

SBL SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Statement on the 27 January 2017 U.S. Executive Order “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”

The Society of Biblical Literature’s mission is to foster biblical scholarship in accordance with our core values, which include scholarly integrity, critical inquiry, respect for diversity, inclusivity, and tolerance. This mission of fostering biblical scholarship rests on the firm belief that the study of sacred texts and traditions involves unhindered intellectual exchange among scholars. Such open, scholarly exchange serves the common good by contributing to a broad public understanding of religious texts, traditions, and practices in the modern world. It is for these reasons, for example, that SBL does not endorse academic boycotts.

In 2012, SBL received a grant to explore the establishment of an international and independent network of scholars of the Qur’an. That grant led to the formation of the International Qur’anic Studies Association (IQSA) in 2014, now an independent affiliate of the SBL and an invaluable partner in the study of sacred texts. As a learned society, IQSA, like SBL, seeks to promote peace through understanding. We thereby stand with our colleagues in Qur’anic and Islamic studies to protest the ban on immigrants and refugees from Muslim countries.

Moreover, the ban encourages discrimination and promotes misleading and sometimes dangerous caricatures of religious people, practices, and texts. It also places obstacles to the travel of Muslim scholars in and out of the United States, and threatens the free exchange of ideas among the Society and partnering and affiliating organizations that advance learning and help make peace and understanding possible. Thus, the Society strongly opposes the ban and its implementation.

29 January 2017