

Five Minutes with a Muslim: Practical Helps for Sharing Your Faith

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Five Minutes with a Muslim

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Introduction

How do I get started? Give me something I can work with? These are just a couple of the questions we heard from Christian believers who really did want to share their faith with Muslims but struggled with how to begin. Though we have consistently stated that there is no “silver bullet” in Muslim evangelism, this book is our response to provide some practical help to witness and comes from twenty-five-plus years of experience in working with Muslims.

Jesus Our Model

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, as detailed in the fourth chapter of John, took no longer than five minutes, and through it we learn a lot about sharing the Gospel in general, and with Muslims specifically. There are many parallels between the religions of Samaritans and Muslims. While both have similarities with the major religions of Judaism and Christianity, they are religious counterfeits to the true God. Even with the differences, Jesus very clearly and effectively presented the Gospel to the woman. By the end of their discussion, she not only made a decision for herself, but one that would affect her entire village.

You might say: “That was Jesus witnessing; of course, she accepted His message! I could never be that effective.” Be reminded that Jesus said: “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12 NIV). Reaching out to Muslims in the power of the Holy Spirit, with the same methods Jesus used with the Samaritan woman will fulfill His words: “You will do even greater things.”

In examining this encounter more closely, we can learn several lessons from the Master to apply in our efforts to reach Muslims for Christ.

1. **Ask for help.** Jesus was relaxing at the well. When the woman came, He asked for her help: “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7). He appealed to her nature as a woman to provide for others. When you sit with a Muslim, ask their help. They will be encouraged to provide and become more open to further relationship. Seeking help from another adds value to them as a person, because they feel they have something to offer others.
2. **Trigger their curiosity.** Jesus asked: “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (John 4:10). When you talk with a Muslim, provoke their interest and curiosity. Don't be a typical person who gives quick, short answers. Instead, say something different, something contradictory but tasteful. You will get their attention.
3. **Make them ask questions.** Once the woman's curiosity was peeked, she asked Jesus about the living water: “Where can you get this living water?” (John 4:11). Once we show love to a Muslim, their question may be as simple as: “Why do you care about me?”
4. **Find something to encourage in the other person.** Jesus never put the woman down. He knew all about her, but He did not shame her. Instead, He encouraged her and saw the truth in her responses and stressed them. When she said she had no husband, Jesus said: “You are right” (John 4:17). He affirmed her answer twice. He knew the ugly side of her life but did not rub it in her face.

It is helpful for us to know something about Islam. Sometimes what we learn is not pleasant or might even get us mad. Bringing up the ugly side of the religion will not help our relationship with our Muslim friend. Instead, pick one good thing you see in that person. If you just listen and watch, through the discernment of the Holy Spirit, you will find something positive to point out. Maybe she shows care for her children. Perhaps he likes the new jacket he just bought. Start with a positive statement such as this: “Nice jacket. It looks really good on you.” Something they touch, they like...that is the beginning.

Once the Samaritan woman believed in Jesus as the Messiah, she left her jar of water by the well and ran to tell the whole village. Do not hold on to the bridge once you make the transition to spiritual truth. There is no reason to dwell on the children or jacket when we are giving them Jesus.

The Role of Your Testimony

Sharing your faith with a person from the Islamic faith does not require a Ph.D. or huge amounts of study, for the Holy Spirit is the One who equips us with the tools we need to share. We know many Muslims who have come to faith through the simple, consistent testimony of Christians in their midst. While this book will help you to develop further tools, we still believe that your personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ is the most effective approach. For this reason, we encourage you to first develop your testimony to be used in both long and short settings with Muslims. Remember that your words can either build bridges or walls, so work on using terms that are understandable to the Muslim mind.

Avoid Debates

Also, as you share, be cautious that you do not fall into debates. While a debate setting may have its place for large audiences of religious

thinkers, they are usually not productive in leading Muslims to faith in Christ. For this reason, if you find that the Muslim friend with whom you are seeking to share simply wants to argue or debate, kindly refrain and excuse yourself for a later opportunity to talk. Again, we cannot stress enough that open hearts are the work of the Holy Spirit, and if a person's heart is not open, it is obvious the time is not right. Leave the door open to other meetings and continue to pray for the Spirit to work in the Muslim's heart to prepare it for the message.

