to man's sinful condition because he chose to separate from God.

An Ethiopian scholar at an LCJE panel suggested that evangelicals in his country have created unnecessary tensions with a believers' movement indigenous to the country because of their position on contextualization an issue also discussed in a multiplex on ethnicity and contextualization featuring Joseph Cummings of Yale Divinity School. Many MBB believers found this multiplex extremely offensive because they were being "talked to" instead of being heard. Their feeling was that they have been willing to stand up for their faith and to take the consequences, and that they should have been given the opportunity to address these issues directly.

Anxieties about syncretism are behind evangelical concerns about contextualization, to the extent that one of the LCWE participants actually stated "culture is sin" believing that the gospel is opposed to culture. This evangelist insists that MBBs reject any expression of Muslim culture upon joining the Church. However, as we have learned, social identity construction depends upon shared cultural values and expressions, and if these are stripped away the loss of identity weakens the ability of the believer, of Jewish or Muslim

background, to participate fully in the Church or to be a bridge to the community of their birth.

Just as there is no commensurability between the *Shoah* and the *Nakba*, there is no commensurability between the Bible and the Qur'an. Nevertheless, because the Qur'an refers to and includes biblical material, to reinterpret the Qur'an through the lens of Scripture is a legitimate evangelistic method. Repudiating unbiblical material in the Qur'an is important, but it is equally important to understand what the Qur'an contains that is biblical so that it can be used as a bridge to Muslims. Brother Daniel put it this way, "We use the Qur'an to destroy faith in the Qur'an as the inspired word of God." It can also be said, "We use the Qur'an to build faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God," as has been the experience of Muslims like former PLO sniper Taysir Abu Sa'ada turned-evangelist and Egyptian businessman and Muslim convert Nehad Saeed, who seeks to reconcile Egyptians and Israelis through Sinai tourism.⁴ Bridging the Qur'an with the Bible is an effective evangelistic method, and the work of Christian apologetics in Qur'anic studies is transforming the entire field.⁵

Muslim politics, repression, and the quest for freedom

The past thirty years have seen enormous demographic changes in the Islamic world, the result of political instability, war, shifting labor markets, high birth rates and improving healthcare. Increasing literacy and improved communication networks have accelerated change in the Muslim world, leading to rapidly accelerating social change and deepening conflict. Repression and revulsion against extremism have led to the stunning number of converts to Christianity in the Muslim world.

Although the story of those conversions is largely untold, we all have all been witnesses to the revolutions that have swept through the Arab world this spring. Popular anger at the ruling regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Iran, and Iraq have destabilized the Arabs, caught between the human aspiration for freedom and democracy and the reactionary forces of Islamism and totalitarianism. Those of us who attended the Congress last fall were not surprised by these events. In our sessions with our Arab Christian and Muslim Background brothers and sisters in Christ, we heard the grief and pain of new believers who have been suffering for choosing to follow Christ and of the persecuted in the lands of jihad. Among the most poignant were the cries of our Libyan brothers, who shared about the oppression that they were experiencing under the Ghaddafi regime.

The story of the persecution of Christians from Pakistan and Turkey to Sudan Egypt, and Nigeria has made it into the Western media. For the most part, Muslim states have not executed those accused of apostasy. Nevertheless, the persecution of Christian converts from Islam has become an internationally recognized, global human rights problem. Most of cases of persecution go unreported because of fear and intimidation. Twenty years ago there were few known cases of Muslim conversions to Christianity in the Islamic world. Today, however, Muslim Background Believers are now living openly in almost every majority-Muslim country.

While many Christians are concerned for the persecuted church in the Islamic world, few understand the cultural and social shock of apostasy. Jewish believers can understand what the Muslim Background Believer experiences in ways that their brothers and sisters in the faith cannot. For Jews as for Muslims, one's identity is shaped by religion and belief that affect every sphere of life. Family and community are the source of identity, and the renunciation of socially and culturally defined norms has serious psychological, social, economic, and cultural effects which add up to what is called social death: the stigmatizing, ostracism, and persecution that can lead to despair, and, literally to death. In Cape Town, believers from Turkey and Libya in particular shared their distress about the reality of social isolation that often leads MBBs to return to Islam, or, even more tragically, to commit suicide.

In his session in Cape Town, Turkish human rights specialist Ziya Meral stated that, "Converts are seen as morally reprehensible" by Muslims, especially Shiites, who view them as unclean. He pointed to the similarity of the situation of Turkish MBBs to Japanese believers whose suffering is depicted in the famous novel *Silence* by Endo. Like the Japanese converts, he said most MBBs in Turkey abandon their faith out of loneliness and despair. He criticized the doctrinal shallowness and heresies that are circulating in the churches, which he tied to the failure to disciple new believers into churches that are "self-referential" rather than planted in Christ and his Word. He criticized ministries for "sprinkling an alien message with a few Arabic words" with the goal of conversion without dealing with ethnic hatreds, some of it defined in theological terms, among Christians towards Muslims. He emphasized the fear that faces many Middle Eastern Christians. What can we do to reach out to them to encourage and disciple them, fellowship with them, and bear their burdens with them?

Meral exhorted the Church to develop "a new vision between the Horizon of the Text and the Horizon of Identity." Today, he said, "the global politics of fear prevent us from understanding the times we live in which have led to the dehumanization of Muslims"; the modern missions movement of the 20th century is no longer a viable method in the 21st century in the context of new technologies, where the need for discipleship and fellowship is so urgent; and finally, that we must understand the churches as "social enclaves" which can perpetuate "ethnic violence through a sociology of hatred." He reminded us of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's observation that "the line of evil runs through the human heart" and that we must be vigilant and circumspect to ensure that the gospel will not be used for evil purposes. Meral's sense of connection with the great Jewish thinkers Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas illuminates the shared intellectual legacy of MBBs and JBBs raised in secular societies: our shared sense of being "the Other," social pariahs excluded on account of "difference." Despite these our human inadequacies, God is still moving and changing hearts.

The growing presence of Muslim background believers in the Islamic world has accelerated the internal Muslim debate over literalism vs. contextualism, law vs. reason, freedom vs. works, democracy vs. clerical rule. The political position of religious minorities generally has deteriorated in the Middle East as Christians find themselves slipping from favored positions in secular states into *dhimmitude* and persecution as

second-class citizens in Islamist societies. As indigenous Christian communities have dwindled in the Muslim world, political and socioeconomic conflict has led to the destruction of churches, riots, and massacres. These dynamics have changed the landscape of the human rights front worldwide.

The Christian need not stand by, feeling helpless about the persecution and suffering of believers. Just as the Apostle Paul knew his rights under Roman Law, Christians must know their rights as well. There are a number of non-governmental organizations working to alleviate the suffering of Christians worldwide. Well-known Christian ministries working in the field of religious freedom include the International Justice Mission, Voice of the Martyrs, and Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the Hudson Institute, and the Institute for Global Engagement. The founder of Human Rights Watch has established a new organization, called Advancing Human Rights, because of the failure of the latter to fulfill its mandate.

“My motivation to start a new organization is that I believe that human rights organizations are failing to report human rights abuses in a fair, accurate, non-partisan manner,” [Robert] Bernstein told the [Jerusalem] *Post*. “There was none of their outrage in the reporting of closed Arab societies that the world is now aware of as the people of these societies try to throw off their tyrannical governments. I also believe that the misreporting of human rights abuses that occur in asymmetrical war is doing great damage to democratic societies having to fight in these wars – this is particularly true in their reporting on civilian death in wartime.”⁶

However, the fight for religious freedom and the rights of apostates in the Muslim world is in its infancy.⁷ We must join that fight.

An important resource for understanding the issues facing MBBs

One of the best resources for Christians interested in the cause of persecuted MBBs is a study commissioned by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) “a human rights organisation which specialises in religious freedom, works on behalf of those persecuted for their Christian beliefs and promotes religious liberty for all.” Written by Turkish MBB Ziya Meral, *No Place to Call Home: Experiences of Apostates from Islam—Failures of the International Community*⁸ is based on in-depth field research in six countries, legal surveys of Muslim-majority states, and theological surveys of current and traditional Islamic thought.”⁸ In his foreword to the report, Jonathan Aitken, President of Christian Solidarity Worldwide writes,

The issue of religious conversion is both deeply sensitive and hotly debated. It arouses strong emotions in both proponents and antagonists for a number of reasons, not least because it is inseparable from questions of individual and community identity. The right to change religion or belief lies at the very heart of the right to freedom of religion or belief. During the formulation of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a lengthy discussion on the question of religious conversion resulted in the wording “the right to have or to

adopt a religion or belief of his choice”, which was eventually adopted without dissent from any State. The right to adopt a religion of one’s choice, the right to change religion and the right to maintain a religion are unequivocally protected according to universally accepted international standards and are not subject to any limitation. It is discouraging and unacceptable that violations and limitations of this aspect of the right to freedom of religion still occur on a regular basis. In the year marking the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, it is fitting that this report should be made available, addressing as it does such a core human right, which has received disappointingly little prominence over the last 60 years from the international community.

I welcome this report on the human rights abuses suffered by apostates from Islam as a much-needed addition to the relatively scarce literature concerning the right to change religion or belief. It is my hope that this report will encourage further writings and debate in this field, in order to contribute to the universal establishment of a climate where States meet their obligations to ensure the freedom of religion or belief for all.”⁹

The greatest strength of the study is Meral’s careful treatment of this important area of human rights law historically and in the contemporary world. All too often, polemical materials about the Qur’an and Islam used by Christians are marred by errors. Most egregious is the frequent claim that Allah is the Moon God, not the God of Abraham, followed by a shallow and distorted understanding of Islamic law. The CSW study is extremely important because it treats Islamist ideologies properly within the context of the challenges of the contemporary world.

Meral points out that the issue of apostasy remains important in Islamic society for two reasons:

Firstly, because contemporary Islamic governments find themselves using secular and other European models of law and governance, they feel the need to assert the difference of shari’a in certain areas in order to demonstrate the Islamic identity of the state. ...Secondly, reluctance to punish the apostate could be used against the rulers by opposition groups and religious fundamentalists. If governments appear to be giving in to the West by not applying shari’a on such a taboo subject, they will face domestic political consequences. Although the contemporary international reality means that Islamic countries do not usually apply the death penalty, states actively persecute converts by placing them in vulnerable situations where they are open to attack by extremists or must endure social pressure.¹⁰

Israel’s ongoing battle to be accepted by her neighbors is tied directly to the struggle for freedom in the Middle East. Meral points to this battle, writing

We are now witnessing a new wave of post-national calls by Islamist groups demanding the global implementation of an Islamic order. Just as political Islam emerged from the failures of secular nation building exercises, global radical and

militant Islamism emerged from the current failure of political Islam to deliver prosperity and political superiority.

Within the popular narratives of a ‘clash of civilizations’ between the World of Islam and the West, there are calls for the re-instatement of the caliphate, militancy, and the full application of shari’a law. The elusive and utopian calls of these groups, such as Hizb al-Tahrir, often include enforcement of the death penalty for apostates.

