

WHY
ISLAM IS
OUR ONLY
CHOICE

Muhammad Haneef Shahid



دار السلام للنشر
Dar-us-Salam Publications
Riyadh-Saudi Arabia

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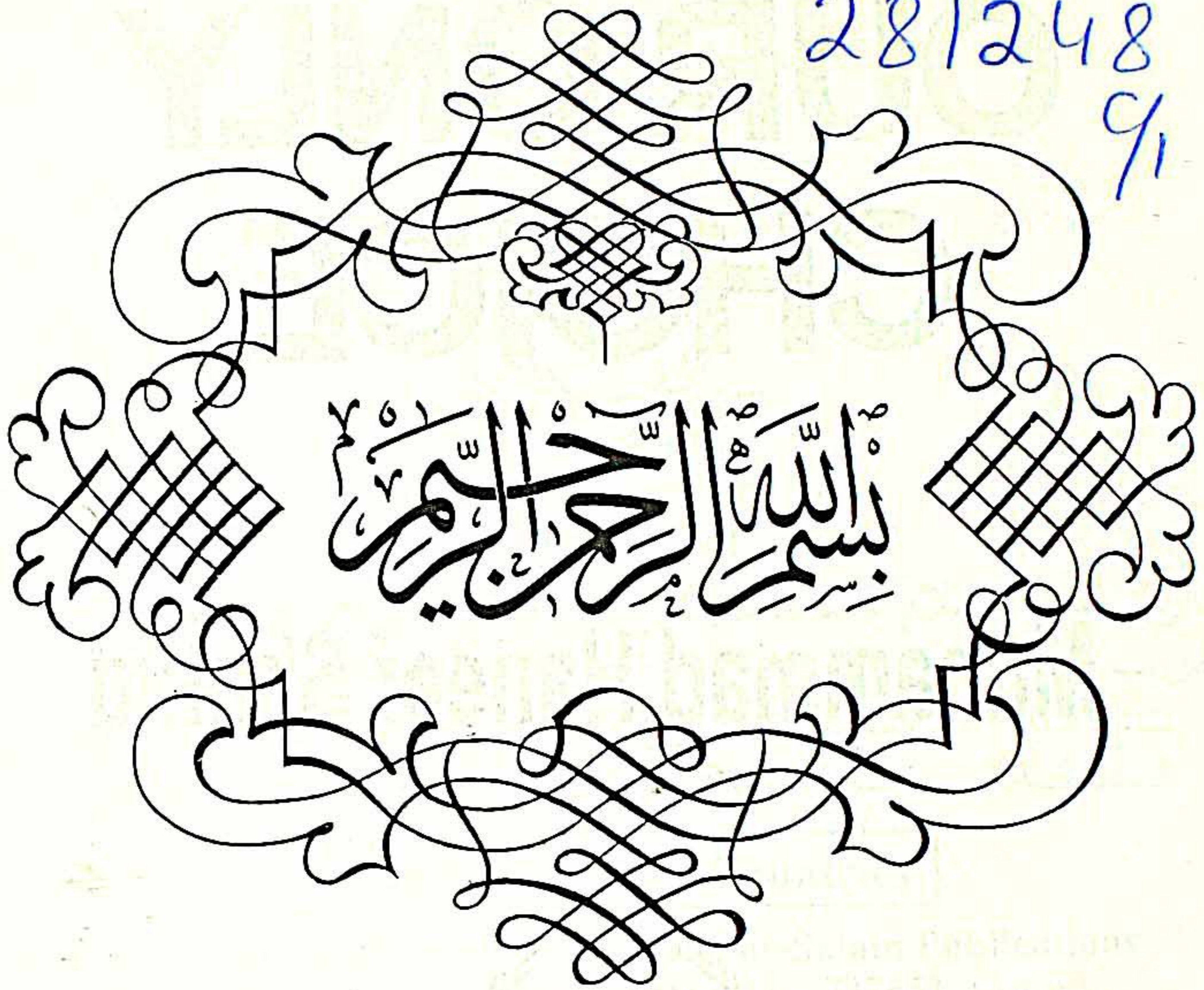
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In the Name of Allah, the Most
Beneficent, the Most Merciful

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From the Qur'ân and Ahadith

﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾^{جاءت}
 جو لوئی بھی

“And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not.” (Surah Al-An'am, 6:125)^[1]

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

“And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) then, compel mankind, until they become believers.” (Surah Yunus, 10:99)^[2]

﴿قُلْ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِنَفْسٍ مِّنْ نَّاسٍ سُلْطَانًا لَّا يُضِلُّهُمُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَكُونُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُ الْأَنْبَاءِ ۝ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ۝ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحَسَنُ مَا أَجَبَ﴾

“Say: Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides unto Himself those who turn to Him in repentance. Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest! Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), and work righteousness, *Tuba* (it means all kinds of happiness, or name of a tree in Paradise) is for them and a beautiful place of (final) return.” (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:27-29)^[3]

﴿ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ﴾

“And say: ‘The truth is from your Lord.’ Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve.” (Surah Al-Kahf, 18:29)^[4]

﴿ رَبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴾

“Perhaps (often) will those who disbelieve wish that they were Muslims (those who have submitted themselves to Allah’s Will in Islam - Islamic Monotheism, this will be on the Day of Resurrection when they will see the disbelievers going to Hell and the Muslims going to Paradise).” (Surah Al-Hijr, 15:2)^[5]

It is obligatory to have belief in the Messengership of the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Allah’s Messenger said:

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ! لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ، ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ.»

“By Him (Allah) in Whose Hand Muhammad’s soul is, there is none from amongst the Jews and the Christians (of these present nations) who hears about me and then dies without believing in the Message which I have been sent (i.e., Islamic Monotheism), but he will be from the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire.”^[6]

^[1-5] *The Noble Qur’ân* : Interpretation of the meanings of The Noble Qur’ân in the English Language; a summarized Version of At-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi & Ibn Kathir with comments from Sahih Al-Bukhari, by Dr. M. Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Riyadh, Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1994, pp. 331, 450, 377.

^[6] *Sahih Muslim*, the Book of Faith, Volume 1, Chapter No. 240.

Advent of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and how did a Jew enter the fold of Islam?

Ali (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“A Jew who was named so-and-so, a learned doctor, had some Dinars due from the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He demanded (them) back from the Prophet but he told him: ‘O Jew! There is nothing with me which I can give you’. He said: ‘O Muhammad! I shall not go away from you till you give me’. Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘In that case I shall keep sitting with you’. He sat with him. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prayed *Zuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, the last *Isha* and then *Fajr*. The Companions of Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were threatening him and were about to drive him out. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) drew attention to what they were doing with him. They said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! A Jew is detaining you.’ Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘My Lord prohibited me to oppress a covenantee or anyone else.’ When the day dawned, the Jew said: ‘I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and half of my property is in the way of Allah. Behold! By Allah, I have not done with you what I have done with you but to examine your descriptions in the Torah: Muhammad, son of Abdullah, his birthplace is Makkah and his place of migration is Taibah, his kingdom is in Sham; neither unmannerly, nor harsh, nor wandering the markets nor prone to indecency of word or treachery. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. This is my property. Pass order about it as Allah gave you wisdom’. The Jew had enormous wealth.”