Know Your Bible

Though we will be helping you to gain understanding of your Muslim friend's faith in order to witness, all of our approaches will move quickly from Islamic concepts or the Qur'an in order to be rooted in the Word of God, the Bible. God's Word is powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, of this, we are sure. As you prepare yourself through study to be a more effective witness to Muslims, make the focus of your time in-depth study and memorization of the Bible. We want our Muslims friends to see us, not only as followers of Jesus, but as men and women who know and live by God's Word.

Practice Helps

We are giving you some examples of effective bridges to use with Muslims, but as you engage them in conversation, you will find that these topics may not come up naturally. For this reason, you will want to practice taking any ordinary conversation and moving it toward a spiritual subject, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman. Do not be afraid of approaching the spiritual realm with Muslims, for the majority easily discuss spiritual ideas, unlike most Americans, who see religion as a private matter. Again, as you work on your testimony or any of these

bridges, practice, with a like-minded partner, turning a common conversation into a spiritual one and then moving toward your bridge to the Gospel. The more you practice on friends or even Muslims, the more these concepts will become a natural part of your Christian outreach.

Final Thoughts

There are a few other items we would like to point out before we move on to the material at hand. We, as believers in Christ, do not want to appear overbearing in our approach toward Muslims. It is our prayer that your friend will see something in your appearance, behavior, or words that will perk their interest in approaching you about your faith. Open the way for your friend to ask you questions about your faith. In this way, you will merely be responding to their queries, not imposing your beliefs on them.

Just as the Samaritan woman had a preconception about who Jesus was as a Jewish man, we must be aware as Christians that Muslims have preconceived notions about who Christians are and what they believe. Some of these stem from their interaction with Christian (nominal and otherwise) communities in their home countries or from direct teaching in their Muslim context. There are barriers to overcome even as we interact with them in conversation. Therefore, we encourage three things:

1. Try to keep your interactions with Muslims of the same sex as yourself. It can be very easy to be misunderstood when sharing with the opposite sex. Already, American women are seen as loose, so we need to limit male-female interaction, especially when we are trying to share our faith. A Muslim woman would also be very cautious in engaging in conversation with an American (i.e. Christian) man. The male authority in her life, whether it is her

father, husband, or brother, would not appreciate a man speaking to a woman in his family.

2. Along this same line, we need to be aware of our physical expressions and dress. A Christian woman can become a distraction to the message, if she tries to share her faith while wearing low-cut tops, short skirts, or shorts. Muslims will only accept our message if they see that our actions and behavior coincide with our talk. Modest dress and a limit to facial expressions such as loud laughter or winking are encouraged.
3. We need to remember that Muslims live in community. Unlike the individual tendencies of Americans, Muslims are ever conscious of the feelings of their parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, cousins, and wider Muslim circle of friends. For this reason, we would do better to share about spiritual matters one-on-one and not in large groups. You will never get a true response from a Muslim who is afraid of those around them.

As Jesus shared of the coming Kingdom of God, He did it while moving among people. He ate with them, healed them, taught them, and loved them. We do not share the Gospel in a vacuum but in relationship. A Muslim will be quick to spot a Christian who is just out to “chalk up” another soul for the Lord. It is the one who knows you first as a friend, who will be many times more open to you as you share the Gospel, and thus, more likely to accept Christ.

We will share with you in the following pages, several examples of potential bridge-crossing conversations. It is up to you, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to take them, mold them, and make them part of your witnessing toolbox. It is our prayer that the Lord will grant you much fruit as you serve Him as fishers of souls among Muslims.

Five Minute Conversations

The Nature of God as Holy and Light

Background:

Because there is no concept of original sin or the need for a savior in Islam, one of our main goals in witness to Muslims will be to lead them to the realization that they are sinners in need of a savior. As we talk with our Muslim friends about God, we can help them to see how His essence as holy and light directly affects our need for salvation.

A Muslim will understand the nature of God as light, because the Qur'an states in sura al-Nor 24:35, "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth..." From this point of agreement, we can begin the conversation to follow.