The global vision and network of such groups, being devoid of tangible local political aims, undermine the power of state officials to maintain control within their societies. These groups declare the leaders of Muslim countries as betrayers of Islam, or puppets controlled by the ‘Crusaders’ or ‘Zionists.’ Respected scholars, their institutions and grand muftis are all perceived as bowing down to the demands of ‘sold-out’ politicians. Thus, even when contemporary Muslim scholars speak against temporal punishment for apostasy, the Islamists see this as betraying the truth of Islam.

...[T]hese trends have resulted in the emergence of a global jihad, which no longer has to await orders and regulations from a Muslim ruler in line with Islamic tradition. Rather it encourages individuals to see militant jihad as a personal religious duty that calls on them to define the boundaries of their action for themselves.

These untraditional formulations, which are not part of modern political systems, make advocacy and the enforcement of human rights incredibly difficult. We are witnessing a breakdown of the traditional power structures of the issuance and implementation [of judicial opinions]. Radical groups and individual actors use their own initiative to apply the law by following leaders of their local communities and [unauthorized opinions] issued on the internet.... The outcome for apostates can be fatal, as converts from Islam are vulnerable targets in their communities, who often end up as the victims of a global Manichean battle.¹¹

Meral’s familiarity with the Muslim discourse on apostasy enables him to give us a nuanced understanding of the issues:

An increasing number of contemporary Muslim thinkers, particularly those residing in the West, have called for a re-evaluation of the shari’a position on the death penalty for apostasy and a return to a more faithful interpretation based on the Qur’an. Although the views of these reforming scholars are encouraging, traditional views on apostasy continue to dominate popular Muslim opinion.¹²

Meral explains that in Arabic, the terms *irtidad* and *riddah* are used interchangeably for “apostasy” which can be understood in three ways:

Firstly, it is used for Muslims who are declared heretical for doctrinal or political

reasons, despite retaining Islam as their religion. They can be accused of committing *kufur*, unbelief, because they hold beliefs that contradict or differ from the theological convictions of their particular societies. For example, the founder of the Hanafi school of shari'a law, Abu Hanifa (699–767 CE), was accused of unbelief and imprisoned and tortured for his different views. Muhammad Isma'il al-Bukhari (810-870 CE), the compiler of the most respected Hadith collection, was declared an apostate during his lifetime, even though his work is today referred to as one of the most important sources of Islamic theology. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE), an influential philosopher and Sufi, was declared an apostate and his books burnt. In Pakistan, membership of the Ahmadiya sect is officially banned and declared as apostasy. Radical or extremist groups regularly brand rulers of Muslim societies, and Muslims who do not follow their extremist views, as apostates.¹³

Thus, a charge of apostasy can be made when a Muslim criticizes established Islamic authorities or leaders. This danger is the greatest threat to democracy and freedom in the Muslim world.

The second use of the term denotes those who follow a religion or belief that was established after the birth of Islam, since they do not acknowledge the supremacy and finality of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, Baha'is are considered apostates and are often persecuted in the Islamic world.¹⁴

Our focus is upon the third meaning of the term: “those who leave Islam for another religion. Individuals who do so are called *murtadd*,” apostate. Meral explains:

Owing to the religious demography of the Middle East and North Africa, most religious conversions are between Christianity and Islam. An extremely small number of Muslims have converted to the Baha'i faith or have become Jehovah's Witnesses, and there are hardly any known converts to Judaism, Hinduism or Buddhism.¹⁵

Historically, under Islamic law, the People of the Book—Jews and Christians—were protected and self-governing religious minorities (*dhimmis*) who paid a special poll tax in exchange for being permitted to live under Islamic rule and not having to serve in the Muslim armies. After the First World War and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, allied with Germany, the Muslim world went through a period of secularization and nationalism, during which time new Islamic political ideologies emerged. The establishment of military regimes throughout the Middle East in the period following WWII saw the height of the Arab Nationalist period, when Christian minorities gained power and influence.

Ethnic and historical Christian communities in the Middle East and North Africa enjoy[ed] relative freedom and protection. Yet Christians who were born as Muslims but converted to Christianity later in life are subjected to a wide range of abuses on the basis of their apostasy alone. Therefore, any survey of apostasy in the

Middle East and North Africa will inevitably focus on apostates from Islam to Christianity.¹⁶

We often hear about Islamist interpretations of the Shari'ah in the West, usually referencing specific punishments. However, “[f]or most modern, secular Muslims, the language of Shari'ah means faithfulness to Islam and Islamic values in the face of increasingly aggressive cultural and economic [Westernization] and globalization.”¹⁷ For Muslims, “it also symboli[z]es a longing for a fair, just and godly society in the face of high levels of corruption in Muslim countries as well as a perceived moral decay among the younger Muslim generations.”¹⁸

The CSW report surveys the codification of laws regarding apostasy in specific Muslim countries and provides a great deal of data on the issue of religious freedom in the Muslim world, making it a tremendous resource for the Church. Apostasy laws vary widely in the Muslim world.

Two countries, Sudan and Malaysia, have codified laws prescribing the death penalty for apostasy, and one country, Egypt, has legislation on apostasy which allows for the marriage of an apostate to be annulled and can result in the loss of inheritance and custody rights.

In Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Iran, where the death penalty for apostasy is not codified, death remains a real possibility for the apostate on the basis of their application of shari'a. In other countries where shari'a is used to govern personal status matters, such as in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Yemen, apostates face serious penalties, such as the annulment of marriage, termination of citizenship, confiscation of identity papers and the loss of further social and economic rights. Apostates are also penalised under other laws, such as ‘insulting Turkishness’ in Turkey, the blasphemy laws in Pakistan, contempt of religion in Egypt and treason in Iran.¹⁹

However, like political dissidents,

Apostates are subject to gross and wide-ranging human rights abuses including extra-judicial killings by state-related agents or mobs; honour killings by family members; detention, imprisonment, torture, physical and psychological intimidation by security forces; the denial of access to judicial services and social services; the denial of equal employment or education opportunities; social pressure resulting in loss of housing and employment; and day-to-day discrimination and ostracism in education, finance and social activities. The affect of all this on the personal lives of apostates and their families can be significant and far-reaching. As the number of apostate communities has significantly increased in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia over the past twenty years, human rights abuses have been more regularly reported.²⁰

The experiences of apostates in Muslim countries are blatantly at odds with their rights as

guaranteed under international law. Most Muslim nations are members of the UN and have ratified international human rights treaties. However, these nations and the international community have failed in their duty to uphold the rights of apostates by neglecting to guarantee their personal safety and their full and fair participation in society. CSW “calls on Muslim nations, the international community, the UN and the international media to resolutely address the serious violations of human rights suffered by apostates.”²¹

Until recently, apostasy has been largely an abstract debate in academic arenas. It has

been used as a rhetorical tool to criticise Islam in the public arena by a host of different interest groups. It has been brought to the table as a fundamental problem in ongoing Western debates on immigration, social cohesion and terrorism amongst other issues. In the Middle East, apostasy has been used by secular or liberal thinkers and activists to challenge the ruling Islamic elites in Iran or ultra-conservative expressions of Islamic faith across the region.²²

“In response,” explains Meral,

Muslim organisations, scholars and public thinkers have sought to defend Islam’s reputation. They have argued that the ‘true message’ of Islam on apostasy does not legitimise the death penalty. A common thread in their argument is that apostasy has been used as part of an Islamophobic campaign to portray a negative image of Islam and Islamic societies.²³

However,

Both the rhetorical attacks on Islam and the explanations given by Muslims have exclusively focused on the issue of the death penalty. Consequently, the issue has seemed to reach a premature conclusion. It is now clear that the death penalty is rarely applied by today’s Islamic governments and an increasing number of modern Islamic scholars question the legitimacy of traditional views that promote the death penalty.²⁴

The central point of the CSW report is that

By limiting the debate on apostasy to the death penalty, the international community has failed to address the gross human rights violations suffered by apostates. Apostates are subject to wide-ranging human rights abuses including extra-judicial killings by state-related agents or mobs; honour killings by family members; detention, imprisonment, torture, physical and psychological intimidation by security forces; the denial of access to judicial services and social services; the denial of equal employment or education opportunities; social pressure resulting in loss of housing and employment; and day-to-day discrimination and ostracism in education, finance and social activities. Concrete steps to end these serious human rights abuses have yet to be included in a full conversation on apostasy.²⁵

The report includes all of the important international texts concerning human rights and religious freedom: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Human Rights Committee General Comment 22, Article 18, Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 1981. In addition the report contains rich Selected Reports of Recent Apostasy Cases, Selected UN Human Rights Texts on Religious Freedom, Islamic Human Rights Texts, Islam and Shari'a in Islamic Constitutions, and a full listing of Qur'an Verses on Religious Freedom.

Meral's discussion of Islamic human rights and religious freedom is the greatest resource to the Church. His perspective on these issues is extremely important because they give us insight into how modern Muslims view them. He represents Islam not as an essentialized religion with jihad at its heart, but as a complex blend of traditions and viewpoints. He draws attention to the fact that

[d]espite the support given to the U[n]iversal Declaration of Human Rights] and ratification of the I[n]ternational Covenant on Civil and Political Rights] by a majority of Muslim states, Muslim scholars and radical groups across the Islamic world have raised objections. Although Muslim diplomats were present during the negotiations of both documents, they were criticized as a Western colonial imposition of non-Islamic values on the Islamic world.²⁶

He explains,

From a purist theological point of view, no man-made law can override the principles given by Allah. This assumption remains the dominant discourse and a logical outcome of a belief system that regulates not only individual piety but society as well. Although the teachings of the Qur'an do not necessarily conflict with modern principles of freedom and a growing number of Muslim scholars are calling for a critical re-evaluation of Islamic tradition. Nevertheless, any evocation of international law to address human rights abuses in Islamic countries inevitably provokes strong theological criticism and accusations of neo-colonialism.²⁷

Moreover, Meral explains that

there is a significant gap between such a theological reaction and political reality, which can be seen at both state and individual levels. Given the inter-dependent nature of the world, economically and politically, isolationist policies are no longer feasible. Even the conservative Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not immune from this effect. King Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, believed that his "kingdom will survive only insofar as it remains a country difficult of access [sic], where the foreigner will have no other aim, with his task fulfilled, but to get out." However, in an official Saudi government statement made in May 2004, King Fahd declared that "we are part of this world and cannot be disconnected from it. We cannot be mere

spectators while the rest of the world is progressing toward a new global system.”²⁸

It is critical to the success of Christian intercession on behalf of MBBs to realize that

[w]hile the conceptual difficulty of adhering to international law and adjusting to the secular and non- Islamic international structures continues to occupy Muslim theologians, politicians have already developed a sophisticated framework by which efforts to appease both domestic and international scenes hang in the balance. In the sphere of human rights, the majority of Muslim countries have signed, or ratified, international treaties that grant the individual the right to choose his or her religion, although some have chosen to enter reservations based on shari’a against this and other rights.²⁹

While “[r]uling elites regularly appeal to Islam and use shari’a... for their own political legitimization” they do not do so with the sense of the shari’a generally understood in a literal sense by Western opponents of Islam.³⁰