[Baihaqi]^[1]

^[1] *Islamic Review*, June 1944, Vol. 32, No. 6. P P. 229, 230.

Publishers Note

The Graces of Allâh upon the humankind are numerous. But the greatest one is the Faith of Islam bestowed to humanity.

Those who have been blessed with it are actually the most fortunate persons. If one is awarded with Faith and guided to the Straight Way, it matters little for him whether he has been provided with worldly blessings like wealth, power, dignity etc. or not.

Islam is highly beneficial to humanity both in this life and in the life hereafter. It is a source of goodness and virtues in this world as it guides a man to lead a righteous life, elevates the mind and moral standards, and takes him out from darkness to light. And as regards in the life hereafter, it insures for him the Paradise adorned with the articles of pleasure and delight.

The book under study 'Why Islam is Our only Choice' comprises the personal remarks and observations by those lucky ones who were blessed with Islam. It has a detailed description as to how they were so impressed with Islam that obliged them to take such a major but uphill decision to abandon the religion of their forefathers. It is evident enough that Islam is the only religion which is so widely accepted by the large number of people each day.

These reverts belong to every class of society but mostly to the learned and intellectual ones.

The Compiler of this book, Mr. Muhammad Haneef Shahid is a beloved son of Pakistan, a renowned scholar, author and editor of a number of books. He has a deep love for Islam. He has spent most of his life in the field of learning and knowlege. He has dedicated his life to impart knowledge, specially of Islam to a wide range of people. I was introduced to him in 1993. In this short period, I was greatly impressed with his virtues and qualities.

Dar-us-Salam is publishing this compilation with the hope that it will provide to the seekers of Truth, the impressions of those persons who have find out the Truth in the form of Islam, and are enjoying its blessings.

Abdul-Malik Mujahid
General Manager
Dar-us-Salam Publications

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Dar-us-Salam Publications
P.O. Box: 22743, Riyadh 11416
Saudi Arabia.
Tel: 4033962 Fax: 4021659

PREFACE

To write a preface of a book written by a reputable research scholar, acclaimed as a "Man of Letters" in his home country of Pakistan, and whose works are well-preserved in one of the world's prestigious institutions, the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., U.S.A., is indeed, a rare privilege and a great honour.

This book of Muhammad Haneef Shahid, "Why Islam is Our only Choice," is part of his lifelong career as a research scholar in the service of Islam. It is a compilation of numerous narratives about the lives, experiences, previous beliefs as well as Islamic impressions and reasons of different personalities belonging to all walks of life as to why they reverted to Islam. It includes nobles, intellectuals, dignitaries, scientists, laureates, influentials, professionals and degenerated men down to the ordinary men and women in the street. The research work is taken from divergent nationalities from the four corners of the earth and covers the span of more than two centuries to the present. They were, in fact, a group of sincere people who came to understand the meaning and purpose of their lives and have arrived at the *Ultimate Truth*, that somehow, 'we belong to only one Creator and to Him alone is our return'. They are convinced that the present life is only transitory and that there will be a day of reckoning, when deeds will be judged according to the terms of the Omnipotent Creator Allah — the Eternal and Absolute, the Maker and Keeper of all creations.

"Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?" (*Surah An-Nûr*, 23:115)

"And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them without purpose! That is the consideration of

those who disbelieve! Then woe to those who disbelieve (in Islâmic Monotheism) from the Fire!” (*Surah Sâd*, 38:27)

Man is a part of the whole creation and, with inner feelings to submit himself, has the natural inclination to look for his Creator. This is what we call in Islam as *Fitrah*. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him - صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “Every child is born on *Al-Fitrah* (Islam) but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Magianism”.

Man knows that the earth is just a small particle of the whole creation in which he lives. In this small earth, creatures beyond numbers have appeared and continue to appear everyday. Man is awed by this phenomena. He cannot believe that all of his surrounding happened and continue to happen by chance. He realized that this universe is not a conglomeration of meaningless and uncoordinated objects. Logic tells him that all these cannot be without a creator, a designer, a controller, a governor and a keeper. But who can be the creator of this sprawling, magnificent, grand, majestic and limitless universe? There can be none other than the One Who is free from all flaw and weakness, possesses Divine Perfect Attributes, is the Infinite, All-Knowing and Whose Power knows no bounds.

This Creator is neither a man, nor an animal or a plant or also an idol or statue of any kind, because none of these mentioned can create itself or cause anything. Certainly, He must be different from His creation. Reason tells us that the maker must be greater than the things which he makes. Hence, enlightened men recognize the Creator and call Him Allah (God).

Allah says:

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): He is Allâh, (the) One. *Allâh-us-Samad* (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none coequal or comparable unto Him.” (*Surah Al-Ikhlâs*, 112:1-4)

Further, it is imperative that all these divine perfect attributes must vest in one omnipotent being. It is irrational for two or more personalities, having the same equal attributes to coexist. There must be one and only Supreme Being, possessing all the Divine Perfect Attributes to control everything. Plurality of deity, therefore, is absolutely ruled out because they are bound to collide.

Furthermore, man's knowledge has reached a point which affirms that everything in the universe is in complete harmony with the whole of creation. Each is interdependent and is governed by Divine laws (Laws of God) which determine their course of action and existence.

Islam is a religion based upon the surrender to the One True God, the concept of pure Monotheism (*Tauhid*), worship of the Only One True God. The name "*Islam*" in Arabic means 'submission and peace'. It is in submitting to God's Will that man attains peace in this life and the Hereafter. The Message of Islam concerns God, Who, in Arabic, is called *Allah*, and it addresses itself to human's profound nature. It concerns all human beings (men and women) as they are all created by Allah (God) but not as fallen beings. So, *Tauhid* is the highest concept of Godhood, for the knowledge of which Allah has sent Revelations to mankind in all ages through His Prophets. It was with this knowledge in the beginning that Adam was sent down to earth, and subsequently, passed on to generations through the Prophets of Allah that finally culminated in the Message of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

The belief in *Tauhid* dispels all clouds of ignorance and illuminates the horizon of reality - the One and Only True God. Therefore, Islam is not an innovation but a reassertion of the universal truth of all revelations which is; the Oneness of God.

