

Oved ben Aharon, Ex-Jew, USA (part 4 of 4)

Description: 25 years of reflection, evaluation of the Jewish community and their Tradition, and in-depth studies within the Yeshivas of Jerusalem, finally leads Oved to Islam. Part 4: Islam and the Muslim community, the true God and entrance into the true faith.

By Oved ben Aharon

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At a time when I was yearning to know whether God would redeem the Jewish people from our exile, and my research of the issue yielding the answer that the majority of worldwide Jewry said no or didn't care, the thought came to me again that perhaps it was the other "Mesorah", the other descendants of Abraham and their tradition that is authentically the message God wanted Abraham to transmit. Recall the core of that message—there is one God. Who today is vocally and unequivocally proclaiming that there is one God? A friend of mine in Boston encouraged me to visit his Synagogue's website, and encouraged my family to move to his community. The website has no reference to God, and instead says the congregation are ambassadors for the Torah. The website for the local Muslim community in contrast emphasizes the message of Islam is the existence of one God.

Not only are converts to Judaism doing so for the culture and not for God, entrance into the Jewish path comes at a cost. As an example, a Jewish family friend of ours recently adopted a 2 year old girl and needed to formally convert her to Judaism. The woman is the daughter of a well-respected Rabbi, yet to prove that her toddler was serious about converting she was charged an \$800 fee in addition to the travel expenses to and from Chicago for the conversion ritual immersion to occur. Compare this to the entrance into Islam, which carries no monetary screening but only requires the sincere declaration that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet. Which pattern did Abraham follow, being charged money or declaring his belief?

For my entire life, from youth to adulthood, spiritual matters have been important to me, and I have been restless in my search for God. I am no longer restless, am grateful that He has been patient with me and led me in a way that was necessary for my acceptance of and understanding of Islam. It is humbling to leave a tradition that was my entire life and identity, but this is how God works—He asks his true followers to submit to His way and leave their accumulated life behind, just as Abraham submitted. I challenge my friends and others to objectively evaluate who of Abraham's descendants are acting as a Holy nation—the nation of Sabras (Israel) composed of a culture of militant atheism and immorality, or the nation of the two mosques composed of a culture and life governed by the will of God as revealed in the Koran. I challenge my friends to objectively evaluate who of Abraham's children dress and act modestly—simply go to a Zoo in a major metropolitan area and compare those women who cover their hair, whether with sheitel (wig) or Hijab, and see which it is who arrogantly puts on a token cultural symbol of

modesty but nevertheless wears a short skirt and tight clothing. I challenge my friends to objectively evaluate which of Abraham's children follows God's admonishment to not oppress your brother, the congregation that charges thousands of dollars for membership otherwise a seat during high holidays will not be granted, or the congregation where the prayers of the poor are preferred by God; for a daily example of not oppressing your brother, examine the costs of kosher food which can economically devastate the most devout Jews. Our father Abraham would be ashamed to read the June/July 2013 edition of Hadassah Magazine, in which one of the articles highlights the rainbow road to Tel Aviv, Israel as the gay capital of the Middle East with its c'est la vie attitude.

There are numerous examples that can be given, but I don't doubt that my friends will ignore the predominant behavior of the worldwide Muslim community and will instead focus on the .00000005% fundamentalists who ignore the will of Allah who says in the Koran that there is no compulsion in religion. I challenge you all to stop and pause and seriously evaluate your community and your standing with God, and evaluate the Jewish People's and Nation's standing with God. Step away from the misguided Mesorah which has led Israel to become the newest Sodom and Gomorrah, and remove yourself from the misguided Mesorah that has made the Jewish holidays and Shabbats festivals and displays of gluttony and wealth with numerous sets of dishes for overpriced foods. The authentic Mesorah of Abraham still exists today, and that nation publicly stops five times a day to proclaim there is only one God, and that nation accepts upon itself a month-long daytime fast to remind us all that the poor often go hungry but God loves the poor and their prayers. Be courageous and go for yourself (Lekh Lekha) from the misguided Mesorah of indulgence where "chosenness" is defined by material and cultural achievements, and submit to God. Put away the expensive Tefillin and Tallitot, which God does not require for prayer. Prayer is not limited to those who can afford the ritual articles and for those who can afford to live in an area where 10 Jews can be assembled for prayer. God wants your prayers, wherever you are and no matter how many are assembled.

For years I never considered converting to Islam because I had been told by Rabbis and others that Islam prohibits accepting Jewish converts. Then one day I saw a documentary on Al Jazeera about Muhammad Assad, formerly Leopold Weiss, a German Jew who had converted to Islam. This intrigued me, and as I began to study Islam I found that it was not what the media and others said it was. The turning point for me was hearing the story of Muhammad's ascent to Heaven, when Allah informed him that prayer was compulsory, that Muhammad and his followers must pray 50 times a day. When Muhammad was returning, he passed the prophet Moses, my prophet, who told Muhammad that this was too much, that he had a hard time dealing with Israel with their prayer obligations, and that Muhammad must return to Allah to have this number of prayers reduced in order to not burden the people. I recognized the voice of Moses, his personality of arguing with God, and there was no question in my mind that this conversation between Moses and Muhammad did in fact occur. When I decided to say the Shahada, the declaration that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is His prophet, my soul was returning to what it always knew was true.

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