The theological rhetoric for defending Islam, therefore, provides a convenient escape from international and domestic reaction to the treatment of citizens. Nevertheless, the legal obligations these countries are under and the conditions they accept in receiving foreign aid, together with the presence of international NGOs and the media, challenge the strong and often unaccountable power they exercise.³¹

It is extremely important that we understand that

[T]his political reality, in contrast to purist theological conclusions, is having a profound effect on the way today’s Muslim population view human rights. Most of the world’s Muslims live under oppressive regimes that assert excessive force and deny civil rights in sustaining their sovereignty. As people have become more aware of the rights they have under international law, the popularity of human rights among Muslims has increased. Many Muslims have begun using international law to defend their rights.³²

Although he wrote the report in 2008, Meral’s understanding of the mood in the Muslim world was quite prescient of what we have seen in 2011. He emphasized that the modernization

... of the Islamic world has resulted in improvement in key areas, such as the development of women’s rights and the increasing political, social and economic participation of women, thus demonstrating how modern Muslim societies are willing to adopt contemporary attitudes, even though the pace of adaptation and implementation may seem slow or non-existent to the outsider. In economics, the break from Islamic tradition in economics has been the fastest. Recent developments in ‘Islamic banking’ by Western and Islamic finance groups is clear evidence of how creatively Islamic principles can be actualised today. Similar modernising efforts can be seen in the increasing theological support for democracy

and in the integration of Muslim communities into the more secular societies of Europe and North America.³³

He concludes that

The disparity between traditional theological reasoning and modern socio-political life provides an open door, not only for reform, but also for advocacy on behalf of those who are persecuted on the basis of their beliefs. However, the issue of whether a Muslim has the right to choose his religion continues to be the one key area where contemporary values and traditional Islamic teaching clash, and where there appears to be minimal possibility of imminent change.³⁴

That is all the more reason for Christians in the West to make religious freedom in the Muslim world an issue. Clearly, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion will secure political freedom for all of the inhabitants of the Muslim world.

Pastor Ameal Haddad and The Religious Freedom Resolution³⁵

Talbot Seminary graduate Pastor Ameal Haddad has been distributing “The Resolution on Religious Freedom” that he wrote following the attack of 9/11. The problem of religiously inspired violence in the Muslim world against Christians led him to write the resolution and to bring it to religious authorities throughout the Arab world for their signatures. Beginning with a letter of support from Pope John Paul II, he travelled to Egypt to meet with the Shaykh (Senior Cleric) Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi of Al-Azhar, the oldest university in the world and the most prestigious institution of Sunni Islam. ”Dr. Tantawi, who has previously served as the Grand Mufti of Egypt, argued that apostates should be left alone and not punished unless they actively pose a threat against Islam.”³⁶

Pastor Haddad brought the resolution to Tantawi, who signed it in his presence. In addition, Muslim clerics in Morocco and Kuwait have also signed the resolution, which has also received a great deal of attention in the Arab media.

Meral reports,

Similarly, the progressive Grand Mufti of Egypt, Ali Gomaa, stated on a US *Washington Post-Newsweek online forum, Muslims Speak Out*, that Muslims were free to change their religion. He said it was a sin which does not have an earthly punishment but will be punished by God on the Day of Judgment. This statement, coming from a senior cleric, could have substantial influence on the world’s Sunni population.

However, it didn’t take long before Dar al-Iftaa, Egypt’s highest body for delivering opinions on Islam, retracted the comments attributed to the Grand Mufti. The council alleged that the Grand Mufti had in fact said that “Islam forbids Muslims from renouncing their faith...and that if a Muslim did they would be committing a mortal sin” and that “apostasy is a kind of subversion and a sort [sic] of crime that

requires punishment". The fact that the Grand Mufti's comments were immediately retracted and 'corrected' is a clear indication of the continuing tension between a dominant literal reading of the Qur'an and the growing presence of Muslim intellectuals publicly challenging it. Any Muslim leader speaking out on this issue runs the risk of being deemed an apostate himself by fellow Muslims.³⁷

The recent demonstrations for revolution and democracy in the Middle East have given us a tantalizing indication that there is popular support for freedom, and, at the same time, that the repression and totalitarianism still overshadow the region. The fact that Pastor Haddad's resolution has garnered such public interest in religious freedom in the Muslim world should inspire us as we advocate for Christian rights and freedom of religion in Muslim lands.

In this paper, I have focused upon the causes of Christian suffering in the Muslim world, and what can be done to come alongside those who are suffering. Christian strategies for aiding Muslim Background Believers suffering as apostates in Muslim societies are legal and pedagogical: as in New Testament days Christians have to know the law and cultural context where they live in order for their witness to be heard. Just as in the days of Jesus, new believers must become disciples, edified in their walk with the Lord by their elders in the faith. We also have to campaign to change the Muslim view of apostasy: that accepting 'Isa/Yesu'a as Messiah and King is the true form of submission to the will of God.³⁸ A redemptive view of Islam based upon critical studies of the Qur'anic text and the traditional corpus of Islamic law that corrects the errors of Muslim hermeneutics is already well underway. Christians must be at the forefront of this burgeoning field in order to work effectively in Muslim contexts.

We must provide a network of homes and places where new believers can be fed and sheltered, enjoying fellowship with their brothers and sisters in the faith. We must worship together, study together, eat together, stay with one another, becoming good neighbors to all so that our witness will shine before men. And Jewish believers must welcome and edify their new brothers and sisters in the faith as part of the universal Ecclesia; if the Jewish people are not present in the churches, the churches will disappear. Holocaust education has led to growing acceptance of Israel in the Muslim world as Muslims learn about the connection between fascism and Islamism, the Bible and the Qur'an.³⁹ The Ecclesia cannot exist without the presence of the Jewish people and the peoples of the world together under the Lordship of Yeshua. We all have a stake in this truth, because we are commanded to love our neighbors. For the sake of Christ, we must all join together to support freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in the Muslim world.

Appendix I: The Religious Freedom Resolution

This resolution is motivated by the existence of religious hate crimes.

The resolution puts in writing what leaders from all walks of religious beliefs have given verbal assent to.

This resolution codifies the public statements into a form that can hold us all accountable for our words.

The religious community of the world can no longer allow the politicalization of our God given right to believe and live in peace.

Therefore, this resolution will foster religious tolerance, the right to faith, freedom of speech, and freedom from reprisal or persecution.

We therefore hold all religious and political leaders to their words of peace.

We agree that the answer to religious disagreements is dialogue and/or debate without violence, or violent responses.

This resolution does not seek to be political nor ecumenical. It does not intend to convert or compare nor interpret religions. It is not racially or nationally oriented.

We Resolve that:

We understand that there are extremes in every religion.

We therefore agree that violence of any kind to exercise a religious point or to cause conversion is unacceptable.

Representatives from religions throughout the world that are connected by our common humanity and personal belief in their creator, hereby resolve to honor, respect, and acknowledge every individual's right to their faith in the creator.

Therefore, we resolve that the inalienable rights of all individuals shall be respected.

We believe that each religion lived out by individuals or an organization has the right to peacefully present its view of theology, people, and the hereafter.

All National and religious entities have the right to proclaim their religious beliefs and to debate them in any open forum without violence.

We recognize the individual's right to believe in the religion of their choice.

Men and women everywhere have the God given right to convert or not to convert to any religion without harm from any other religion or national politic.

We agree that no opposing religion or nation has the right to interfere in the religious service of another.

The individual has the right to debate the facts about his or her religion without fear of reprisal.

Every individual has the right to hear and to be heard. A citizen of the world has the right to know the facts about their religious beliefs and have access to their holy books.

Every person no matter what religion, race, or nationality has the right to live at peace with their neighbor no matter what their faith.

Each individual from any religion has the right to listen to another individual.

No one has the right to interfere or disrupt a religious service.

Every seeker has the right to enter a religious service for their own exploration of knowledge.

They all want others to know what they know.

We, therefore, assert that all people have a divine right to share what they know and to live at peace with the results.

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Appendix II Qur'anic Verses Cited by MBB Nehad Saeed to support his thesis that the Qur'an, recognizes the Jewish right to sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Surah 21 Al-Anbiya (The Prophets) Part 17 verses 78-82

•21:78 And David and Solomon, when they once ruled with regard to someone's crop that was destroyed by another's sheep, we witnessed their judgment. And remember David and Solomon, when they gave judgment in the matter of the field into which the sheep of certain people had strayed by night: We did witness their judgment.

•21:79 We granted Solomon the correct understanding, though we endowed both of them with wisdom and knowledge. We committed the mountains to serve David in glorifying (God), as well as the birds. This is what we did. To Solomon We inspired the (right) understanding of the matter: to each (of them) We gave Judgment and Knowledge; it was Our power that made the hills and the birds celebrate Our praises, with David: it was We Who did (all these things).

•21:80 And we taught him the skill of making shields to protect you in war. Are you then thankful? It was We Who taught him the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence: will ye then be grateful?

•21:81 For Solomon, we committed the wind gusting and blowing at his disposal. He could direct it as he wished, to whatever land he chose, and we blessed such land for him. We are fully aware of all things. (It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Solomon, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We do know all things.

•21:82 And of the devils there were those who would dive for him (to harvest the sea), or do whatever else he commanded them to do. We committed them in his service.

Surah 38. Sad (Saad) Part 23 verse 26

38:26 O David, we have made you a ruler on earth. Therefore, you shall judge among the people equitably, and do not follow your personal opinion, lest it diverts you from the way of GOD. Surely, those who stray off the way of GOD incur severe retribution for forgetting the Day of Reckoning.

Surah 27. An-Naml (The Ant) Part 19 verse 1-2, 42-44

17:1 Most glorified is the One who summoned His servant (Muhammad) during the night, from the Sacred Masjid (of Mecca) to the farthest place of prostration,* whose surroundings we have blessed, in order to show him some of our signs. He is the Hearer, the Seer.

17:2 Similarly, we gave Moses the scripture, and rendered it a beacon for the Children of Israel that: "You shall not set up any idol as a Lord and Master beside Me."

27:42 When she arrived, she was asked, "Does your mansion look like this?" She said, "It seems that this is it." (Solomon said,) "We knew beforehand what she was going to do, and we were already submitters."

27:43 She had been diverted by worshiping idols instead of GOD; she belonged to disbelieving people.

27:44 She was told, "Go inside the palace." When she saw its interior, she thought it was a pool of water, and she (pulled up her dress,) exposing her legs. He said, "This interior is now paved with crystal." She said, "My Lord, I have wronged my soul. I now submit with Solomon to GOD, Lord of the universe."

Surah 43. Al-Zukhruf (The Embellishment) Part 25 verse 46

For example, we sent Moses with our proofs to Pharaoh and his elders, proclaiming: "I am a messenger from the Lord of the universe."

Surah 44. Ad-Dukhan (Smoke) Part 25 verse 30-33

44:30 Meanwhile, we saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating persecution.

44:31 From Pharaoh; he was a tyrant.

44:32 We have chosen them from among all the people, knowingly.