Bridge:

Can you please help me with something? I have been reading some in the Qur'an, since I want to better understand Islam. I read that God is the light of heaven and earth. Isn't that correct? (They will agree). You know, as a follower of Jesus, I can agree with this, because the Bible says something similar: "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

I also understand that for Muslims, it's very hard to imagine what God looks like, because He's so distant and high. Nobody can talk to Him, and He does not talk to anyone. I can understand the Qur'an's position that because God is ultimate power, no human being (in the physical dimension, that is) can approach Him. It's just like approaching the sun—if we took a spaceship and tried to get close to the sun, we would disintegrate before even touching it. God is almighty power and light.

There is no darkness in Him. But you and me—we mess up. We make mistakes.

If God is light and no darkness can be found in Him, then because He is holy, He can have nothing to do with wrong or evil. Don't you agree, that even with the smallest mistake we make—a bad word here, a bad word there, or simply stealing a penny, we know deep inside that we are wrong? (They should agree). This very little wrong separates us from God's presence. When we do these simple bad deeds, it's as if we were marked with a little black spot. Then, if we tried to draw near to God with this black spot, God would immediately stop us from coming into His presence. Even if we asked God why and told Him that we really wanted to be with Him, His justice would deny us access. A voice would proclaim: "God is light, he has no darkness in him." We cannot enter His presence with even one atom of darkness. Because of that one spot, we would be destined eternally to damnation in Hell.

(At this point, I would want to look into the eyes of my Muslim friend and try to determine if the Holy Spirit is working on their heart. I might even take a moment in silence to pray for the Spirit to work in them. Then I would continue).

There is only one way we can enter God's presence and not die.¹ We must get rid of this sin inside of us. Our human nature is sinful. I know that this is different from what you are brought up with, but don't you think that you have little choices in your life every day? Right now, you have a choice—to remain the way you are, without any assurance of

¹ Be eternally cast out of His presence.

Heaven² or to be completely cleansed from the sin which separates you from God's presence both here on earth and for eternity.

Isa al-Messih³ said, “I am the light of the world.” The Qur'an and the Bible both tell us that Jesus is alive. You can talk to Him today the same way you are talking to me. Not in the physical sense, face-to-face, but as a conversation—hearing, understanding, and responding to each other's words. With Jesus, you don't even have to utter words. Once you start thinking in your mind and heart, He will answer you in your mind and heart. He will come to your heart, cleanse you from all the sin that prevents you from entering God's presence and give you eternal peace. You will become a new creation. You see, without a personal relationship with God, we are spiritually dead. When Jesus comes into our hearts and cleanses us, He gives us a new spiritual life.

Would you like to have that new life today?

² Or, you can use the word *paradise* to fit more closely into a Muslim's understanding of Heaven.

³ *Jesus the Christ*, using the Muslim word for Jesus instead of the Arabic, 'yesua'.

The Story of Abraham: Our Need for a Ransom

Background:

So far, we have dealt with God's holiness and thus, His separation from all that is sinful and evil. We trust that through the work of the Holy Spirit, your friends have come to recognize their sinful nature and need for a savior. The well-recognized story of Abraham, which is also found in the Qur'an, reinforces the concept of ransom. You can read it in sura al-Saffat 37:102-113. The Qur'an does not mention the name of the son (Isaac or Ishmael), but Muslims believe him to be Ishmael.

When Abraham raised his hand to offer his son as a sacrifice, according to the command of God, the Qur'an reads: "And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice" (Saffat 37:107). We know that after that, Abraham saw a ram caught in the bush, and it was the ram he slaughtered in the place of his son.

Bridge:

One of the greatest stories that is told in both the Qur'an and the Bible is that of our Father Abraham,⁴ when God asked him to offer his son as sacrifice. We know that Abraham was obedient. He took his son, his favorite son, who was about thirteen years old at the time, and traveled to the mountain. Abraham loved him very much, and he would have given himself in his place, but God asked him to offer this very son he loved. Abraham obeyed and brought his son, put him on the altar and raised his

⁴ *Ibrahim* in Arabic.

hand with a knife to offer him as a sacrifice for God. The Qur'an says that God stopped him and said: “We ransomed him⁵ with a great sacrifice.”

Abraham looked around and saw a ram. He took the ram and killed it instead of his son. I want to explain to you, my friend, a very important fact in this story. God said: “We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” The word for “ransom”⁶ means to offer something of equal value in place of another. We know that a mere ram was in no way equal to the son of the mighty prophet Abraham.