This truth was asserted by all the Prophets down to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all). The essence of their Messages is one because their source is one. It is the

affirmation of that universal truth (*Tauhid*) - the belief and the worship of the Only One True God.

He says:

“Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): “We believe in Allâh and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibrâhim (Abraham), Ismâ‘il (Ishmael), Ishâque (Isaac), Ya‘qûb (Jacob) and *Al-Asbât* [the twelve sons of Ya‘qûb] and what was given to Musa (Moses), ‘Iesa (Jesus) and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allâh) we have submitted (in Islâm).” (*Surah Al-Imrân.3:84*)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was the last of the chain of Prophets and Islam is the last ordained religion of God to mankind. His Message was the “Qur’ân” - a comprehensive and universal guidance applicable for all times and all ages to the Day of Judgement, and which solves the problems of humanity and bring them in harmony with God’s Will.

“... This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (*Surah Al-Mâidah, 5:3*)

The Islamic way of life is based on the teachings of the Qur’ân and the *Sunnah* (records of teaching, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). The Qur’ân is the Inspired Book and was revealed to him in parts (through the agency of angel Gabriel) over a period of 23 years of his Prophethood. Whenever a portion of it was revealed, it was written by his faithful scribes (Companions) under his close supervision on palm leaves, parchment, bones, etc. Moreover, there were tens of thousands of the Prophet’s Companions who committed the Qur’ân to memory, and at present, by the millions. The Qur’ân is the inimitable Words of Allah (God) which has remained pure for the past fourteen centuries. It is the only Revelation

(Scripture) available today whose authenticity and accuracy is unchallenged.

“Do they not then consider the Qur’ân carefully? Had it been from other than Allâh, they would surely have found therein much contradictions.” (*Surah An-Nisa*,.4:82)

Proofs of the authenticity of the Qur’ân are too numerous to put them in this preface. The fact that in the study of the Qur’ân, we find references to data connected with scientific knowledge unveiled to mankind, provide ample proofs that the Revelation itself has truly emanated from Allah. For, indeed, no human work as early as during the time of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم), has proclaimed numerous natural phenomena of such intellectual depths, as those of scientific truths before their discovery by men in the late centuries. In early centuries (i.e., revelation of the Qur’ân up to the 15 century) men were unable to understand them because they did not possess adequate means of reassessing them. Those phenomena infused in the Qur’ân were only understood and confirmed by man after scientific study has opened the horizons for discovery. Some of these phenomena can be found in the following chapters of the Qur’ân: 21:33, 39:5, 55:33, 22:53, 26:66, 23:14.

But what astound most readers, is the Revelation in Chapter 10, verses 90, 91 and 92 of the Qur’ân which were discussed by Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French doctor, in his lecture at the French Academy of Medicine on November 9, 1976. It has something to do with what happened to the Pharaoh of Egypt, and Merneptah, the sovereign who persecuted the Israelites. The Israelites fled from Egypt led by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him - عليه السلام) and when the Pharaoh learned of their plot, he tried with his army to catch them. But God foiled his attempt by opening the Red Sea passage to the Israelites and when it was Pharaoh and his armies’ turn to cross, the Sea engulfed them and they were all drowned. However, there was no extra account in any of

the Scriptures of what happened to Pharaoh after that. But, the Qur'ân has revealed something for us regarding what happened, thus:

“So this day We shall deliver your (dead) body (out from the sea) that you may be a sign to those who come after you! And verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.).” (*Surah Yunus*, 10:92)

The experts of archeology and artifacts had discovered the remains of Merneptah in 1898 from an antique boat sunk at the bank of the Nile River. According to Dr. Maurice Bucaille, medical examination of the mummy showed that the body could not have stayed in the water for long, because it does not show signs of deterioration due to prolong submersion. Yet, surprisingly enough, the body was till intact after more than 3,000 years according to traditional beliefs which, now, bring to us additional concrete proofs of the authenticity of the Qur'ân since it was revealed earlier approximately 1,400 years ago.

Man is not only given different faculties for him to survive, but he is also endowed with reason to realize the meaning and purpose of his existence. This reasoning capacity helps man to visualize the Truth (Reality). And if he stumbles upon the truth, it becomes incumbent upon him not only to accept the truth, but also, to declare, to uphold, and to defend that truth, even a bitter truth. Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“Allah didn't give a gift better than reason.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

And Allah has warned mankind in His Book:

“This (Qur'ân) is a Message for mankind (and a clear proof against them), in order that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that He is the only One *Ilâh* (God — Allâh) — (none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh), and that men of understanding may take heed.” (*Surah Ibrahim*, 14:52)

In the final analysis, though man is given a free will (i.e., freedom of choice), yet he is not completely free. His will is only good when it is in conformity with God's Will. So, there is no option left for him, but to live a virtuous life according to God's Will in order to reap the benefits of heaven. Before he leaves this present life, he must be sure to accept the Decree of Allah:

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islâm, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.” (*Âl-Imrân*,3:85)

The order of the day is to submit ourselves to God by way of worshipping Him alone on His terms and never on our own: that is the Straight Path.

All praises belong to Allah (*Alhamdulillah*), after reading this preface and the whole book, I hope, Allah will show you the Straight Path. May the light of truth shine in your hearts and minds. May it lead you to peace and certitude in this life and eternal bliss in the Hereafter. *Ameen!*

“And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright” (*Surah Al-Baqarah*,.2:186)

Muhammad Ameen C. Cave

Islamic Da'wah Committee

World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)

P.O. Box 10845, Riyadh 11443, Saudi Arabia

Tel: (01) 464-1669 / 456-5431

Fax: (01) 464-1710

INTRODUCTION

We welcome and congratulate, from the core of our heart, those of our brothers and sisters who entered the fold of Islam. May Allah the Almighty bless them! They, of course, are very fortunate and lucky that Allah, the Creator of the universe, has bestowed His favours upon them:

“And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not.” (*Surah Al-An‘am* 6:125)

When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him - صلى الله عليه وسلم) came out with the Message of Oneness of Allah, they were the early Companions who readily and without any hesitation responded to the call. They did not embrace Islam with any selfish ends or motives. It is as clear as broad daylight that at the advent of Islam it was a very critical period for the Muslims. In those days to enter the fold of Islam meant to invite troubles, hardships and miseries for oneself. But they accepted Islam without any fear of troubles and atrocities. It is a sign of true Faith that when a man accepts it, believing it to be true and righteous, he holds to it with rock like firmness, under all odd circumstances, calamities, hardships and trials. So the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) embraced Islam in perfect sincerity and with true heart, with the result they endured all the hardships and afflictions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They remained steadfast in their Belief and as a result of their sacrifice Allah bestowed upon them His bounties:

“As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (i.e. Allah’s religion —

Islamic Monotheism). And verily, Allah is with the *Muhsinin* (good doers).” (*Surah Al-‘Ankabut*, 29:69)

and the response of the ‘true believers’ was very thought-provoking and heart-rendering. Allah says in the Noble Qur’an:

“And why should we not put our trust in Allah while He indeed has guides us our ways. And we shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us, and in Allah (Alone) let those who trust, put their trust.” (*Surah Ibrahim*, 14:12)

But those who were misguided and went astray, they rejected the call of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) although he invited them to *Tauhid* according to the injunctions of the Qur’ân:

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur’an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.” (*Surah An-Nahl*, 16:125)

Allah, the Knower of all things, addressing the jinns and men said:

“O you assembly of jinns and mankind! ‘Did not there come to you Messengers from amongst you, reciting unto you My Verses and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?’ They will say: ‘We bear witness against ourselves.’ It was the life of this world that deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.” (*Surah Al-An‘am*, 6:130)

If Allah had wanted and willed, He could have easily compelled everyone to accept Islam and strictly follow it, but He did not like to do so. He granted everyone freedom of choice. He sent Prophets for the guidance of mankind, but did not force or compel human beings to accept and follow them. Man was left

free to make his own choice in this regard. Allah the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful says:

“And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) then compel mankind, until they become believers. It is not for any person to believe, except by the Leave of Allah, and He will put the wrath on those who are heedless.” (Surah Yunus, 10: 99,100)

and at another place in the Noble Qur’ân, Allah the Creator of the universe says:

“And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one *Ummah* [nation or community (following one religion only i.e. Islam)] but they will not cease to disagree, except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy (the follower of truth — Islamic Monotheism) and for that did He create them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled (i.e. His Saying): ‘Surely, I shall fill Hell with jinns and men all together’.” (Surah Hud, 11: 118,119)

It is against the Plan of Allah to mislead any of His creature. Because according to the well-known *Hadith* of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

“Every child is born on *Al-Fitrah* (Islam), but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Magianism.”

In this connection, Allah the Cherisher and Nourisher of mankind says:

“And Allah will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid. Verily, Allah is the All-Knower of everything.” (Surah At-Taubah, 9:115)

On the contrary, Allah is pleased with them who follow what is right and forbid what is wrong.

“Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him.” (*Surah At-Taubah*, 9:100)

“Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise.” (*Surah At-Taubah*, 9:111)

So, we have seen that those who do righteous deeds and remain far from what Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) have forbidden, they will prosper and their abode will be in Paradise, but those who rejected the Faith and went astray and did what Allah and His Messenger forbade them to do, their abode will be Hell-fire and there they will remain forever.

Now the question arises, why Islamic teachings should be followed, when there are other religions? The first and foremost outcome of the pre-eminent position of Islam is that all the other religions have been abrogated and now Islam is the only religion approved by Allah:

“He it is Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islamic Monotheism) to make it victorious over all (other) religions even though the *Mushrikun* (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) hate (it).” (*Surah, As-Saff*, 61:9)

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (*Surah Al-Maidah*, 5:3)

Consequently, it is incumbent upon people belonging to every nation, country and age that they should follow Islam because when this religion is for all mankind and its Messenger has been for all creatures and has been regarded as the ‘Prophet of

Humanity', and 'Seal of the Prophets', the religion or reign of any other Prophet ceases to exist.

If someone does not accept his Prophethood and refuses to obey the religion of Allah, brought by him, it would not merely be a revolt against him but against the Creator of the universe who sent him with 'Guidance and Religion of Truth', and the last of His Prophets to the whole world:

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.” (*Surah Al-‘Imrân*, 3:85)

It is the Plan of Allah that Islam will prevail over all other religions and Islam will be the 'Religion of the Future' because it is the 'Religion of Allah' and 'Religion of Nature'.

It is known to nearly every student of Islamic history that when Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) started preaching *Tauhid*, there were handful of his followers, but due to his endless efforts and perseverance, the figure increased to thousands by the passage of time. There is no shadow of doubt that at the time of his last pilgrimage, when Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) delivered *Khutbah* on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, 10 A.H., there was a prodigious gathering of more than one hundred and forty-four thousand believers.

Because of the superiority of Islam over all other religions it is the most fast growing religion in the world today. According to our esteemed brother Ahmed Deedat:

“It is claimed from the following chart that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world:

“The overall increase of all the sects and denominations of Christianity was staggering 138 percent with the incredible increase of Islam by 235 percent in the same period of time of half a century. It is further affirmed that in Britain and the United States of America, Islam is the

fastest growing Faith. It is said that in Britain 'There are more Muslims than Methodists in the country.' The destiny of Islam is spelt out here in the clearest terms. Islam is to master, overcome and supersede every other faith."

In Arabic, the word is *Deen* (literally meaning 'way of life') to supersede all, whether it be Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Communism or any other 'ism'. This is the destiny of Allah's *Deen*.

The following figures show the increase/decrease during the last 50 years from 1934 to 1984:

Christianity	:	138 percent increase
Buddhism	:	63 percent increase
Hinduism	:	117 percent increase
Judaism	:	4 percent decrease
Islam	:	235 percent increase^[1]

According to the reports published recently in different newspapers and journals, the position of Islam is as follows:

"Islam has spread allover the world as we do not find a single country without having some Muslims.

"As a result of the spread of Islam, Muslim communities and minorities are now living in many areas and are representing unnegligible force. In fact, more than 40 percent of Muslims live as minorities in the world.

"The future of Islam in the West largely affects the future of the Islamic nation and the mankind in general. For Islam has become the Second wide spreading religion in

[1] *The Choice* (Vol. 1), by Ahmed Deedat, 1993, pp. 132-134

many European countries as the number of Muslims in Europe stands about 20 million.”^[1]

“A report by the Organization of Islamic Conference put the current world population at 5 billion and said it included 1.2 billion Muslims constituting about 23.2 percent. The report said 389 million Muslims are living as Muslims communities and minorities in non-member countries. According to the report, one in five people in the world is a Muslim. The report expected the world population to reach six billion by the year 2000 and said the Muslims will reach 1.611 billion constituting about 26.85 percent. It is also expected that the number of Muslim communities living in non-Islamic countries will reach about 500 million.”^[2]

According to the IINA report from London:

“About 400 million Muslims (one-third of the entire Muslims worldwide) are living as minorities among non-Muslim majorities in various parts of the world, according to Secretary General of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Dr. Mani Saeed Al-Juhani.”^[3]

According to Mr. Sami Baaghil, the conversion rate in the United States of America is:

“An estimated 50,000 Americans convert to Islam annually, like Edson, the majority are African-American. According to Muhammad Mehdi of the National Council of Islamic Affairs in New York: many of them believe

[1] *Riyadh Daily*, June 16, 1995, p. 7.