44:33 We showed them so many proofs, which constituted a great test.

Surah 2. Al-Baqarah (The Cow) Part 1 verses 49-50, 57-58, 79, 133, 136, 142-145, 159-160, 174-175, 246-252 [Long citations provided for context, underlined verses chosen by Sayyid Saeed].

2:49 Recall that we saved you from Pharaoh's people who inflicted upon you the worst persecution, slaying your sons and sparing your daughters. That was an exacting test from your Lord.

2:50 Recall that we parted the sea for you; we saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people before your eyes.

2:51 Yet, when we summoned Moses for forty nights, you worshiped the calf in his absence, and turned wicked.*

2:52 Still, we pardoned you thereafter that you may be appreciative.

2:53 Recall that we gave Moses scripture and the statute book, that you may be guided.

2:54 Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, you have wronged your souls by worshiping the calf. You must repent to your Creator. You shall kill your egos. This is better for you in the sight of your Creator." He did redeem you. He is the Redeemer, Most Merciful.

2:55 Recall that you said, "O Moses, we will not believe unless we see GOD, physically." Consequently, the lightning struck you, as you looked.

2:56 We then revived you, after you had died, that you may be appreciative.

2:57 We shaded you with clouds (in Sinai), and sent down to you manna and quails: "Eat from the good things we provided for you." They did not hurt us (by rebelling); they only hurt their own souls.

2:58 Recall that we said, "Enter this town, where you will find as many provisions as you like. Just enter the gate humbly, and treat the people nicely. We will then forgive your sins, and increase the reward for the pious."

2:59 But the wicked among them carried out commands other than the commands given to them. Consequently, we sent down upon the transgressors condemnation from the sky, due to their wickedness.

2:60 Recall that Moses sought water for his people. We said, "Strike the rock with your staff." Whereupon, twelve springs gushed out therefrom. The members of each tribe knew their own water. Eat and drink from GOD's provisions, and do not roam the earth corruptingly.

2:61 Recall that you said, "O Moses, we can no longer tolerate one kind of food. Call upon your Lord to produce for us such earthly crops as beans, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions." He said, "Do you wish to substitute that which is inferior for that which is good? Go down to Egypt, where you can find what you asked for." They have incurred condemnation, humiliation, and disgrace, and brought upon themselves wrath from GOD. This is because they rejected GOD's revelations, and killed the prophets unjustly. This is because they disobeyed and transgressed.

2:62 *Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. (Italics mine)*

2:63 *We made a covenant with you, as we raised Mount Sinai above you: "You shall uphold what we have given you strongly, and remember its contents, that you may be saved."*

2:64 *But you turned away thereafter, and if it were not for GOD's grace towards you and His mercy, you would have been doomed.*

2:65 *You have known about those among you who desecrated the Sabbath. We said to them, "Be you as despicable as apes."*

2:66 *We set them up as an example for their generation, as well as subsequent generations, and an enlightenment for the righteous.*

2:67 Moses said to his people, "GOD commands you to sacrifice a heifer." They said, "Are you mocking us?" He said, "GOD forbid, that I should behave like the ignorant ones."

2:68 They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us which one." He said, "He says that she is a heifer that is neither too old, nor too young; of an intermediate age. Now, carry out what you are commanded to do."

2:69 They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us her color." He said, "He says that she is a yellow heifer, bright colored, pleases the beholders."

2:70 They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us which one. The heifers look alike to us and, GOD willing, we will be guided."

2:71 He said, "He says that she is a heifer that was never humiliated in plowing the land or watering the crops; free from any blemish." They said, "Now you have brought the truth." They finally sacrificed her, after this lengthy reluctance.

2:72 You had killed a soul, then disputed among yourselves. GOD was to expose what you tried to conceal.

2:73 We said, "Strike (the victim) with part (of the heifer)." That is when GOD brought the victim back to life, and showed you His signs, that you may understand.

2:74 Despite this, your hearts hardened like rocks, or even harder. For there are rocks from which rivers gush out. Others crack and release gentle streams, and other rocks cringe out of reverence for GOD. GOD is never unaware of anything you do.

2:75 Do you expect them to believe as you do, when some of them used to hear the word of GOD, then distort it, with full understanding thereof, and deliberately?

2:76 And when they meet the believers, they say, "We believe," but when they get together with each other, they say, "Do not inform (the believers) of the information given to you by GOD, lest you provide them with support for their argument concerning your Lord. Do you not understand?"

2:77 Do they not know that GOD knows everything they conceal, and everything they declare?

2:78 Among them are gentiles who do not know the scripture, except through hearsay, then assume that they know it.

2:79 Therefore, woe to those who distort the scripture with their own hands, then say, "This is what GOD has revealed," seeking a cheap material gain. Woe to them for such distortion, and woe to them for their illicit gains.

2:80 Some have said, "Hell will not touch us, except for a limited number of days." Say, "Have you taken such a pledge from GOD - GOD never breaks His pledge - or, are you saying about GOD what you do not know?"

2:81 Indeed, those who earn sins and become surrounded by their evil work will be the dwellers of Hell; they abide in it forever.

2:82 As for those who believe, and lead a righteous life, they will be the dwellers of Paradise; they abide in it forever.

2:83 *We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship except GOD. You shall honor your parents and regard the relatives, the orphans, and the poor. You shall treat the people amicably. You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat)." But you turned away, except a few of you, and you became averse.*

2:84 *We made a covenant with you, that you shall not shed your blood, nor shall you evict each other from your homes. You agreed and bore witness.*

2:85 *Yet, here you are killing each other, and evicting some of you from their homes, banding against them sinfully and maliciously. Even when they surrendered, you demanded ransom from them. Evicting them was prohibited for you in the first place. Do you believe in part of the scripture and disbelieve in part? What should be the retribution for those among you who do this, except humiliation in this life, and a far worse retribution on the Day of Resurrection? GOD is never unaware of anything you do.*

2:86 *It is they who bought this lowly life at the expense of the Hereafter. Consequently, the retribution is never commuted for them, nor can they be helped.*

2:87 *We gave Moses the scripture, and subsequent to him we sent other messengers, and we gave Jesus, son of Mary, profound miracles and supported him with the Holy Spirit. Is it not a fact that every time a messenger went to you with anything you disliked, your ego caused you to be arrogant? Some of them you rejected, and some of them you killed.*

2:88 Some would say, "Our minds are made up!" Instead, it is a curse from GOD, as a consequence of their disbelief, that keeps them from believing, except for a few of them.

2:89 When this scripture came to them from GOD, and even though it agrees with, and confirms what they have, and even though they used to prophesy its advent when they talked with the disbelievers, when their own prophecy came to pass, they disbelieved therein. GOD's condemnation thus afflicts the disbelievers.

2:90 Miserable indeed is what they sold their souls for - rejecting these revelations of GOD out of sheer resentment that GOD should bestow His grace upon whomever He chooses from among His servants. Consequently, they incurred wrath upon wrath. The disbelievers have incurred a humiliating retribution.

2:91 When they are told, "You shall believe in these revelations of GOD," they say, "We believe only in what was sent down to us." Thus, they disbelieve in subsequent revelations, even if it is the truth from their Lord, and even though it confirms what they have! Say, "Why then did you kill GOD's prophets, if you were believers?"

2:92 Moses went to you with profound miracles, yet you worshiped the calf in his absence, and you turned wicked.

2:93 We made a covenant with you, as we raised Mount Sinai above you, saying, "You shall uphold the commandments we have given you, strongly, and listen." They said, "We hear, but we disobey." Their hearts became filled with adoration for the calf, due to their disbelief. Say, "Miserable indeed is what your faith dictates upon you, if you do have any faith."

2:94 Say, "If the abode of the Hereafter is reserved for you at GOD, to the exclusion of all other people, then you should long for death, if you are truthful."

2:95 They never long for it, because of what their hands have sent forth. GOD is fully aware of the wicked.

2:96 In fact, you will find them the most covetous of life; even more so than the idol worshippers. The one of them wishes to live a thousand years. But this will not spare him any retribution, no matter how long he lives. GOD is seer of everything they do.

2:97 Say, "*Anyone who opposes Gabriel should know that he has brought down this (Quran) into your heart, in accordance with GOD's will, confirming previous scriptures, and providing guidance and good news for the believers.*"

2:98 *Anyone who opposes GOD, and His angels, and His messengers, and Gabriel and Michael, should know that GOD opposes the disbelievers.*

2:99 We have sent down to you such clear revelations, and only the wicked will reject them.

2:100 Is it not a fact that when they make a covenant and pledge to keep it, some of them always disregard it? In fact, most of them do not believe.

2:101 *Now that a messenger from GOD has come to them,* and even though he proves and confirms their own scripture, some followers of the scripture (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) disregard GOD's scripture behind their backs, as if they never had any scripture.*

2:102 They pursued what the devils taught concerning Solomon's kingdom. Solomon, however, was not a disbeliever, but the devils were disbelievers. They taught the people sorcery, and that which was sent down through the two angels of Babel, Haroot and Maroot. These two did not divulge such knowledge without pointing out: "This is a test. You shall not abuse such knowledge." But the people used it in such evil schemes as the breaking up of marriages. They can never harm anyone against the will of GOD. They thus learn what hurts them, not what benefits them, and they know full well that whoever

practices witchcraft will have no share in the Hereafter. Miserable indeed is what they sell their souls for, if they only knew.

2:103 If they believe and lead a righteous life, the reward from GOD is far better, if they only knew.

2:104 O you who believe, do not say, "Raa`ena"* (be our shepherd). Instead, you should say, "Unzurna" (watch over us), and listen. The disbelievers have incurred a painful retribution.

2:105 Neither the disbelievers among the followers of the scripture, nor the idol worshipers, wish to see any blessings come down to you from your Lord. However, GOD showers His blessings upon whomever He chooses. GOD possesses infinite grace.

2:106 When we abrogate any miracle, or cause it to be forgotten, we produce a better miracle, or at least an equal one. Do you not recognize the fact that GOD is Omnipotent?

2:107 Do you not recognize the fact that GOD possesses the kingship of the heavens and the earth; that you have none besides GOD as your Lord and Master?

2:108 Do you wish to demand of your messenger what was demanded of Moses in the past? Anyone who chooses disbelief, instead of belief, has truly strayed off the right path.

2:109 Many followers of the scripture would rather see you revert to disbelief, now that you have believed. This is due to jealousy on their part, after the truth has become evident to them. You shall pardon them, and leave them alone, until GOD issues His judgment. GOD is Omnipotent.

2:110 You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat). Any good you send forth on behalf of your souls, you will find it at GOD. GOD is seer of everything you do.

2:111 Some have said, "No one will enter Paradise except Jews or Christians!" Such is their wishful thinking. Say, "Show us your proof, if you are right."

*2:112 Indeed, those who submit themselves absolutely to GOD alone, while leading a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.**

2:113 The Jews said, "The Christians have no basis," while the Christians said, "The Jews have no basis." Yet, both of them read the scripture. Such are the utterances of those who possess no knowledge. GOD will judge them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding their disputes.