If you are in debt to a bank for \$1,000, then, to ransom you of your debt, I have to pay exactly \$1,000, not \$999, not \$1,001. This is the meaning of ransom—it is equal and just. The Qur'an is so clear about ultimate justice, and the *Tawrat*⁷ says we must pay an “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”⁸ But if we look at the story of Abraham, we need to understand that the ram God provided was not by any means equal to Abraham's son. Would you give your son for one ram, for a hundred rams? Of course not. I would not give my son for all the rams in the world, because my son and your son are more precious than rams. So, if this is the case, there must be a deeper meaning to the statement made about ransoming Abraham's son with a great sacrifice.

So, who is this great sacrifice? We both know that every year, from the time of Abraham till today, the Jews have never stopped offering a sacrificial ram. They are still trying to prove their obedience to God

⁵ Abraham's son.

⁶ *Fadeya* in Arabic.

⁷ Torah.

⁸ Exodus 21:24.

through works. You Muslims do the same, as every *Adha*⁹ feast you kill a ram or a cow. Man is the crown of creation; there is no animal that could be his equal. The Qur'an obviously means the Great Sacrifice was to come at a later time. Man could not provide such a sacrifice—God alone was able.

If we continue to read in the Qur'an, we learn that after many years there was a very special prophet who came. This prophet had no father. He is from the Spirit of God, and he is a word from God. This prophet, *Isa*,¹⁰ was in a very special category above all humankind. He raised the dead, opened blind eyes, and made the lame to walk.¹¹ The Qur'an calls him *Isa al-Messih*. The Bible calls him Jesus the Christ. *Al-Messih* means the Anointed One, the Chosen One—the Chosen One worthy to be put on the scale.¹²

And if we look around us, the true Christians, who don't lie or steal, who live a pure life like Jesus; these are the ones who have put themselves on the other side of the scale. And still the side of Jesus is much heavier. All of Jesus's followers, from centuries past, who have died, are on the scale too. There is still room for more, and any who put themselves on the other side of the scale are changed immediately. They become clean from all their mistakes and sins as if they never committed them. Many years ago, I realized this very important fact and put myself on the other side of the scale. I became a completely different person, as if I was born again.

⁹ Sacrificial. The *Adha* feast is the annual commemoration for Muslims of Abraham's sacrifice.

¹⁰ Jesus.

¹¹ Sura al-i-'Imran 3:49.

¹² Muslims believe your deeds will be weighed on a scale. This is the reason we're using the idea of Jesus being on the scale.

My friend, there is still room on the scale for you. You can come and put yourself before Jesus, and He will pay for all your sins and mistakes. You don't have to wait until the Day of Judgment after you die, because by then it will be too late to know whether your good deeds outweigh the bad. We will never be saved by works but only by accepting the Great Sacrifice God revealed to us through Prophet Abraham's story. Are you ready to put yourself on the scale with Jesus?

The Story of Adam and Eve: The Concept of Sin

Background:

The qur'anic version of the Fall varies from that found in the Bible, so we need to be careful in how we begin and quickly move the story toward Scripture. The text for that found in the Qur'an is sura al-Baqara 2:30-39. In brief, God asks the angels to bow before Adam, and they all complied except Satan.¹³ This is the origin of sin in the Qur'an.

God tells Adam and his wife¹⁴ to live in the Garden¹⁵ but not to approach a certain tree or they will come to harm and darkness.¹⁶ Satan caused them to slip and go out from the Garden. There is no idea conveyed that Adam sinned, because God is said to have been merciful to him.

One way to approach this story in order to lead your friend to understand the concept of sin is to have them read the verses from al-Baqara or tell you the story of Satan and Adam from the Qur'an. Once they have done this, you can begin the following conversation.

Bridge:

There are similarities between what the Bible says and what you have told me. Satan was full of pride, for the Bible tells us that he wanted to be like God himself, and because of this was cast from heaven. We know that

¹³ *Iblis* in the Qur'an.

¹⁴ Eve's name is never mentioned in the Qur'an.

¹⁵ Some Muslim scholars do not consider the Garden to be on earth, but to be Paradise.

¹⁶ Transgression.

from that time on, he would work to do all he could to lead all people astray and keep them far from God by following his evil ways.