[2] *Riyadh Daily*, January 20, 1995, p. 7.

[3] *Riyadh Daily*, January 13, 1995, p. 7.

when their ancestors were brought here, they were Muslim.”^[1]

From the above-mentioned report, we have seen that there is no restriction on the Islamic rituals, and the Muslims enjoy freedom in religious matters. Mr. Warren Christopher confirmed this statement by saying:

“The United States does not regard Islam as a hostile religion. The United States respects Islam and rejects the idea that there is a necessary or fundamental conflict or hostility with Islam. The traditions of the religion are very consistent with our best traditions.”^[2]

According to another report, a total of 44 trainees representing all the segments of the U.S. army are taught Islamic fundamentals. So is the case of the U.S. prisons. Besides the distribution of Islamic literature, lectures are given to the prisoners.^[3]

In a special report to the *Saudi Gazette*, Mr. Sami Baaghil, wrote:

“In Blandenboro, N.C., butchers slaughter goats according to the rules of the Qur’ân. And in Fort Monmouth, N.J., an Army Captain makes history as the military’s first Muslim Chaplain.

“No one knows exactly how many of the world’s nearly 1 billion Muslims live here. The best estimate is at least 5 million--meaning Muslims could outnumber the USA’s 6 million Jews by early in the next century and make Islam the nations’ Second Largest Religion.”^[4]

[1] *Saudi Gazette*, February 13, 1995, p. 8.

[2] *Arab News*, November 2, 1994, p. 12.

[3] *Riyadh Daily*, 20 January 1995, p. 7.

[4] *Saudi Gazette*, October 17, 1994, p. 10.

As regards U.K., the statistics of the Muslims as given in the *Riyadh Daily* are as under:

“In Britain and Ireland there are about two million Muslims, third of them are children and fifth of them are youth.

“There are more than 1,000 mosques and hundreds of Islamic institutions in Britain.”^[1]

According to another report, *Riyadh Daily* writes:

“There are approximately 1½ million Muslims in Britain, about 20,000 of whom are estimated to be converts. Islam is thought to be the fastest growing religion in the U.K. The British Muslim Community consists mainly of people originating from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, but there are also substantial communities originating from the Middle East, Cyprus, Turkey, and South East Asia as well as British converts.”^[2]

Regarding Soviet Russia, Muslims constitute majority in nine Republics and autonomous regions.

“There are about 60 million Muslims in different states of Soviet Russia but the outside world seems to know little about them.

“In all, the Soviet Union consists of 16 states. At the time of the Communist revolution, the Muslims were in majority in eight states, they were in varying numbers.

“The Muslim majority areas in the Soviet Union are: (1) Uzbekistan, (2) Tajikistan, (3) Azerbaijan, (4) Georgia and

[1] *Riyadh Daily*, April 14, 1995, p. 2.

[2] *Riyadh Daily*, April 14, 1995, p. 2.

Armenia, (5) Kazakistan, (6) Kirghizia, (7) Tartar and Bashkir, (8) Kakeshia (Kavkaz) and (9) Crimea.”^[1]

As regards France and Italy, the Muslim population and rate of conversion is as follows:

“There are several million Muslims in France and the majority of them practice their religious duties and rites. I am not against this divine faith. On the contrary, I consider Islam a factor of stability in society and I am sorry that my religion, Christianity, is less dynamic than Islam. I am keen to see Muslims practicing their religious rites freely.” (These are the remarks of French Interior Minister, Charles Pasque which he gave while inviting Azhar scholars to France to explain the position of Islam).^[2]

“In France, Muslims represent about 7 percent of its population, while unofficial figures show that 38 percent of Muslims in France live in Paris and its suburbs.”^[3]

Regarding Italy, the position of the Muslims is quite surprising. Mr. Philip Pullella, writing from Rome, says:

“Although it still comes as a surprise to some in Catholic Italy, Islam has become the ‘Second-largest Religion’. There are some 650,000 Muslims in Italy, at least 85,000 of them in Rome. Community sources say that the figure could be as high as ‘One Million,’ if unregistered aliens are included. By comparison, there are only 35,000 Jews in Italy, 15,000 of them in Rome.”^[4]

[1] *The Straight Path*, February/March, 1990.

[2] *Saudi Gazette*, November 13, 1994, p. 3.

[3] *Riyadh Daily*, June 16, 1995, p. 7.

[4] *Arab News*, June 21, 1995, p. 12.

According to the recent statistics of the Muslims in Germany, the Muslim population has exceeded 1.6 million. This figure includes about 50,000 Germans who have joined the fold of Islam. Besides, there are 7,000 Muslims in East Germany.^[1]

Keeping all the above-mentioned figures and statistics in view, we conclude that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. It is heartening to note that the Islamic Centres, Institutions, Organizations and *Da'awah* Centres are doing a lot of propagation worldwide. But, inspite of all this, there is threat from anti-Islamic forces. It is worthy to mention that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the rise of radical 'Islamism' in the Muslim world poses the 'greatest threat' to the nation's security... If you have to define the true threat ... it is the 'wave of Islamic radicalism'.^[2]

As we have already stated that Islam will prevail over all other religions (*Surah As-Saff*,61:9) because it is a Message for all the worlds (*Surah At-Takwir*,81:26-29), and it is the same Message as was sent to the earlier Prophets (*Surah Az-Zukhruf*,43:44,45).

.....

To conclude, I am thankful to brother Muhammad Ameen C. Cave, of Islamic Da'wah Committee, World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for writing Preface to the book. It is really an honour to me that inspite of his preoccupations and commitments, he wrote an illustrious and thought-provoking Preface.

Brother Muhammad Ameen C. Cave, was born (1934) to a Christian family in the Philippines. Although his father was a Protestant and his mother a Roman Catholic, he was baptized in the Roman Catholic church. He is a Bachelor of Arts and LL.B.

[1] *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* (Birmingham), May 1991, p. 37.

[2] *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, June 1995, p. 22.

(Bachelor of Law). He served Tihama Contracting Company Ltd., Riyadh from 1984 to 1990. He has a deep knowledge of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He entered the fold of Islam on June 3, 1985. Presently, he is attached with World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and a very active member of the Islamic Da'wah Committee. It is worth mentioning that since August 1990, he has been preaching Islam and through his *Da'wah* (invitation) and *Tableegh* (preaching), more than 3 thousand fortunate persons have embraced Islam. The people who joined the fold of Islam through his endless efforts, are Americans, British, European, Hindus, Buddhist, Thais, Filipinos, etc. Brother Muhammad Ameen is a regular contributor of *Islamic Future*, published by World Assembly of Muslim Youth. He has written a series of articles, namely 'Prophecies in the Bible for the Advent of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)' which have been published in the *Islamic Future* and won name and fame for him. May Allah bless him and bestow his favours upon him!^[1]

My thanks are due to Brother Khalil-ur-Rahman Shah and brother Pervez Aslam Khan Burki for their help and cooperation. I am also thankful to all other friends who lent me a helping hand during the compilation of the manuscript. It will be injustice if I do not say a few words of thanks to Dr. M.M. Siddiqui for his valuable suggestions.