2:114 Who are more evil than those who boycott GOD's masjids, where His name is commemorated, and contribute to their desertion? These ought not to enter therein except fearfully. They will suffer in this life humiliation, and will suffer in the Hereafter a terrible retribution.

2:115 To GOD belongs the east and the west; wherever you go there will be the presence of GOD. GOD is Omnipresent, Omniscient.

2:116 They said, "GOD has begotten a son!" Be He glorified; never! To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth; all are subservient to Him.

2:117 The Initiator of the heavens and the earth: to have anything done, He simply says to it, "Be," and it is.

2:118 Those who possess no knowledge say, "If only GOD could speak to us, or some miracle could come to us!" Others before them have uttered similar utterances; their minds are similar. We do manifest the miracles for those who have attained certainty.

2:119 We have sent you* with the truth as a bearer of good news, as well as a warner. You are not answerable for those who incur Hell.

2:120 Neither the Jews, nor the Christians, will accept you, unless you follow their religion. Say, "GOD's guidance is the true guidance." If you acquiesce to their wishes, despite the knowledge you have received, you will find no ally or supporter to help you against GOD.

2:121 Those who received the scripture, and know it as it should be known, will believe in this. As for those who disbelieve, they are the losers.

2:122 O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I blessed you more than any other people.

2:123 Beware of the day when no soul will help another soul, no ransom will be accepted, no intercession will be useful, and no one will be helped.

2:124 Recall that Abraham was put to the test by his Lord, through certain commands, and he fulfilled them. (God) said, "I am appointing you an imam for the people." He said, "And also my descendants?" He said, "My covenant does not include the transgressors."

2:125 *We have rendered the shrine (the Ka`aba) a focal point for the people, and a safe sanctuary. You may use Abraham's shrine as a prayer house. We commissioned Abraham and Ismail: "You shall purify My house for those who visit, those who live there, and those who bow and prostrate."*

2:126 *Abraham prayed: "My Lord, make this a peaceful land, and provide its people with fruits. Provide for those who believe in GOD and the Last Day." (God) said, "I will also provide for those who disbelieve. I will let them enjoy, temporarily, then commit them to the retribution of Hell, and a miserable destiny."*

2:127 *As Abraham raised the foundations of the shrine, together with Ismail (they prayed): "Our Lord, accept this from us. You are the Hearer, the Omniscient.*

2:128 "Our Lord, make us submitters to You, and from our descendants let there be a community of submitters to You. Teach us the rites of our religion, and redeem us. You are the Redeemer, Most Merciful.

2:129 *"Our Lord, and raise among them a messenger to recite to them Your revelations, teach them the scripture and wisdom, and purify them. You are the Almighty, Most Wise."*

2:130 *Who would forsake the religion of Abraham, except one who fools his own soul? We have chosen him in this world, and in the Hereafter he will be with the righteous.*

2:131 *When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I submit to the Lord of the universe."*

2:132 *Moreover, Abraham exhorted his children to do the same, and so did Jacob: "O my children, GOD has pointed out the religion for you; do not die except as submitters."*

2:133 Had you witnessed Jacob on his death bed; he said to his children, "What will you worship after I die?" They said, "We will worship your god; the god of your fathers Abraham, Ismail, and Isaac; the one god. To Him we are submitters."

2:134 Such is a community from the past. They are responsible for what they earned, and you are responsible for what you earned. You are not answerable for anything they have done.

2:135 *They said, "You have to be Jewish or Christian, to be guided." Say, "We follow the religion of Abraham - monotheism - he never was an idol worshiper."*

2:136 Say, "We believe in GOD, and in what was sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs; and in what was given to

Moses and Jesus, and all the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters."

2:137 If they believe as you do, then they are guided. But if they turn away, then they are in opposition. GOD will spare you their opposition; He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

2:138 Such is GOD's system, and whose system is better than GOD's? "Him alone we worship."

2:139 Say, "Do you argue with us about GOD, when He is our Lord and your Lord? We are responsible for our deeds, and you are responsible for your deeds. To Him alone we are devoted."

2:140 Do you say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs were Jewish or Christian? Say, "Do you know better than GOD? Who is more evil than one who conceals a testimony he has learned from GOD? GOD is never unaware of anything you do."

2:141 That was a community from the past. They are responsible for what they earned, and you are responsible for what you earned. You are not answerable for anything they did.

2:142 The fools among the people would say, "Why did they change the direction of their Qiblah?"* Say, "To GOD belongs the east and the west; He guides whoever wills in a straight path."

2:143 We thus made you an impartial community, that you may serve as witnesses among the people, and the messenger serves as a witness among you. We changed the direction of your original Qiblah only to distinguish those among you who readily follow the messenger from those who would turn back on their heels. It was a difficult test, but not for those who are guided by GOD. GOD never puts your worship to waste. GOD is Compassionate towards the people, Most Merciful.

2:144 We have seen you turning your face about the sky (searching for the right direction). We now assign a Qiblah that is pleasing to you. Henceforth, you shall turn your face towards the Sacred Masjid. Wherever you may be, all of you shall turn your faces towards it. Those who received the previous scripture know that this is the truth from their Lord. GOD is never unaware of anything they do.

2:145 Even if you show the followers of the scripture every kind of miracle, they will not follow your Qiblah. Nor shall you follow their Qiblah. They do not even follow each others' Qiblah. If you acquiesce to their wishes, after the knowledge that has come to you, you will belong with the transgressors.

2:146 Those who received the scripture recognize the truth herein, as they recognize their own children. Yet, some of them conceal the truth, knowingly.

2:147 This is the truth from your Lord; do not harbor any doubt.

2:148 Each of you chooses the direction to follow; you shall race towards righteousness. Wherever you may be, GOD will summon you all. GOD is Omnipotent.

2:149 Wherever you go, you shall turn your face (during Salat) towards the Sacred Masjid.* This is the truth from your Lord. GOD is never unaware of anything you all do.

2:150 Wherever you go, you shall turn your face (during Salat) towards the Sacred Masjid; wherever you might be, you shall turn your faces (during Salat) towards it. Thus, the people will have no argument against you, except the transgressors among them. Do

not fear them, and fear Me instead. I will then perfect My blessings upon you, that you may be guided.

2:151 (Blessings) such as the sending of a messenger from among you to recite our revelations to you, purify you, teach you the scripture and wisdom, and to teach you what you never knew.

2:152 You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.

2:153 O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.

2:154 Do not say of those who are killed in the cause of GOD, "They are dead." They are alive at their Lord, but you do not perceive.*

2:155 We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.*

2:156 When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to GOD, and to Him we are returning."

2:157 These have deserved blessings from their Lord and mercy. These are the guided ones.

2:158 The knolls of Safa and Marwah are among the rites decreed by GOD. Anyone who observes Hajj or `Umrah commits no error by traversing the distance between them. If one volunteers more righteous works, then GOD is Appreciative, Omniscient.

2:159 Those who conceal our revelations and guidance, after proclaiming them for the people in the scripture, are condemned by GOD; they are condemned by all the condemners.

2:160 As for those who repent, reform, and proclaim, I redeem them. I am the Redeemer, Most Merciful.

2:161 Those who disbelieve and die as disbelievers, have incurred the condemnation of GOD, the angels, and all the people (on the Day of Judgment).

2:162 Eternally they abide therein. The retribution is never commuted for them, nor are they reprieved.

2:163 Your god is one god; there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

2:164 In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that roam the ocean for the benefit of the people, the water that GOD sends down from the sky to revive dead land and to spread in it all kinds of creatures, the manipulation of the winds, and the clouds that are placed between the sky and the earth, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand.

2:165 Yet, some people set up idols to rival GOD, and love them as if they are GOD. Those who believe love GOD the most. If only the transgressors could see themselves when they see the retribution! They will realize then that all power belongs to GOD alone, and that GOD's retribution is awesome.

2:166 Those who were followed will disown those who followed them.* They will see the retribution, and all ties among them will be severed.

2:167 Those who followed will say, "If we can get another chance, we will disown them, as they have disowned us now." GOD thus shows them the consequences of their works as nothing but remorse; they will never exit Hell.

2:168 O people, eat from the earth's products all that is lawful and good, and do not follow the steps of Satan; he is your most ardent enemy.

2:169 He only commands you to commit evil and vice, and to say about GOD what you do not know.

2:170 When they are told, "Follow what GOD has revealed herein," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents did not understand, and were not guided?

2:171 The example of such disbelievers is that of parrots who repeat what they hear of sounds and calls, without understanding. Deaf, dumb, and blind; they cannot understand.

2:172 O you who believe, eat from the good things we provided for you, and be thankful to GOD, if you do worship Him alone.

2:173 He only prohibits for you the eating of animals that die of themselves (without human interference), blood, the meat of pigs, and animals dedicated to other than GOD. If one is forced (to eat these), without being malicious or deliberate, he incurs no sin. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

2:174 Those who conceal GOD's revelations in the scripture, in exchange for a cheap material gain, eat but fire into their bellies. GOD will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution.

2:175 It is they who chose the straying instead of guidance, and the retribution instead of forgiveness. Consequently, they will have to endure Hell.

2:176 This is because GOD has revealed this scripture, bearing the truth, and those who dispute the scripture are the most ardent opponents.

2:177 Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.

2:178 O you who believe, equivalence is the law decreed for you when dealing with murder - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. If one is pardoned by the victim's kin, an appreciative response is in order, and an equitable compensation shall be paid. This is an alleviation from your Lord and mercy. Anyone who transgresses beyond this incurs a painful retribution.

2:179 Equivalence is a life saving law for you, O you who possess intelligence, that you may be righteous.

2:190 You may fight in the cause of GOD against those who attack you, but do not aggress. GOD does not love the aggressors.

2:191 You may kill those who wage war against you, and you may evict them whence they evicted you. Oppression is worse than murder. Do not fight them at the Sacred Masjid, unless they attack you therein. If they attack you, you may kill them. This is the just retribution for those disbelievers.

2:192 If they refrain, then GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

2:193 You may also fight them to eliminate oppression, and to worship GOD freely. If they refrain, you shall not aggress; aggression is permitted only against the aggressors.

2:242 GOD thus explains His revelations for you, that you may understand.

2:243 Have you noted those who fled their homes - though they were in the thousands - fearing death? GOD said to them, "Die," then revived them. GOD showers His grace upon the people, but most people are unappreciative.

2:244 You shall fight in the cause of GOD, and know that GOD is Hearer, Knower.

2:245 Who would lend GOD a loan of righteousness, to have it repaid to them multiplied manifold? GOD is the One who provides and withholds, and to Him you will be returned.

2:246 Have you noted the leaders of Israel after Moses? They said to their prophet, "If you appoint a king to lead us, we will fight in the cause of GOD." He said, "Is it your intention that, if fighting is decreed for you, you will not fight?" They said, "Why should we not fight in the cause of GOD, when we have been deprived of our homes, and our children?" Yet, when fighting was decreed for them, they turned away, except a few. GOD is aware of the transgressors.