Adam and Eve were happy in the Garden until the day they ate from the Tree of Immortality.¹⁷ They ate from the tree and discovered they were naked. Satan was happy when they were put out of the Garden. I remember reading somewhere in the Qur'an that they asked God's forgiveness, and He guaranteed forgiveness; but in another place, it says that God gave them some words. My friend, when I look at this story in the Qur'an, I do not see God as just. He might be merciful, but He was not just.

If I am not obedient to an officer, he will give me a ticket. If I'm not obedient to a judge, he will put me in jail. If I'm not obedient to a king, he might even kill me. Well, here it tells us that Adam broke the very law of God. God's majesty is so great, that once Adam became disobedient to God, the consequences were not only to leave the Garden of Eden, but to leave God's presence forever. Adam and Eve's nature was not as before. It changed immediately, once they were disobedient to God. Before they ate from the tree, they walked naked before God, unashamed. They could talk with God, and He talked with them. But once they broke God's law by eating from the tree, their nature changed and became sinful. So just kicking them out of the Garden was not enough.

Our story of the Garden is longer than that you shared. Would you mind if I read it to you from the Bible?¹⁸ If we look at the great *Tawrat*,¹⁹ we can see another element in the story. God redeemed them with a

¹⁷ As per the Qur'anic version.

¹⁸ If they agree, you can read Genesis 3, or tell the story in your own words.

¹⁹ Books of Moses or Torah.

sacrifice. He killed an animal and covered them with its skin, because the leaves that they started to pile over themselves were never enough to cover their shame of breaking God's law. But the blood of that sacrifice only temporarily covered their sin until the Great Sacrifice came, which I explained before in the story of Abraham.

In the *Tawrat* also, we notice something else: the tree they ate from was not the Tree of Immortality as the Qur'an said, because Adam and Eve were already immortal. If so, why would eating from that tree be forbidden? Also, if they had eaten from the Tree of Immortality, they would never have died, but we all know that Adam and Eve died long ago. The *Tawrat* mentioned that this tree was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and this makes more sense really. Because if we look at ourselves, every descendent of Adam and Eve, every one of us, deep inside knows the difference between good and evil. We don't choose good all the time, but we definitely know the difference between the two. It was only after they sinned that they were forbidden to eat from the other tree, the Tree of Life (which would be of immortality).

Also, in this story we see that God made one Adam and one Eve, and they were happy before the Fall. God's main plan was one man for one woman for a lifetime. So here we can agree with the Qur'an when it says that though a Muslim is allowed to marry four wives, they should only really marry one, because they will never be able to treat them all with equal justice. This is the way God intended it from the beginning.

When we accept the Great Sacrifice, *Isa al-Messih*, we can see that this first sacrifice in the Garden was a symbol of the redemption that *Isa*

would bring through His own sacrifice so many years later. If you allow Him to cover all your sins, you will be a new creation.²⁰

Our religious books agree that Satan was around when Adam and Eve sinned, but he did not force them to sin, because God created them with free will. We are not robots, are we? No, we make our own choices of right and wrong. But because of those wrong choices, we are separated from God. He is holy and can't have anything to do with unholy things. Before Adam sinned, the Bible tells us that God met with him in the Garden, but afterwards, they could no longer be in fellowship together. Thankfully, that was not the end of the story for us.

In another place, the Bible says: "Consequently, just as one trespass (sin) resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people... For just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man (Isa al-Messih) the many will be made righteous (Romans 5:12, 18-19).

Because Jesus, being from God, put Himself on the scale for us, we can place all our sins on the other side, allowing us to gain access to God and Heaven for eternity. This is the good news. Would you like to accept the redemption that comes through the sacrifice of Jesus for you?

²⁰ You can also include if they are married: And your spouse can be a new creation; your marriage can be redeemed, and you can live according to the original plan God had for man and woman.

Fathers and Their Children: Knowing God's Plan for Salvation

Background:

We believe that Muslims see God in only one aspect of His person—the Father, though they would never acknowledge it as such. The Fatherhood of God is forbidden in the Qur'an, because God cannot have physical children. The spiritual sonship of man to God is incomprehensible for Muslims, because they have only a physical understanding of the concept of Fatherhood.

God is a distant, incomprehensible being. There is no way for the Muslim mind to grasp the concept of a spiritual God relating to physical man. Yet, it is important to share with our Muslim friends the biblical teaching of the Father God. You can try to convey our understanding of the Person of the Father using the following dialogue.