Lastly, I would thank from the core of my heart Brother Abdul-Malik Mujahid who has been known to me for the last two decades. He is not only '*Mujahid*' by name but also he has proved his worth by his 'deeds'. He is '*Mujahid*' in the true sense of the word. Besides, being a well-known religious scholar, he has made his mark in the book world. He knows the

[1] Brother Muhammad Ameen C. Cave's 'Interview and his views about his 'Reversion to Islam' appear under the title "*Why I embraced Islam*" in this volume in the alphabetical order.

bits and bytes of book-production and I am sure, by dint of his endless and tireless efforts, he will gain his 'goal,' *In sha Allah!* All my prayers are with him!

At the end, I must admit that I am a humble servant of Islam. I am thankful to Allah the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, Who gave me health, strength and patience with the result I became able to present this book to my esteemed brothers.

“I only desire reform so far as I am able, to the best of my power. And my guidance cannot come except from Allah, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent.” (*Surah Hud*, 11:88)

This is the first part in this series, very humbly presented to the esteemed readers. Any sort of advice and suggestions in this regard, will be highly appreciated.

Muhammad Haneef Shahid

10th July, 1995

King Saud University

P.O. Box No. 22480

Riyadh 11495

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chapter One:

CORRESPONDENCE

Views of the reverts about the Oneness of Allah (God), Islam, the Noble Qur'ân, Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and Islamic teachings. All these 'lucky' persons entered the fold of Islam by 'correspondence' with the '*Islamic Review*', London.

...to this by ... the ... of ...

...to this by ... the ... of ...

...to this by ... the ... of ...

CORRESPONDENCE

...to this by ... the ... of ...

Views of the reports about the ... of Allah (God), Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) teaching. All these "daily" ... the fold of Islam by ... the Islamic Review, London.

I live for Islam, the deliverer

Thank you for your spiritual encouragement, which, I must tell you, means a great deal to me. But above all, I thank you for receiving me into the great brotherhood of Islam. Praise be to Allâh.

Please let me know the name, of the kind friend who is going to send me, my soul's desire, a copy of the Holy Quran, that I may express gratitude to him. How different a spirit to that demonstrated by materialistic Christianity. How the world is in need of Islam. I live for the destruction of this horrible caste system (Christianity) which is slowly strangling my country, and I live for Islam, the deliverer.^[1]

A.M.T.

Wittersham, Sussex

After belief in the absolute Oneness of Allâh, His Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) became the pattern of my conduct and behaviour

My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of the Almighty Allah. Without this Divine guidance all learning, search and other efforts to find the Truth may even lead one astray. The moment I believed in the Absolute Oneness of God, His Holy^[2] Apostle Muhammad became the pattern of my conduct and the behaviour.^[3]

Prof. Abdul-Ahad Dawud, B.D.

[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, p. 306.

[2] The word 'Holy' is not the word that suits Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم as he is the slave and Messenger of Allâh. The concept behind this word in Christianity is mostly of being sacred or divine having 'direct' connection with Him, while the concept of Prophethood in Islam is that all the Prophets are merely blessed men, neither holy nor divine in that particular sense—*Editor*.

[3] *Islamic Review*. February 1929, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 40.

God will perfect His Light

I would like one copy of the *Review* sent to some English man or woman who, you think, might be interested in Islam, and to remove thereby a part of the barrier of lies that has been built around our Holy Faith by people of other religions, especially the Christian missionaries. 'They wish to put out the Light of God with their mouths, but God will perfect His Light'. I have been living in the Faith of Islam, now 40 years having been converted^[1], and made my first *Hajj* in the year 1311 A.H., and have constantly been working amongst my European friends to clear the Faith of Islam from the lies that have been built up like a wall around it by its enemies. I am certain that from the first days of Islam, the preachers of other faiths were afraid that if the truth about our Holy Religion were known, there would be very few that would adhere any longer to those other religions which Islam came to supplant.^[2]

(*Al-Haj*) **Abdullah Fadhil Williamson**

[1] In place of the words 'convert' 'converted' or 'conversion' we use 'revert' 'reverted' or 'reversion', as according to our Prophet صلى الله عليه و سلم every child is born on Islam, but his parents convert him to their respective religions. So whenever a non-Muslim enters into the fold of Islam, we use the words 'revert', 'reverted' or 'reversion' etc., for him — *Editor*.

[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1933, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 199,200.

Islam alone can bring peace to this world

I feel that I must write and express my heartfelt thanks to all my Muslim brothers who, on my embracing Islam have so kindly written or sent telegrams to me. I appreciate their good wishes more than my words can convey.

After the last war, when the world waded through streams of blood, I thought that all peace and goodwill was at an end but the fact that my brethren across the seven seas are so willing to extend a hand of friendship brings a message of hope and good cheer to me. This has proved to me more than anything else, that Islam alone can bring peace to this world.^[1]

C.E. Abdullah Archibald W. Hamilton

Selsey (Sussex)

January 8, 1924.

Islam is a Light

A search after Truth in matters spiritual has shown me that Islam is a Light which dispels the gloom of doubt and misgiving, a Faith which through its appeal to an acknowledgment of a simple and eternal Truth, and its revelation of the love of God, and His Wisdom and Justice, brings comfort and strength to the soul.

May the pure Light of Islam, by the grace of God, spread far and wide, and its peace prevail.^[2]

C.G.H. Abdur-Rahman

[1] *Islamic Review*. February 1924. Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 77,78.

[2] *Islamic Review*. February 1924, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 78.

Islam satisfies the spiritual craving of intellectual humanity

On Friday, the 5th of August, I was converted and became a member of the great worldwide religious fraternity of Islam. Prior to my conversion, I followed Christianity as a unit of the Roman Catholic persuasion; but owing to the ritualism practised and the dogmatism imposed, coupled with, what I may with justice term, the Pantheon of lesser deities (the Calendar of Saints), I found myself seeking another avenue for my religious expression. Protestantism, Methodism and the minor Christian sects drove me into a nebulous state, and I became apathetic as far as religion was concerned. But the innate urge to worship God truthfully goaded me, and I applied myself to the study of Christian metaphysics. In metaphysical Christianity I found some solace, but transcendentalism often conflicts with logic, and I needed something rational. Fortunately, I came in contact with Mr. Abdur-Rahman and some other Muslim gentlemen who, upon my asking, readily placed all Islamic literature available at my disposal. Incidentally I became deeply impressed with the tenets of Islam. I diligently studied Islam and compared its teachings with those taught to me formerly, and finally arrived at the blessed conclusion that the Religion preached by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is the only one which stands out prominently as connotative of the marvellous grandeur of God and one which satisfies the spiritual craving of intellectual humanity.^[1]

Abu Bakr Beaumont-Benjamin
(Formerly *Roderick Leofric Beaumont-Benjamin*)

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January-February 1933, Vol. 21, Nos. 1-2, pp. 26,27.