2:247 Their prophet said to them, "GOD has appointed Taloot (Saul) to be your king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us when we are more worthy of kingship than he; he is not even rich?" He said, "GOD has chosen him over you, and has blessed him with an abundance in knowledge and in body." GOD grants His kingship to whomever He wills. GOD is Bounteous, Omniscient.

2:248 Their prophet said to them, "The sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will be restored to you, bringing assurances from your Lord, and relics left by the people of Moses and the people of Aaron. It will be carried by the angels. This should be a convincing sign for you, if you are really believers."

2:249 When Saul took command of the troops, he said, "GOD is putting you to the test by means of a stream. Anyone who drinks from it does not belong with me - only those who do not taste it belong with me - unless it is just a single sip." They drank from it, except a few of them. When he crossed it with those who believed, they said, "Now we lack the strength to face Goliath and his troops." Those who were conscious of meeting GOD said, "Many a small army defeated a large army by GOD's leave. GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere."

2:250 When they faced Goliath and his troops, they prayed, "Our Lord, grant us steadfastness, strengthen our foothold, and support us against the disbelieving people."

2:251 They defeated them by GOD's leave, and David killed Goliath. GOD gave him kingship and wisdom, and taught him as He willed. If it were not for GOD's support of some people against others, there would be chaos on earth. But GOD showers His grace upon the people.

2:252 These are GOD's revelations. We recite them through you,* truthfully, for you are one of the messengers.

Surah 5. Al-Maidah (The Feast) Part 6 verses 20-26, 43-44, 46-47

5:20 Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember GOD's blessings upon you: He appointed prophets from among you, made you kings, and granted you what He never granted any other people.

***5:21 *"O my people, enter the holy land that GOD has decreed for you, and do not rebel, lest you become losers."*

5:22 They said, "O Moses, there are powerful people in it, and we will not enter it, unless they get out of it. If they get out, we are entering."

5:23 Two men who were reverent and blessed by GOD said, "Just enter the gate. If you just enter it, you will surely prevail. You must trust in GOD, if you are believers."

5:24 They said, "O Moses, we will never enter it, so long as they are in it. Therefore, go - you and your Lord - and fight. We are sitting right here."

5:25 He said, "My Lord, I can only control myself and my brother. So, allow us to part company with the wicked people."

5:26 He said, "Henceforth, it is forbidden them for forty years, during which they will roam the earth aimlessly. Do not grieve over such wicked people."

5:27 Recite for them the true history of Adam's two sons. They made an offering, and it was accepted from one of them, but not from the other. He said, "I will surely kill you." He said, "GOD accepts only from the righteous."

5:28 "If you extend your hand to kill me, I am not extending my hand to kill you. For I reverence GOD, Lord of the universe."

5:29 "I want you, not me, to bear my sin and your sin, then you end up with the dwellers of Hell. Such is the requital for the transgressors."

5:30 His ego provoked him into killing his brother. He killed him, and ended up with the losers.

5:31 GOD then sent a raven to scratch the soil, to teach him how to bury his brother's corpse. He said, "Woe to me; I failed to be as intelligent as this raven, and bury my brother's corpse." He became ridden with remorse.

5:32 Because of this, we decreed for the Children of Israel that anyone who murders any person who had not committed murder or horrendous crimes, it shall be as if he murdered all the people. And anyone who spares a life, it shall be as if he spared the lives of all the people. Our messengers went to them with clear proofs and revelations, but most of them, after all this, are still transgressing.

5:33 The just retribution for those who fight GOD and His messenger, and commit horrendous crimes, is to be killed, or crucified, or to have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or to be banished from the land. This is to humiliate them in this life, then they suffer a far worse retribution in the Hereafter.

5:34 Exempted are those who repent before you overcome them. You should know that GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

5:35 O you who believe, you shall reverence GOD and seek the ways and means to Him, and strive in His cause, that you may succeed.

5:36 Certainly, those who disbelieved, if they possessed everything on earth, even twice as much, and offered it as ransom to spare them the retribution on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them; they have incurred a painful retribution.

5:37 They will want to exit Hell, but alas, they can never exit therefrom; their retribution is eternal.

5:38 The thief, male or female, you shall mark their hands* as a punishment for their crime, and to serve as an example from GOD. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.

5:39 If one repents after committing this crime, and reforms, GOD redeems him. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

5:40 *Do you not know that GOD possesses the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whomever He wills, and forgives whomever He wills. GOD is Omnipotent.*

5:41 O you messenger, do not be saddened by those who hasten to disbelieve among those who say, "We believe," with their mouths, while their hearts do not believe. Among the Jews, some listened to lies. They listened to people who never met you, and who distorted the words out of context, then said, "If you are given this, accept it, but if you are given anything different, beware." Whomever GOD wills to divert, you can do nothing to help him against GOD. GOD does not wish to cleanse their hearts. They have incurred humiliation in this world, and in the Hereafter, they will suffer a terrible retribution.

5:42 They are upholders of lies, and eaters of illicit earnings. If they come to you to judge among them, you may judge among them, or you may disregard them. If you choose to disregard them, they cannot harm you in the least. But if you judge among them, you shall judge equitably. GOD loves those who are equitable.

5:43 Why do they ask you to judge among them, when they have the Torah, containing GOD's law, and they chose to disregard it? They are not believers.

5:44 We have sent down the Torah,* containing guidance and light. Ruling in accordance with it were the Jewish prophets, as well as the rabbis and the priests, as dictated to them in GOD's scripture, and as witnessed by them. Therefore, do not reverence human beings; you shall reverence Me instead. And do not trade away My revelations for a cheap price. Those who do not rule in accordance with GOD's revelations are the disbelievers.

5:45 And we decreed for them in it that: the life for the life, the eye for the eye, the nose for the nose, the ear for the ear, the tooth for the tooth, and an equivalent injury for any injury. If one forfeits what is due to him as a charity, it will atone for his sins. Those who do not rule in accordance with GOD's revelations are the unjust.

5:46 Subsequent to them, we sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the previous scripture, the Torah. We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the previous scriptures, the Torah, and augmenting its guidance and light, and to enlighten the righteous.

5:47 The people of the Gospel shall rule in accordance with GOD's revelations therein. Those who do not rule in accordance with GOD's revelations are the wicked.

Surah 17 Banu Isra'il (The Sons of Israel) ("Al-Isra" The Night Journey) verses 1 and 2

17:1 Most glorified is the One who summoned His servant (Muhammad) during the night, from the Sacred Masjid (of Mecca) to the farthest place of prostration,* whose surroundings we have blessed, in order to show him some of our signs. He is the Hearer, the Seer.

17:2 Similarly, we gave Moses the scripture, and rendered it a beacon for the Children of Israel that: "You shall not set up any idol as a Lord and Master beside Me."

Surah 7. Al-A'raf (The Heights) Part 9 verses 52, 103-145, 161, 174

7:52 We have given them a scripture that is fully detailed, with knowledge, guidance, and mercy for the people who believe.

7:103 After (those messengers,) we sent Moses with our signs to Pharaoh and his people, but they transgressed. Note the consequences for the wicked.

7:104 Moses said, "O Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of the universe.

7:105 "It is incumbent upon me that I do not say about GOD except the truth. I come to you with a sign from your Lord; let the Children of Israel go."

7:106 He said, "If you have a sign, then produce it, if you are truthful."

7:107 He threw down his staff, and it turned into a tremendous serpent.

7:108 He took out his hand, and it was white to the beholders.

7:109 The leaders among Pharaoh's people said, "This is no more than a clever magician.

7:110 "He wants to take you out of your land; what do you recommend?"

7:111 They said, "Respite him and his brother, and send summoners to every city.

7:112 "Let them summon every experienced magician."

7:113 The magicians came to Pharaoh and said, "Do we get paid if we are the winners?"

7:114 He said, "Yes indeed; you will even become close to me."

7:115 They said, "O Moses, either you throw, or we are throwing."

7:116 He said, "You throw." When they threw, they tricked the people's eyes, intimidated them, and produced a great magic.

7:117 We then inspired Moses: "Throw down your staff," whereupon it swallowed whatever they fabricated.

7:118 Thus, the truth prevailed, and what they did was nullified.

7:119 They were defeated then and there; they were humiliated.

7:120 The magicians fell prostrate.

7:121 They said, "We believe in the Lord of the universe.

7:122 "The Lord of Moses and Aaron."

7:123 Pharaoh said, "Did you believe in him without my permission? This must be a conspiracy you schemed in the city, in order to take its people away. You will surely find out.

7:124 "I will cut your hands and feet on alternate sides, then I will crucify you all."

7:125 They said, "We will then return to our Lord.

7:126 "You persecute us simply because we believed in the proofs of our Lord when they came to us." "Our Lord, grant us steadfastness, and let us die as submitters."

7:127 The leaders among Pharaoh's people said, "Will you allow Moses and his people to corrupt the earth, and forsake you and your gods?" He said, "We will kill their sons, and spare their daughters. We are much more powerful than they are."

7:128 Moses said to his people, "Seek GOD's help, and steadfastly persevere. The earth belongs to GOD, and He grants it to whomever He chooses from among His servants. The ultimate victory belongs to the righteous."

7:129 They said, "We were persecuted before you came to us, and after you came to us." He said, "Your Lord will annihilate your enemy and establish you on earth, then He will see how you behave."

7:130 We then afflicted Pharaoh's people with drought, and shortage of crops, that they may take heed.

7:131 When good omens came their way, they said, "We have deserved this," but when a hardship afflicted them, they blamed Moses and those with him. In fact, their omens are decided only by GOD, but most of them do not know.

7:132 They said, "No matter what kind of sign you show us, to dupe us with your magic, we will not believe."

7:133 Consequently, we sent upon them the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood - profound signs. But they maintained their arrogance. They were evil people.

7:134 Whenever a plague afflicted them, they said, "O Moses, implore your Lord - you are close to Him. If you relieve this plague, we will believe with you, and will send the Children of Israel with you."

7:135 Yet, when we relieved the plague for any length of time, they violated their pledge.

7:136 Consequently, we avenged their actions, and drowned them in the sea. That is because they rejected our signs, and were totally heedless thereof.

7:137 We let the oppressed people inherit the land, east and west, and we blessed it. The blessed commands of your Lord were thus fulfilled for the Children of Israel, to reward them for their steadfastness, and we annihilated the works of Pharaoh and his people and everything they harvested.

7:138 We delivered the Children of Israel across the sea. When they passed by people who were worshiping statues, they said, "O Moses, make a god for us, like the gods they have." He said, "Indeed, you are ignorant people.

7:139 "These people are committing a blasphemy, for what they are doing is disastrous for them.

7:140 "Shall I seek for you other than GOD to be your god, when He has blessed you more than anyone else in the world?"

7:141 Recall that we delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who inflicted the worst persecution upon you, killing your sons and sparing your daughters. That was an exacting trial for you from your Lord.

7:142 We summoned Moses for thirty* nights, and completed them by adding ten.* Thus, the audience with his Lord lasted forty* nights. Moses said to his brother Aaron, "Stay here with my people, maintain righteousness, and do not follow the ways of the corruptors."