Bridge:

My friend, do you know whether you will go to Heaven or Hell after you live your long life?²¹ I understand from reading the Qur'an that it says we will all die, and on the Day of Account every soul will stand before God, the books will be opened, and whatever is written in my book of good deeds will be put on the right side of the scale, and whatever is found in the book of my bad deeds will be put on the left side of the scale. If the right side is heavier, even by an atom, my soul will pass by the narrow path with the speed of light into the luxurious Paradise. But, if my bad

²¹ The right answer under Islam is “God knows” (*Allah allum*).

deeds on the left side of scale tip down by one atom, while my soul is passing on the straight path, it will fall down to Hell for eternity. Isn't that correct?²²

I know that the reason you answered my first question by “God knows” is because you can never know which side of the scale will turn out heavier for you in the end. That is why, my friend, you keep doing more and more good works each day. I have a question: What if I imagined that on that Day of Account I really, really wanted from all my heart to make it to Heaven, but the left side of the scale was one atom heavier, and I heard the word of judgment— “To eternal Hell!” I scream to God: “Please, please let me go back and do only one little good thing!” But His justice will never agree. The books are closed; my fate is sealed. The seal can never be broken that would allow me to come back to life and return to earth to do one little work. My friend, I have a hard time imagining such a harsh God. Really, to tell you the truth, I would not like that God at all.

Do you have children?²³ If your children come to you and ask you if they should play with good friends or bad friends, do you turn your back and ignore them? Then, if you didn't give them an answer and they chose to play with the bad friends, do you punish them?²⁴ Or, do you advise them to play with the good friends before they make a mistake?²⁵ If you as a human parent take time to warn and advise your children, don't you

²² They will agree.

²³ If they say, yes, then you can continue with the question as is. If not, reword it to reflect on their parents' treatment of them as children.

²⁴ They should be answering “of course not”.

²⁵ Of course, the Muslim will answer that he would advise their children first.

think that God, who is Father to all humankind, will let us know that we are messing up and provide us a way to change our eternal destiny before we die?

The Qur'an says *Isa al-Messih*²⁶ was a word from God thrown to Miriam. My friend, you would never know all that I have just talked about without either reading my words or hearing them from my voice. Our words are the means of communication between you and me. *Isa al-Messih* is the Word that communicates God's will to us. God says that it is only through the Great Sacrifice, Jesus, that a man or woman's sin can be completely wiped out. If I accept His sacrifice, I will immediately know my eternal destiny. I won't need to wait till I die to find out Heaven or Hell.

That's why, we can understand that the ultimate love of God was shown through the sacrifice of Jesus. He made the way for us to know our eternal destiny before death. We cannot gamble with eternity. I would not want to live my life without certainty of my final destination.

You can choose to allow Jesus to take you sins today and put them on the scale. Do you want to be certain of your final destination? Choose Jesus today.

²⁶ Jesus the Christ.

The Justice and Mercy of God: The Importance of the Cross

Background:

In sharing with Muslims, we have found several illustrations which touch the heart of the Muslim experience and yet challenge them to examine their faith. One of the most effective has been in talking about the justice and mercy of God. The concept of mercy is the greatest obstacle in their coming to understand the Christian concept of the forgiveness of God through Christ.

All Muslims hold to the belief that God is both just and merciful. We want to lead them to see the contradiction in these two characteristics and how the cross is the source of resolution.

Bridge:

I know that almost every *sura* of the Qur'an starts with the opening that God is the Most Gracious and Most Merciful. But the *tawhid*²⁷ of Islam also teaches in the ultimate justice of God. His justice is perfect. I think we can understand this by just looking at ourselves. Ultimate justice can be found deep in the human soul.

If I took one penny that is not mine, I know that it's not mine, and realize I'm a thief. When I speak a simple kind word to someone, I have an inner satisfaction that I'm a kind or gracious person. We can understand this because God made us like Him ethically. These characteristics are inherently found in all people. God, however, is

²⁷ Oneness. (For Christianity, it is *theology*).

ultimate in justice and *ultimate* in mercy. This raises a problem, my friend. The Qur'an talks about both mercy and justice, but my mind can't fathom how they are both characteristics of Almighty God. How can He be ultimate in justice and mercy at the same time?²⁸

For example, if someone committed a murder, the Court of Ultimate Justice requires their immediate death—life for life. In the meantime, if we put this murderer before the Court of Ultimate Mercy, the verdict will be quite different, because mercy means undeserved merit, undeserved forgiveness. It is the complete opposite of justice. So, the Court of Ultimate Mercy should give the not-guilty verdict—they are free to go home. This is a great dilemma. If that murderer stands before God, will God sentence them to eternal Hell and forget about His mercy (God forbid) or send them to Paradise and forget about His justice? (God forbid). How can God have these two characteristics in perfection?

