

TESTIMONY

OF A P.L.O.



TERRORIST



There was that **dream again!**

The little, beautiful body of a lamb had wool as white as snow. It was spotless in every aspect, yet had the very handsome face of a young man.

It kept talking to me, inviting me to **follow.**

The lamb promised to take me to a place that looked **like paradise.**

Then it would fade and my 5-year-old mind could never understand its meaning.

For the next 13 years, I kept trying to

discover where that “paradise” was.



I grew up in the holy land, but it was **far from “holy.”** For centuries it had known nothing but conflict. Literally from birth, as a Palestinian Muslim, I had been taught to hate the intruders into our land, the Israelis. Before I reached the age of eight, I had witnessed **bombings** and **assassinations** all across my home community. I had determined in my heart to die as a martyr for the Palestinian cause and, by doing so, I would achieve my “dream” of giving one’s life for the cause. This was the highest goal on earth, and I would receive the ultimate reward in heaven.

During my teenage years, I became deeply involved with anti-western activities. By the age of 16, I had been instructed how to **persecute Christian missionaries** and tourists. I remember burning their religious books, tracts and cassettes. In ignorance, my friends and I would assault them, robbing them at gunpoint. We excused our actions by rationalizing that the western world helped Israel take over Palestine and occupy our homeland. Now they were coming to change our religion. For people to become Christians would be the worst thing that could ever happen to our nation.

The next step, was to join the Palestine Liberation Organization (**P.L.O.**), closely associating with Yassar Arafat. In 1998 I was accused of being involved in a bombing its chairman, Yassar Arafat. My terrorist activities concentrated on the Israelis that tragically killed 16 people and injured 30 others at an Israeli Passport and Identification Card Service, established to register Palestinians. A massive search by Israeli soldiers was launched and many were arrested. Under the **extreme torture** that took place behind the scenes, one of the detainees informed them of my name. A squad of soldiers climbed over the walls of my father's large home, **carrying M-16s** and other compact machine guns. They rushed into my bedroom before I had the chance to reach for my AK-47, given to me as a gift from my father. I was taken to jail and severely beaten.

I remained in jail for nearly eight months. It was the most horrible experience of my life. My jailers burned my legs with cigarette butts, pulled off my fingernails and committed other acts of merciless torture and **My father** interceded for me through the governor of the region and I was finally released.

For some unknown reason, during the time I was incarcerated,

the Israeli authorities allowed missionaries to visit the Palestinian prisons. One of these missionaries was going from cell to cell, talking with the prisoners, and **handing out tracts**, magazines, and Arabic New Testaments. As the man approached my cell, 18 years of anger and hatred, which had been building up inside of me, reached its climax. When he began talking to me, I punched him from between the bars and spat on his face. I grabbed the “little navy blue book” he had given me and threw it back at him, yelling the most vulgar slander at him. Without emotion, he bent down, picked up the book, and before leaving stated, “I’ll be praying for you. And, by the way, **Jesus loves you!**”

His response left me emotionally shaken. I was even more perplexed when I saw him come back to my cell the following day. I said to myself, “This guy must be one of two things: either he is ‘crazy’ or he really **believes** in his convictions.” He reached out his hand with that same blue book and said, “I urge you to take this gift and check it out. It will give you **eternal life.**” This time, I took it from him, thinking that I would throw it away later. I placed it under my mattress and tried to forget about it.



Yet, for the next several days, I kept **dreaming** about that “little navy blue book.” It bothered me and I concluded, “I’ve got to throw that thing away or read it. Maybe I ought to see what it’s talking about.” I pulled it out from under my mattress and opened it.

The very first words my eyes read were, **“Love your enemy.”** I immediately slammed the book shut, yelling, “Whoever wrote this doesn’t know what it’s like to have an enemy like the Jews! If he was in my shoes, the author would never dare to write anything like that!”

Suddenly, inside of me I heard a clear voice saying, **“On your own you cannot, but with me you can love all people.”** I looked around to see who was speaking. There was no one else in the cell. I was arguing with God about “loving my enemy.” The missionary’s face kept flashing in my head. Through him, God had shown me that in a real, practical way, loving one’s enemy could be accomplished.

I knelt on hands and knees, bowing my face to the dusty concrete floor, crying out to God. “What is this? Where are You? Why am I feeling the way I do? It’s horrible! So much hate, so much animosity, so much evil in my heart! I want what that missionary has. I want to be able to love and forgive. I have never known **love** and **mercy** like he has.” I screamed, “God, where are you?” And for the first time in over 13 years, the vision of the little lamb returned. This time, however, I knew who the lamb was. He was “God in the flesh,” that little baby born of the virgin Mary. He was **Jesus**.



Suddenly, my body began shaking and my tongue began to speak in a language different from Arabic and Hebrew. It seemed I had no control over it. I felt a peace that was beyond **understanding** and definitely beyond anyone's ability to describe. For the first time in my life, I felt secure. And for the first time in my life, I addressed God directly and could call Jesus, "Lord!" I asked Christ to make me like that British-accented missionary so that I could love and forgive. I again began speaking in that "new language," and afterward, my life was never the same.



There was a great difference in my attitudes. I discovered that I could love Israelis equally as much as I loved my own countrymen. The hatred and anger had been replaced with acceptance and a burden that, as Paul said, "*Israel would be saved!*" Years later, having moved to the United States to live, there remains a strong desire in my life to witness to everyone about Jesus, who exchanged my sins for His righteousness. Because of the change in my

heart, I have been able to lead many of those Jews whom I once hated to the Lord.

You see, Jesus is too good to keep to myself. And as I read about the recent events in the "not-so-holy" land, I recognize there is no other way for a **peaceful settlement** among those who live there other than Jesus, who is "*the way, the truth and the life*" (John 14:6). Neither another Camp David Accord, a temporary truce settlement in Ramallah, nor the negotiations of subtle diplomacy will ever bring the security and safety that both Israel and the

Palestinians are claiming to pursue. What **humanity** cannot do, God can. And it begins in the hearts of individuals.

I also **look forward** to experiencing that paradise which I dreamed about so many years ago. I look forward to that day when I will see Christ **face to face**. I hope to see you there with me, let me share with you how you too can know Christ.

First, admit that you have sinned against God. The Bible says that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and “there is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). Confess your sins to Him. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9)

Second, understand and believe that Jesus lived a sinless life, died on a cross and rose again from the grave to save you from those sins. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us... We have now been justified by His blood...” (Romans 5:8,9)

Third, receive by faith the free gift of mercy and grace God gives you through Jesus His Son. “For by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8)

Fourth, it all begins by simply talking to God. Pray something like this:

“Dear Jesus, I am a sinner and need your mercy and forgiveness. I believe You are the Son of God. I trust not in myself but in You alone to cleanse me and make me a new person. Thank You for dying on a cross, as the ultimate sacrifice, to forgive all of my sins and for rising again to give me a new life. Amen.”