

‘Palestinian’ Author Warns: Watch Your Language, MEMRI is Listening

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The MEMRI report [posted here](#) recalls the warning issued on December 23, 2018 by the “Palestinian” author Mushir Al-Farra on Baladna TV (Gaza). He wanted to alert his fellow “Palestinians” to a great danger of which some of them were insufficiently aware. That danger was that the Western world now had the ability to listen in on what “Palestinians” – and other Arabs and Muslims – were saying, in unguarded moments, to their own audiences. The chief offending party was the website MEMRI, which has the unsettling ability to record, translate, and disseminate online, statements by Muslim Arabs – political leaders, clerics, media personalities, members of Hamas and Hezbollah, Islamic apologists of every sort, men on the street.

Al-Farra warned his listeners that “MEMRI monitors everything.” Therefore they must be careful what they say, and how they say it. They need to make sure they do not reveal too many truths, that can then be picked up by MEMRI, and quoted by the diabolically clever Israelis against the interests of the too-candid “Palestinians.”

Mushir Al-Farra gave as one of his examples a statement from Salah Bardawil, a Hamas leader whom he described as “ a dear friend who is like a brother to me, but he made a big mistake when [he said](#), following the Friday of the Nakba anniversary on May 15-16, that 53 of the 68 ‘martyrs’ [killed in Gaza while taking part in the ‘Great March of Return’] were members of Hamas.” This was perfectly true, but should never have been said in public. Bardawil wanted to claim credit for Hamas, and perhaps – Al-Farra doesn’t mention this consideration – he might have wanted to contrast the sacrifices made by Hamas with the failure of Fatah members to join the protest and be among the “martyrs.” The trouble was that the Israelis had been insisting all along that the “Great March” protest was not a spontaneous popular uprising, but was orchestrated by Hamas. And then along comes Salah Bardawil, and with his report about the Hamas martyrs, he confirmed the Israeli version. Bardawil’s remark was “even quoted by Benjamin Netanyahu, by the Israeli ambassador to the U.N., and by many other ambassadors.” They exclaimed: “Why do you call it a popular uprising? It is an uprising by Hamas.” Al-Farra said Bardawil’s admission was a public relations disaster for the “Palestinians.” He warned that the Palestinians should be more cautious while representing their cause on media outlets, in order to avoid speaking in a way that weakens it. In other words, don’t tell the truth; it’s only going to cause damage.

Another example Al-Farra provided was the statement by Hamas spokesman Abu Ubeida, [who referred](#) to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu as the “son of a Jewish woman.” In using the phrase “son of a Jewish woman” as an obvious slur (the locution “son-

of-a.." is derogatory – cf. "son of a whore"), Abu Ubeida could be depicted as antisemitic. Al-Farra suggested using "son of Zionists" instead. Zionists are always bad, and so of course are the Jews, but let us, because the Western world is so hypersensitive about "the Jews," and for the sake of our cause, pretend that we have nothing against Jews. Let Netanyahu be the "son of a Zionist." That's even worse.

Another example Al-Farra gave was of someone he described as a "media activist, one Momen Shaikh, who 'has a candid camera show.'" Al-Farra continued: "He asked people 'What would you do if you saw a Jew walking down the street? He said "Jew," not Zionist. This is a very important word. We should stay away from the word 'Jew.'" And Al-Farra then digressed a bit, offering his sanitized view of why there Muslim dislike or even hate Jews had nothing to do with their religion: "were it not for Balfour and the Nakba, if there were no massacres, killings, or expulsions, why would we hate human beings because of their religious background? Obviously there are religious differences, but we do not hate them for their religion. Out of their hatred for the Israeli army, the people [who have been asked 'what would you do if you saw a Jew walking down the street?'] started saying 'I will kill them' [the Jews], I will slaughter them.' It was all translated and delivered to the international media on the same day. MEMRI is one of the websites that monitors everything. They said: 'look at this antisemitism. They say they want to kill the Jews.'"

So Mushir Al-Farra wisely advises us not to use the word "Jew." It's not good PR for the "Palestinians." Don't tell an interviewer that when you see a Jew going down the street you immediately think "I want to kill the Jews." For so many Westerners, it's just unacceptable. Nothing we can do about it. Hitler, and all that Holocaust stuff. So don't say "Jew." Always say "Zionist" instead. Momen Shaikh should have asked people "what do you think when you see a Zionist walking down the street"? Then you can say: "I want to kill the Zionists."