I find, my friend, that the Qur'an is silent about this issue. If you want, you can take time to go and ask your imam or counsel the Qur'an to see if I am speaking truth. But, if you already realize that the Qur'an has no answer for this, then let me continue.

The justice of God and His mercy can never exist together in His personality²⁹ without a great sacrifice. When we say “great” here, that means the greatest sacrifice can only be provided by God Himself, because nothing in this created world can satisfy His justice. All of creation became unclean once sin entered it through Adam. We were all

²⁸ Because a Muslim will not be able to adequately explain this, don't pause long but move on to your illustration.

²⁹ *Tawhid*.

on his back.³⁰ God himself had to provide the means of mercy. So, now you understand what is the meaning of the great sacrifice: a sacrifice that came from God through *Isa al-Messih*, to pay the ransom for whosoever asks. Only in *Isa al-Messih*, can the justice and mercy of God be in complete harmony.³¹ Christ took upon Himself the sin of mankind, allowing God to look with favor on all those who accept His sacrifice for their sin. Can you now see, my friend, the crucial need for *Isa al-Messih's* sacrifice on our behalf to justify God's justice and allow for His mercy? Are you ready to accept that sacrifice?

³⁰ A reference from the *Hadith*.

³¹ Psalm 85:10.

Post-Script

We want to reiterate that without the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of both the witness and Muslim, these are just good concepts and words. It is unlikely that you will use more than one of these in a setting with a Muslim, and it is important to internalize not our words, but the concepts and Scriptures in order to be able to share them naturally and with boldness.

Also, depending on the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the person to whom you're speaking, they may or may not accept the invitation to repent and believe. If not, leave the door open for God to continue working in their life with a statement such as this: "I understand if you're not ready to take this step today, but I do encourage you to take what I've said to God. Before you sleep tonight, ask God to make it clear to you whether what I've said is true and that Jesus is the Christ. If you ask with a sincere heart, He will answer."

There are many topics with which you can build a bridge to witness, along with current events and everyday issues. You can refer to our book, *A Christian Guide to the Qur'an: Building Bridges in Muslim Evangelism*³² for further helps in using the Qur'an as a starting point with Muslims.

It is our prayer that you will see the Lord do great things in the lives of Muslims as you engage them in love and witness.

Dr. Raouf and Carol Ghattas

2010, Revised 2026

³² Kregel, 2009.

Books by Raouf and Carol Ghattas Related to Missions and Islam

Ghattas, Carol B. [*When Serving Gets Tough: A Thirty-Day Devotional for Missionaries*](#). USA: William Carey Publishing, 2024.

Daoud, Um. [*The Life I Now Live*](#). USA: Xulon Press, 2024.

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Ghattas, Carol B. [*When Doors Close: Changing Course in Missions Without Losing Your Way*](#). USA: Xulon Press, 2021.

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Daoud, Um. [*Lust Under the Veil*](#). USA: Xulon Press, 2004.

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About the Authors

Raouf Ghattas was raised as an evangelical Christian in Egypt, but gained a strong understanding of the Qur'an, as it was taught in school. After immigrating to the United States in the 1970s, Ghattas earned his Masters and D.Min. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served more than twenty years in North Africa and the Middle East as an evangelist and church planter with the International Mission Board, SBC. Returning to the USA in 2009, he began the Arabic Baptist Church of Murfreesboro in 2011. Dr. Ghattas went to be with the Lord in 2015.

Carol B. Ghattas, a Tennessee native, earned a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and served alongside her husband in the mission field, living in Muslim countries throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Under the pseudonym, Um Daoud, she has authored several novels which illustrate the difficulties Muslims face in coming to Christ. A writer of fiction and nonfiction, Carol also speaks to churches and groups about missions, Islam, and work among Muslims. You can follow her on her blog: lifeinexile.net.