

Examples of Cruciformity

18. Tass Saada

Part A: Summary of His Life Story

This page is part of the Foreword of the autobiography by Tass Saada, *Once an Arafat Man: The True Story of How a PLO Sniper Found a New Life*.¹ It is significant that this Foreword is written by a Messianic Jew, Joel Rosenberg².

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Tass Saada was a killer . . . Tass and his closest friends murdered Jews in Israel. They murdered civilians and soldiers alike. They attacked Christians in Jordan. Sometimes they tossed hand grenades at their homes. Sometimes they strafed God-fearing homes with machine-gun fire. They once tried to assassinate the crown prince of an Arab country. They nearly succeeded. And they did all this willingly. They did so eagerly. Tass certainly did. His nickname was once *jazzar* – "butcher." It was a moniker he relished.

Born in Gaza and raised in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf in a world of radical Islam and violent Palestinian nationalism, by his teenage years Tass was a cauldron of seething, roiling hatred. His family was close to the Saudi royal family. He once met Osama bin Laden. He became personal friends with Yasser Arafat, a man he long regarded as a hero, and happily killed in his name. In part one of the book . . . Tass takes you inside the world he once loved. It is not pretty.

. . . the unforgettable story of a jihadist who found Jesus, of a violent revolutionary who was radically transformed one day by the power of the Holy Spirit and became a man of peace and compassion. At its core, this is a story of the greatness of our great God. It is the story of a man who fell in love with a Savior who loves Arabs as well as Jews. The God of the Bible is crystal clear to all who will listen: he loves us all with an unfathomable love, with an everlasting love, with an unquenchable love. His love is so amazing, so divine that he actually offers all of us-Jew and Gentile alike-the free gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He wants to adopt each one of us into his own family. He wants to bless us. He wants to take care of us. He wants to heal us and change us and make us like him. And then he wants to empower us to be a blessing to others.

Tass said yes to that love, and he was changed forever . . . See how God not only changed Tass's life but his family's as well. Be at his side as he is called into the ministry, as he shares the gospel with Yasser Arafat, and even as he shares the message of Christ's love and forgiveness with his parents and brothers, who all want to kill him.

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1 Tass Saada, *Once an Arafat Man: The True Story of How a PLO Sniper Found a New Life* (Clarksville, TN: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008) ix - x.

2 Author of (1) *Epicenter: Why the Current Rumbblings in the Middle East Will Change Your Future* and of (2) *Inside the Revolution: How the Followers of Jihad, Jefferson & Jesus are Battling to Dominate the Middle East and Transform the World*.

As the story progresses, see Tass and his lovely wife, Karen, as they reach out to the poor and needy in Gaza and the West Bank in the name of Jesus. And watch how Tass's heart changes towards the Jews. This part I can personally vouch for.

This page is from the cover of the same book:

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Tass Saada is a former Muslim and founder of Hope for Ishmael,³ a non-profit organization whose mission is to reconcile Arabs and Jews. Born in 1951 in the Gaza Strip, Saada grew up in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. He worked under Yasser Arafat as a Fatah fighter and sniper. Years after immigrating to America, he became a Christian.

. . . At age seventeen, Tass Saada was carrying a high-powered Simonix rifle. He had run away from home to become a PLO sniper and chauffeur for Arafat.

His experience growing up as a refugee in Saudi Arabia had taught him to hate. Like many Palestinians, his hatred – and his rifle – was aimed at Israel.

Tass Saada's story could have ended tragically, another casualty of the centuries of hatred brewing in the Middle East. But Tass was destined for better things. His story will give you an intimate look at

- the world of Arafat
- the life struggles, and heart of a Palestinian refugee;
- a Muslim who converted to Christianity and faced retribution at the hands of his relatives; and
- the transformation of hatred into love and hope.

This is more than the story of a Palestinian refugee making something good of his life in America. It's a story of the ultimate triumph of love over hatred, reconciliation over persistent divisions. It's a story that can inspire us all to overcome the divisions and conflicts in our own lives.

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A significant paragraph near the end of the book:

When I speak to groups of messianic Jews, I often say, "A soul is worth more than land. To bring a single Palestinian soul to Jesus is more important than hanging onto acreage." When I address Arab Christians, I make the same point in reverse. "So far, most Jews are not finding their true Messiah. For us to bring them in that direction is worth far more in God's eyes than proving our point about the land."<sup>4</sup>

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3 [www.hopeforishmael.org](http://www.hopeforishmael.org) "To reconcile Arabs and Jews to the Father and each other through the gospel of Jesus Christ."

4 Tass Saada, *Once and Arafat Man*, 226