7:143 When Moses came at our appointed time, and his Lord spoke with him, he said, "My Lord, let me look and see You." He said, "You cannot see Me. Look at that mountain; if it stays in its place, then you can see Me." Then, his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, and this caused it to crumble. Moses fell unconscious. When he came to, he said, "Be You glorified. I repent to You, and I am the most convinced believer."

7:144 He said, "O Moses, I have chosen you, out of all the people, with My messages and by speaking to you. Therefore, take what I have given you and be appreciative."

7:145 We wrote for him on the tablets all kinds of enlightenments and details of everything: "You shall uphold these teachings strongly, and exhort your people to uphold them - these are the best teachings. I will point out for you the fate of the wicked."

7:146 I will divert from My revelations those who are arrogant on earth, without justification. Consequently, when they see every kind of proof they will not believe. And when they see the path of guidance they will not adopt it as their path, but when they see the path of straying they will adopt it as their path. This is the consequence of their rejecting our proofs, and being totally heedless thereof.

7:147 Those who reject our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, their works are nullified. Are they requited only for what they committed?

7:148 During his absence, Moses' people made from their jewelry the statue of a calf, complete with the sound of a calf.* Did they not see that it could not speak to them, or guide them in any path? They worshiped it, and thus turned wicked.

7:149 Finally, when they regretted their action, and realized that they had gone astray, they said, "Unless our Lord redeems us with His mercy, and forgives us, we will be losers."

7:150 When Moses returned to his people, angry and disappointed, he said, "What a terrible thing you have done in my absence! Could you not wait for the commandments of your Lord?" He threw down the tablets, and took hold of his brother's head, pulling him towards himself. (Aaron) said, "Son of my mother, the people took advantage of my weakness, and almost killed me. Let not my enemies rejoice, and do not count me with the transgressing people."

7:151 (Moses) said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us into Your mercy. Of all the merciful ones, You are the Most Merciful."

7:152 Surely, those who idolized the calf have incurred wrath from their Lord, and humiliation in this life. We thus requite the innovators.

7:153 As for those who committed sins, then repented thereafter and believed, your Lord - after this - is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

7:154 When Moses' anger subsided, he picked up the tablets, containing guidance and mercy for those who reverence their Lord.

7:155 Moses then selected seventy men from among his people, to come to our appointed audience. When the quake shook them, he said, "My Lord, You could have annihilated them in the past, together with me, if You so willed. Would You annihilate us for the deeds of those among us who are foolish? This must be the test that You have instituted for us. With it, You condemn whomever You will, and guide whomever You will. You are our Lord and Master, so forgive us, shower us with Your mercy; You are the best Forgiver.

7:156 "And decree for us righteousness in this world, and in the Hereafter. We have repented to You." He said, "My retribution befalls whomever I will. But My mercy encompasses all things. However, I will specify it for those who (1) lead a righteous life, (2) give the obligatory charity (Zakat),* (3) believe in our revelations, and

7:157 "(4) follow the messenger, the gentile prophet (Muhammad), whom they find written in their Torah and Gospel.* He exhorts them to be righteous, enjoins them from evil, allows for them all good food, and prohibits that which is bad, and unloads the burdens and the shackles imposed upon them. Those who believe in him, respect him, support him, and follow the light that came with him are the successful ones."

7:158 Say, "O people, I am GOD's messenger to all of you. To Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no god except He. He controls life and death." Therefore, you shall believe in GOD and His messenger, the gentile prophet, who believes in GOD and His words. Follow him, that you may be guided.

7:159 Among the followers of Moses there are those who guide in accordance with the truth, and the truth renders them righteous.

7:160 We divided them into twelve tribal communities, and we inspired Moses when his people asked him for water: "Strike the rock with your staff," whereupon twelve springs gushed out therefrom. Thus, each community knew its water. And we shaded them with clouds, and sent down to them manna and quails: "Eat from the good things we provided for you." It is not us that they wronged; it is they who wronged their own souls.

7:161 Recall that they were told, "Go into this town to live, and eat therefrom as you please, treat the people amicably, and enter the gate humbly. We will then forgive your transgressions. We will multiply the reward for the righteous."

7:162 But the evil ones among them substituted other commands for the commands given to them. Consequently, we sent upon them condemnation from the sky, because of their wickedness.

7:163 Remind them of the community by the sea, who desecrated the Sabbath. When they observed the Sabbath, the fish came to them abundantly. And when they violated the Sabbath, the fish did not come. We thus afflicted them, as a consequence of their transgression.

7:164 Recall that a group of them said, "Why should you preach to people whom GOD will surely annihilate or punish severely?" They answered, "Apologize to your Lord," that they might be saved.

7:165 When they disregarded what they were reminded of, we saved those who prohibited evil, and afflicted the wrongdoers with a terrible retribution for their wickedness.

7:166 When they continued to defy the commandments, we said to them, "Be you despicable apes."

7:167 Additionally, your Lord has decreed that He will raise up against them people who will inflict severe persecution upon them, until the Day of Resurrection. Your Lord is most efficient in enforcing retribution, and He is certainly the Forgiver, Most Merciful.

7:168 We scattered them among many communities throughout the land. Some of them were righteous, and some were less than righteous. We tested them with prosperity and hardship, that they may return.

7:169 Subsequent to them, He substituted new generations who inherited the scripture. But they opted for the worldly life instead, saying, "We will be forgiven." But then they continued to opt for the materials of this world. Did they not make a covenant to uphold the scripture, and not to say about GOD except the truth? Did they not study the scripture? Certainly, the abode of the Hereafter is far better for those who maintain righteousness. Do you not understand?

7:170 Those who uphold the scripture, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), we never fail to recompense the pious.

7:171 We raised the mountain above them like an umbrella, and they thought it was going to fall on them: "You shall uphold what we have given you, strongly, and remember the contents thereof, that you may be saved."

7:172 Recall that your Lord summoned all the descendants of Adam, and had them bear witness for themselves: "Am I not your Lord?" They all said, "Yes. We bear witness." Thus, you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were not aware of this."
 7:173 Nor can you say, "It was our parents who practiced idolatry, and we simply followed in their footsteps. Will You punish us because of what others have innovated?"
7:174 We thus explain the revelations, to enable the people to redeem themselves.*

Surah 6 Al-An'am (The Cattle) verses 98, 114-5

6:98 He initiated you from one person, and decided your path, as well as your final destiny. We thus clarify the revelations for people who understand.

6:99 He is the One who sends down from the sky water, whereby we produce all kinds of plants. We produce from the green material multitudes of complex grains, palm trees with hanging clusters, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranate; fruits that are similar, yet dissimilar. Note their fruits as they grow and ripen. These are signs for people who believe.

6:100 Yet, they set up beside GOD idols from among the jinns, though He is the One who created them. They even attribute to Him sons and daughters, without any knowledge. Be He glorified. He is the Most High, far above their claims.

6:101 The Initiator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son, when He never had a mate? He created all things, and He is fully aware of all things.

6:102 Such is GOD your Lord, there is no god except He, the Creator of all things. You shall worship Him alone. He is in control of all things.

6:103 No visions can encompass Him, but He encompasses all visions. He is the Compassionate, the Cognizant.

6:104 Enlightenment have come to you from your Lord. As for those who can see, they do so for their own good, and those who turn blind, do so to their own detriment. I am not your guardian.

6:105 We thus explain the revelations, to prove that you have received knowledge, and to clarify them for people who know.

6:106 Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord, there is no god except He, and disregard the idol worshipers.

6:107 Had GOD willed, they would not have worshiped idols. We did not appoint you as their guardian, nor are you their advocate.

6:108 Do not curse the idols they set up beside GOD, lest they blaspheme and curse GOD, out of ignorance. We have adorned the works of every group in their eyes.

Ultimately, they return to their Lord, then He informs them of everything they had done.

6:109 They swore by GOD, solemnly, that if a miracle came to them, they would surely believe. Say, "Miracles come only from GOD." For all you know, if a miracle did come to them, they would continue to disbelieve.

6:110 We control their minds and their hearts. Thus, since their decision is to disbelieve, we leave them in their transgressions, blundering.

6:111 Even if we sent down the angels to them; even if the dead spoke to them; even if we summoned every miracle before them; they cannot believe unless GOD wills it. Indeed, most of them are ignorant.

6:112 We have permitted the enemies of every prophet - human and jinn devils - to inspire in each other fancy words, in order to deceive. Had your Lord willed, they would not have done it. You shall disregard them and their fabrications.

6:113 This is to let the minds of those who do not believe in the Hereafter listen to such fabrications, and accept them, and thus expose their real convictions.*

6:114 Shall I seek other than GOD as a source of law, when He has revealed to you this book fully detailed?* Those who received the scripture recognize that it has been revealed from your Lord, truthfully. You shall not harbor any doubt.

6:115 The word of your Lord is complete,* in truth and justice. Nothing shall abrogate His words. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

Verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat

49:13 O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant.

•Surah 16. An-Nahl Part 14 verse 125

16:125 You shall invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kind enlightenment, and debate with them in the best possible manner. Your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path, and He knows best who are the guided ones.

16:126 And if you punish, you shall inflict an equivalent punishment. But if you resort to patience (instead of revenge), it would be better for the patient ones.

16:127 You shall resort to patience - and your patience is attainable only with GOD's help. Do not grieve over them, and do not be annoyed by their schemes.

16:128 GOD is with those who lead a righteous life, and those who are charitable.

Surah 12. Yusuf (Joseph) verses 1-3

12:1 A.L.R. These (letters) are proofs of this profound scripture.*

12:2 We have revealed it an Arabic Quran, that you may understand.*

12:3 We narrate to you the most accurate history through the revelation of this Quran. Before this, you were totally unaware.

Surah 10. Yunus (Jonah) Part 11 verse 37, 94

10:37 This Quran could not possibly be authored by other than GOD. It confirms all previous messages, and provides a fully detailed scripture. It is infallible, for it comes from the Lord of the universe.

10:38 If they say, "He fabricated it," say, "Then produce one sura like these, and invite whomever you wish, other than GOD, if you are truthful."

10:39 Indeed, they have rejected this without studying and examining it, and before understanding it. Thus did those before them disbelieve. Therefore, note the consequences for the transgressors.

10:40 Some of them believe (in this scripture), while others disbelieve in it. Your Lord is fully aware of the evildoers.

10:41 If they reject you, then say, "I have my works, and you have your works. You are innocent of anything I do, and I am innocent of anything you do."

10:42 Some of them listen to you, but can you make the deaf hear, even though they cannot understand?

10:43 Some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind, even though they do not see?

10:44 GOD never wrongs the people; it is the people who wrong their own souls.

10:45 On the day when He summons all of them, they will feel as if they lasted in this world one hour of the day, during which they met. Losers indeed are those who disbelieved in meeting GOD; and chose to be misguided.

10:46 Whether we show you some (of the retribution) we promise them, or terminate your life before that, to us is their ultimate return. GOD witnesses everything they do.

10:47 To each community, a messenger. After their messenger comes, they are judged equitably, without the least injustice.

10:48 They challenge: "When will this prophecy come to pass, if you are telling the truth?"