In the Qur'ân, there is a plain direction for everyone; it is logic and no mysticism

[Mr. Ahmad A. Allan was born in New Zealand some weeks after his father's death. He was brought to England soon after and was educated at private schools. Being the only child, was left much to his own devices - became an omnivorous reader as a schoolboy, acquired a copy of Sale's Qur'ân and was much struck with it — at that early age and could see through and was thoroughly disgusted with the hypocrisy of those professing Christianity and their leaders. Of recent years, he has studied the Qur'ân a great deal — therein is 'a plain direction for everyone'; it is logic and no mysticism the best commentary on the Qur'ân is: It requires none to teach and illustrate its meanings (so read it with an unbiased mind all you who wish to know the truth and seek guidance —*Editor*].

It must not be taken that I am 'renegading' from any creed, for, as a child, I received no particular religious instruction at school; the Scriptures and the Gospel were just used as a daily reading lesson, and not taught otherwise. I mention this, as I know converts often are looked upon with suspicion and contempt, particularly by the Osmanlis.

I have not been photographed since a boy as I had an idea that it was rather against the law (*Shariat*).

I never followed any particular creed. I think, when a child, I used to be occasionally sent to church for respectability's sake, but had a furious and instinctive dislike for its rituals, not being able to understand anything that I used to hear there.^[1]

Ahmad A. Allan

^[1] Islamic Review . September 1931, Vol. 19, No. 9 , P. 344

The Ideal Prophet

I read the book 'The Ideal Prophet' and it certainly cleared up many points regarding which I was in grave doubt - such as the Islamic teaching concerning the position of women, the love of one's fellowmen, and a number of other things, all of which seem to have been deliberately misrepresented to us here in Christian lands.

I feel that God has guided me in the right way by causing me to enquire into the religion of His Prophet Muhammad. I am no more a Christian. I hold that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet; I am a Muslim from now on.^[1]

B. Arifeen Ashman

May Pen, Jamaica

For many years my heart and thoughts have been Muslim

I sincerely wish to become a true Muslim, for many years my thoughts and heart have been Muslim. I, Arthur C. Hammond, son of G. Hammond, deceased, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion, that I worship the One and only Allah (God) alone, that I believe Muhammad to be His messenger, and servant, that I respect equally all prophets, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.^[2]

Arthur C. Hammond

Mombasa

[1] *Islamic Review*. November 1932, Vol. 20, No. 11, p. 361.

[2] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, p. 307.

Islam means peace

Islam means peace with the Creator as well as with His creatures. Obeying divine commandments, as shown in doing good to fellowmen is a noble ideal, and appeals to the intellect and heart.^[1]

Charles Abdullah Garner

I believe in the five principles of the Faith

I believe in the five principles of the Faith. I have been led into believing in them, not by intensive study of literature, but by logical reasoning. The Church Creed requires me to believe in the Holy Trinity. No priest of the Christian Church admits belief in three gods, and no priest has given me a satisfactory answer as to what the Holy Trinity is; nor has any priest convinced me that the Service of the Holy Sacrament is not a survival of paganism. I ceased attending communion services some years ago.

I do not believe in the literal interpretation of books of religion as do Puritans. They were written by men, men who were no doubt inspired, but were nevertheless human like you and me. There have been mistranslations and misunderstandings, and we have to be guided by these works and by our own consciences. I believe in prayer, because one thereby submits one's conscience to God for guidance.^[2]

D.B.

Old Sarum, Wilts.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. November 1926, Vol. 14, No. 11, p. 397.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. November 1933, Vol. 21, No. 11, p. 393.

The only way to the world peace lies in the true religion of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)

I admit that it (*Islamic Review*) has changed my views entirely about Islam and its Holy Prophet.

Some months back I used to think of Muhammad as a man who preached his religion through sword and advocated slavery, but thank God, I have seen the Truth now. I am now positive that the only way to the world peace lies in the true religion of Muhammad.^[1]

T.U. Daniell
Ghent, Belgium

The sublimity of the language of the Noble Qur'ân impresses me

It is with great pleasure that I take up my pen to tell you the process by which I came to adopt Islam.

I had never been fully convinced about the Trinity even in my earlier years. I could not understand how the Great God could beget a son on this earth of ours. I had always considered God as the Unattainable, the Almighty. I love and venerate all the prophets of Christianity because of their perseverance against adversity in spreading the word of God throughout their land. I felt strangely discontented, and my affairs did not progress on account of this uneasiness.

I have now read almost half of *Surah Baqarah* of the Quran. What impresses me about the Sacred Book is the sublimity of the language and the constant testimony to the glory of Allah.^[2]

Da'ud Couan
Dundee, Scotland

[1] *Islamic Review*. November 1933, Vol. 21, No. 11, p. 392.

[2] *Islamic Review*. October 1933, Vol. 21, No. 10, p. 360.

The Qur'ân is without doubt a revelation from God

The Quran is without doubt a revelation from God, the most High, sent down for guidance of mankind.^[1]

David (Omar) Nicholson

11th February, 1926.

To be a Muslim is the greatest blessing to be desired on the earth

I was always struck by the devout attention at prayer time shown by the worshippers entering their Mosque, much different from those of my own former church.

After reading those books and purchasing an English translation of the Quran in a secondhand bookshop, I formed the opinion that to be a Muslim was the greatest blessing to be desired on the earth. The faith of Islam is broad-minded, clean, pure, sent by God Himself or otherwise it would never have prospered as it has done.

The Quran which I have got is translated by the Rev. J.M. Rodwell. The translation, I believe, is correct, but the *Surahs* are mixed, and his comment in small print, shows a narrow mind and prejudice against our Blessed Prophet.^[2]

Earnest J. Bromley

Portsea, Portsmouth

[1] *Islamic Review*. July 1926, Vol. 14, No. 7, p. 287.

[2] *Islamic Review*. January-February 1933, Vol. 21, No. 1-2, pp. 29,30.