Or, even better to say, “I want to kill the killers.” There, that’s much better. You know what you mean. I know what you mean. But there are plenty of people who don’t know and can be easily misled – so for the sake of the “Palestinians,” mislead them.

Mushir Al-Farra is practicing the taqiyya that he preaches. He makes sure to insist that Muslims do not have any reason to hate others for their religious differences: “why would we hate human beings because of their religious background? Obviously there are religious differences, but we do not hate them for their religion.” He knows this is palpably false, but he’s offering an example of what other Muslims, heeding his warning to mind their language, should be doing.

We need to ask Mushir Al-Farra a few more questions: Your advice is very good, but how do we Muslims explain the 109 Qur’anic verses that command us to engage in violent jihad against the Unbelievers, to “smite at their necks” and “strike terror in their hearts” only because of “their religion”? What should we tell them about such verses as 2:191-194, 4:89, 8:12, 8:60, 9:5, 9:29, 47:4? Eventually the Unbelievers will find out about them; we can’t keep them ignorant forever. And how do we deal with Muhammad’s famous remarks that “war is deceit” and “I have been made victorious through terror”? We can’t claim them as inauthentic. They’re in Bukhari. We need a way to explain these verses, these quotes. And how do we deal with the verse that instructs Muslims not to take “Jews or Muslims as friends, for they are friends only with each other”(5:51)? What should we tell Unbelievers, if they bring it up, about the verse that tells Muslims they are the “best of peoples” (3:110) and another that describes the Unbelievers – all non-Muslims – as “the most vile of creatures” (98:6)? We need your guidance, Sheikh.

It’s not just MEMRI that we have to worry about. There’s also Jihad Watch. A quick googling brings up at that site a long list of antisemitic (and some that are also anti-Christian)

statements in the Qur'an:

'The Qur'an depicts the Jews as inveterately evil and bent on destroying the well-being of the Muslims. They are the strongest of all people in enmity toward the Muslims (5:82); they fabricate things and falsely ascribe them to Allah (2:79; 3:75, 3:181); they claim that Allah's power is limited (5:64); they love to listen to lies (5:41); they disobey Allah and never observe his commands (5:13). They are disputing and quarreling (2:247); hiding the truth and misleading people (3:78); staging rebellion against the prophets and rejecting their guidance (2:55); being hypocritical (2:14, 2:44); giving preference to their own interests over the teachings of Muhammad (2:87); wishing evil for people and trying to mislead them (2:109); feeling pain when others are happy or fortunate (3:120); being arrogant about their being Allah's beloved people (5:18); devouring people's wealth by subterfuge (4:161); slandering the true religion and being cursed by Allah (4:46); killing the prophets (2:61); being merciless and heartless (2:74); never keeping their promises or fulfilling their words (2:100); being unrestrained in committing sins (5:79); being cowardly (59:13-14); being miserly (4:53); being transformed into apes and pigs for breaking the Sabbath (2:63-65; 5:59-60; 7:166); and more. They are under Allah's curse (9:30), and Muslims should wage war against them and subjugate them under Islamic hegemony (9:29).

That's a lot to try to explain.

We're not sure how to handle all this, Mr. Al-Farra. Perhaps you can figure out some way to deal with these passages. Do we deny they exist? Should we claim these verses have not been properly translated? That you have to be not just a native speaker of Arabic, but have to know the Arabic of the 7th century to correctly grasp their meaning? Do we claim that these verses – but there are so many! – have been wildly misinterpreted by non-Muslims? Can you give us a few examples? Or should we claim that they were only meant to apply to

enemies at a certain time and place, way back in 7th century Arabia, and have nothing to do with how Muslims feel about Jews today? There's got to be a way. Tell us, please. We're all ears. Just like, as you warned us at the beginning, that sinister group known as MEMRI. And wouldn't it be ironic if, after all you said, MEMRI managed to eavesdrop on our conversation right here and right now, the one we are having with you, and then posted it online for the world to see?

First published in