10:49 Say, "I possess no power to harm myself, or benefit myself; only what GOD wills takes place." Each community has a predetermined life span. Once their interim comes to an end, they cannot delay it by one hour, nor advance it.

10:50 Say, "Whether His retribution comes to you by night or by day, why are the transgressors in such a hurry?"

10:51 "If it does happen, will you believe then? Why should you believe then? You used to challenge it to come?"

10:52 It will be said to the transgressors, "Taste the eternal retribution. Are you not requited precisely for what you have earned?"

10:53 They challenge you to prophesy: "Is this really what will happen?" Say, "Yes indeed, by my Lord, this is the truth, and you can never escape."

10:54 If any wicked soul possessed everything on earth, it would readily offer it as ransom. They will be ridden with remorse when they see the retribution. They will be judged equitably, without the least injustice.

10:55 Absolutely, to GOD belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. Absolutely, GOD's promise is truth, but most of them do not know.

10:56 He controls life and death, and to Him you will be returned.

10:57 O people, enlightenment has come to you herein from your Lord, and healing for anything that troubles your hearts, and guidance, and mercy for the believers.

10:58 Say, "With GOD's grace and with His mercy they shall rejoice." This is far better than any wealth they can accumulate.

10:59 Say, "Did you note how GOD sends down to you all kinds of provisions, then you render some of them unlawful, and some lawful?" Say, "Did GOD give you permission to do this? Or, do you fabricate lies and attribute them to GOD?"

10:60 Does it ever occur to those who fabricate lies about GOD that they will have to face Him on the Day of Resurrection? Certainly, GOD showers the people with His grace, but most of them are unappreciative.

10:61 You do not get into any situation, nor do you recite any Quran, nor do you do anything, without us being witnesses thereof as you do it. Not even an atom's weight is out of your Lord's control, be it in the heavens or the earth. Nor is there anything smaller than an atom, or larger, that is not recorded in a profound record.

10:62 Absolutely, GOD's allies have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

10:63 They are those who believe and lead a righteous life.

10:64 For them, joy and happiness in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This is GOD's unchangeable law. Such is the greatest triumph.

10:65 Do not be saddened by their utterances. All power belongs to GOD. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

10:66 Absolutely, to GOD belongs everyone in the heavens and everyone on earth. Those who set up idols beside GOD are really following nothing. They only think that they are following something. They only guess.

10:67 He is the One who rendered the night for your rest, and rendered the day lighted. These are proofs for people who can hear.

10:68 They said, "GOD has begotten a son!" Be He glorified. He is the Most Rich. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. You have no proof to support such a blasphemy. Are you saying about GOD what you do not know?

10:69 Proclaim: "Those who fabricate lies about GOD will never succeed."

10:70 They get their temporary share in this world, then to us is their ultimate return, then we commit them to severe retribution for their disbelieving.

10:71 Recite for them the history of Noah. He said to his people, "O my people, if you find my position and my reminding you of GOD's revelations too much for you, then I put my trust in GOD. You should get together with your leaders, agree on a final decision among yourselves, then let me know it without delay.

10:72 "If you turn away, then I have not asked you for any wage. My wage comes from GOD. I have been commanded to be a submitter."

10:73 They rejected him and, consequently, we saved him and those who joined him in the ark; we made them the inheritors. And we drowned those who rejected our revelations. Note the consequences; they have been warned.

10:74 Then we sent after him messengers to their people, and they showed them clear proofs. But they were not to believe in what they had rejected in the past. We thus seal the hearts of the transgressors.

10:75 Then we sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his group, with our proofs. But they turned arrogant; and were transgressing people.

10:76 When the truth came to them from us, they said, "This is obviously magic!"

10:77 Moses said, "Is this how you describe the truth when it comes to you? Is this magic? How can any magicians prevail?"

10:78 They said, "Did you come to divert us from what we found our parents doing, and to attain positions of prominence for yourselves? We will never join you as believers."

10:79 Pharaoh said, "Bring to me every experienced magician."

10:80 When the magicians came, Moses said to them, "Throw whatever you are going to throw."

10:81 When they threw, Moses said, "What you have produced is magic, and GOD will make it fail. GOD does not support the transgressors' work."

10:82 GOD establishes the truth with His words, despite the criminals.

10:83 None believed with Moses except a few of his people, while fearing the tyranny of Pharaoh and his elders. Surely, Pharaoh was much too arrogant on earth, and a real tyrant.

10:84 Moses said, "O my people, if you have really believed in GOD, then put your trust in Him, if you are really submitters."

10:85 They said, "We trust in GOD. Our Lord, save us from the persecution of these oppressive people."

10:86 "Deliver us, with Your mercy, from the disbelieving people."

10:87 We inspired Moses and his brother. "Maintain your homes in Egypt for the time being, turn your homes into synagogues, and maintain the Contact Prayers (Salat). Give good news to the believers."

10:88 Moses said, "Our Lord, you have given Pharaoh and his elders luxuries and wealth in this world. Our Lord, they only use them to repulse others from Your path. Our Lord, wipe out their wealth, and harden their hearts to prevent them from believing, until they see the painful retribution."

10:89 He said, "Your prayer has been answered (O Moses and Aaron), so be steadfast, and do not follow the ways of those who do not know."

10:90 We delivered the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh and his troops pursued them, aggressively and sinfully. When drowning became a reality for him, he said, "I believe that there is no god except the One in whom the Children of Israel have believed; I am a submitter."

10:91 "Too late!* For you have rebelled already, and chose to be a transgressor."

10:92 "Today, we will preserve your body, to set you up as a lesson for future generations."* Unfortunately, many people are totally oblivious to our signs.

10:93 We have endowed the Children of Israel with a position of honor, and blessed them with good provisions. Yet, they disputed when this knowledge came to them. Your Lord will judge them on the Day of Resurrection regarding everything they disputed.

10:94 If you have any doubt regarding what is revealed to you from your Lord, then ask those who read the previous scripture. Indeed, the truth has come to you from your Lord. Do not be with the doubters.

Surah 32 As-Sajdah (Prayer) Part 21 verses 23-25

32:23 We have given Moses the scripture - do not harbor any doubt about meeting Him - and we made it a guide for the Children of Israel.

32:24 We appointed from among them imams who guided in accordance with our commandments, because they steadfastly persevered and attained certainty about our revelations.

32:25 Your Lord is the One who will judge them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding everything they disputed.

¹ Over the past year, I have been writing and speaking about the *Shoah* and the *Nakba* focusing on the redemptive purposes that history can play in reconciling Israeli and Palestinian Christians, a topic that has become quite controversial in Israel where the use of public funds to commemorate the Nakba is now illegal. Two publications resulted from my journey to Theresienstadt: “Between Promise and Fulfillment: Shoah/Nakbah Offerings of Memory and Histories of Catastrophe”, in Margaret Monahan Hogan and James M. Lies, C.S.C, eds., *What We Choose to Remember* (Portland: University of Portland Press, 2011), (forthcoming) and “The Historian and the Claims of Memory,” *Fides et Historia* 42 (Fall 2010):55-65.

² Bassam Tibi and Ibn Warraq are two noted critics of radical Islamism. See also my article, “What Do Muslims Really Think About Israel,” *Review of Faith and International Affairs* (Winter 2008):37-41.

³ Appendix II Qur’anic Verses Cited by MBB Nehad Saeed to support his thesis that the Qur’an recognizes the Jewish right to sovereignty over Jerusalem. All Quranic translations Khalifa, “Quran Browser.org,” <http://www.submission.info/servlet/qtbrowse> <accessed July 29, 2008>. See also Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi, “Allah Is a Zionist: The Quranic argument for Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel,” *Tablet Magazine*, March 18, 2010,

<http://www.tabletmag.com/news-and-politics/28575/allah-is-a-zionist/> and Imam Palazzi’s website: <http://www.amislam.com/>

⁴Taysir Abu Saada, *Once an Arafat Man* (Toronto: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008); Mosab Hasan Yusuf, *Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices* (Toronto: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008).

⁵Keith E. Small, *Holy Books Have a History: Textual Histories of the New Testament and the Qur’an* (Monument, Colorado: Snow Fall Press, 2010); W. Richard Oakes, “Review of Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur’an: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought*,” *Muslim World* 101 (January 2011): 119-121.

⁶ Jordana Horn, “At 88, A Man of Morals Starts Over,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 4, 2011 available at <http://new.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=215658> <accessed April 15, 2011>.

⁷As it is in Israel. The Jerusalem Institute for Justice (<http://www.jij.org.il/>) and the Caspari Center Media Review (http://www.caspari.com/media_review/) report on freedom of religion in Israel, however, progressive Israeli NGOs working in the field of human rights have by and large ignored the issue of conversion in Israel. There have been a few reported cases of Muslims converting to Judaism in Israel, but such cases are rare.

⁸Ziya Meral, *No Place to Call Home: Experiences of Apostates from Islam—Failures of the International Community* (Surrey, U.K.: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2008), available at <http://www.denizenscorner.com/>, his website. Meral “is a Turkish researcher and writer. He holds a 1st Class BA Hons from Brunel University, an MDiv from the International School of Theology in the Philippines and an MSc in Sociology from the London School of Economics. He has travelled widely in the Middle East and Asia, and published books, articles and reviews. He has delivered talks on a broad range of issues including Middle Eastern and Turkish politics and culture, religious freedom, and comparative literature and theology. His first book in Turkish, *Ve Tanrı Ağlıyordu (And God was Crying; Essays on Life, Hope and God)* was published by GOA publications in 2006 and a shorter book *Bir Türk Teolojisine Doğru (Towards a Turkish Theology)* was published the same year by Yeni Yasam Publications in Istanbul,” ii.

⁹ Ibid., i.

¹⁰ Ibid., 42.

¹¹ Ibid., 42-43. See also his article “Israel: The Model for the Future of Egypt,” *Channel 4 News Online*, February 3, 2011, available on his website, <http://www.denizenscorner.com/> <accessed April 15, 2011>.

¹² Ibid., 4.

¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 5.

²³ Ibid., 6.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 13.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 18-19.

³⁴ Ibid., 19.

³⁵ Available at <http://www.am4peace.com/>

³⁶ Meral, 31.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Isa” and “Yesua” are, respectively, the eastern and western pronunciations of “Yeshu’a” in Arabic dialects of the seventh century. Christian texts referred to Yeshu’a in both ways. It is a mistake to consider them to be different names, just as Allah is the Christian Arabic term for the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob. Controversy over these issues has only served to hinder understanding.

³⁹ Recent books and editorials on this subject include Robert Satloff, *Among the Righteous* (New York: Public Affairs, Perseus, 2006), (Norman H. Gershman, *BESA: Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Mohammad Dajani Daoudi and Robert Satloff, “Why Palestinians Should Learn About the Holocaust,” *New York Times*, March 29, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/30/opinion/30iht-edsatloff30.html> <accessed April 15, 2011>, Abdulateef al-Mulhim, “What if Arabs had recognized the State of Israel in 1948?” *Arab News*, March 19, 2011 <http://arabnews.com/opinion/columns/article322715.ece?comments=all> <accessed April 15, 2011>.