I am tired of a religion which is built upon legends and stories

[Mr. Ernest Linich was introduced to Islam by Mr. R.E. Walker, who accepted Islam in 1930. Mr. Walker writes that 'this young man is tired of a religion which is built upon legends and stories of past ages. He wants a solid foundation to build his character on. He does not find it in the Christian religion; hence his conversion to Islam'—*Editor*].

Mr. Ernest Linich declared:

I, Ernest Linich, son of Franz Linich, do hereby faithfully, and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion; that I worship One and only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His messenger and servant that I respect equally all prophets - Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah^[1]

Ernest Linich

Islam is unity

You ask if I would like a Muslim name. Certainly, why not? I think "Muhammad" would be very suitable, as it will always tend to keep me in remembrance of him who brought the Good Tidings (praised be his name).

My reasons for embracing Islam are as follows:

^[1] *Islamic Review*. February 1931, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 41.

- a) Sub-consciously I have always been a Muslim, but for years have struggled against the fear of social ostracism, which, thanks be to Him, is no longer a hindrance.
- b) Islam is unity, and has successfully broken down the barrier of racial differences and has consolidated humanity as no other Faith has ever done.
- c) Its prayers are unvarying, yet devotedly beautiful and substantial, 'and like the flowers of the narcissus, feed the soul.'
- d) It demands pilgrimage, to test the earnestness of man, and gives him the experience of satisfaction, for in giving so little he receives so very much.^[1]

Ernest T.W. Blackmore

Islamic prayers are so full of simplicity and glory

You can imagine, then what delight I felt when I learned of a religion ... whose prayers are said at any and all times, and so full of simplicity and glory that one feels delighted in addressing the Mighty God through them.^[2]

G. Fitzgerald Lee

Islam can solve the world's difficulties

During my stay in India, I have come in daily contact with Mohammedans and have found them exceptionally faithful both from a religious and a worldly point of view and in consequence have weighed up both Christianity and Islam - the latter being to

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1933, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 201.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1927, Vol. 15, No. 6, p. 185.

my mind more likely to solve the world's difficulties and more satisfying to the spiritual needs of mankind than the former.^[1]

G.H.F.
Southsea Hants

Islam is a clean and wholesome faith

Not satisfied with many of the tenets of the Christian faith, I studied the Holy Quran. Islam is a clean, wholesome faith, and makes the salvation of man man's own duty, and not dependent on the sacrifice of a 'son of God'.^[2]

Geo T. Tyler

Islam has wonderful strength

I bought a copy of the Holy Quran ... began to study it ... talked ... with Arab friends ... and it was thus I realized the wonderful strength of Islam, and embraced it.^[3]

H.P. Flisher Ahmad

Islam is the ideal Faith - the natural Faith- and the only real Faith

Now, I have given myself a certain period of time in which to thoroughly probe my conscience and inmost feelings concerning the real meaning of "religion" and as to how it appeals to me. I

[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1933, Vol. 21, No. 8, p. 281.

[2] *Islamic Review*. December 1926, Vol. 14, No. 12, p. 487.

[3] *Islamic Review*. February 1928, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 41.

can say that I am convinced upon one supreme point - the utter hypocrisy of the whole Christian Faith as at present existing throughout the world.

In the first place, there is absolutely no spirit of Oneness at all. The many sects are almost too numerous to count, and they seem to be increasing every year. At the present time the whole Christian Faith is a sham, and the Church truly has no hold upon the vast majority of people.

Society - social position - this is the religion of England and in order to attain and keep social position, one goes to 'church'.

The wonderful and beautiful religion of Islam has opened my mind in a manner that I am unable to express in words. It seems to be the ideal Faith - the natural Faith - and the only real Faith.

I feel that it is hardly necessary to say that it is my Faith absolutely, and it is with very great and deep pleasure that I ask to be admitted into the all-wonderful Brotherhood of Islam.^[1]

Hamiy uddin Harris

**Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) gave to
the world the classic of classics which does not
clash with science**

The Western world has been slow to recognize the sterling qualities of Islam, and it has been very reluctant to acknowledge the debt it owes to the early Muslims for their contribution to the progress of civilization, the science and culture. The world today owes much to that greatest of all the prophets, Prophet Muhammad of blessed memory.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1922, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 190,191.

The Islamic faith is the only monotheistic faith in existence. It does not include a catalogue of saints nor a mathematical inconsistency like the Christian Trinity - three in one and one in three. It is a faith which has successfully withstood the ravages of intolerance and malignity. It is worthy of a most diligent study and its practice creates harmony, peace and morality.

A very learned librarian of Europe has established the fact that there are in existence today over 150,000 authorized versions of the New Testament alone. Which is the correct one? The question is unanswerable. But, in this respect the Muslim is not confronted with such a perplexing problem. There is but one Quran. Its authenticity is unquestioned by friend or foe.

So, too, if we consider the comparative qualities of the various founders of world religions, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not lose his head in the clouds of idealism; and he lived as a man amongst men, practiced that which he preached and inspired emulation amongst his followers. Unlettered and unlearned, yet he gave to the world the classic of classics which does not clash with science nor does it contain the revolting tales found in the Bible.^[1]

Harry E. Heinkel

I have found to my entire satisfaction and peace the teaching and practice of Islam

I have reached Islam through a great maze of studies - rationalism, metaphysics, science, philosophy and the doctrines of various Christian sects - extending over many years. All these doctrines and 'isms' offered in turn divergent specifically individual points of view. They seemed, at first sight to afford

^[1] *Islamic Review*. July 1933, Vol. 21, No. 7, pp. 240,241.

satisfactory solutions of the great problems of life and death (and the hereafter), but when examined critically they produced no evidence of the continuity of the life after death ...

I owe to physical research my emergence from all such doctrines and philosophical quagmire. To my mind it has produced indubitable proofs of man's survival of physical death, and, therefore, disposes off the agnostic's contentions about it as thoroughly as it does the Christian's claim to an exclusive and privilege place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Once satisfied that man does continue his existence of this physical life, I began to need a religion more free from dogma and mediaevalism - in short, a religion more conformed to explications in accordance with the whole manifestation of Nature and the Universe, and I have found that, to my entire satisfaction and peace, in the teaching and practice of Islam.^[1]

Henry Sandbach
Mold Flint, Wales
October 15, 1931

**I found the real peace and blessing that
I was striving for**

I was brought up a Lutheran from a child but after I grew up, could not find the real peace and blessing that I was striving for, I went to the high Church of England but could not there even find the real peace I wanted until I met Muhammad Allum, our wonderman, the great healer of our people, and I sincerely thank Muhammad Allum for pointing out the true way to God.

My daughter, Effie Halimah Schwerdt, embraced Islam 3 years ago living at Adelaide, South Australia.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1932, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 1.

[We produce hereunder the declaration of Mr. Schwerdt in which he declares:]

I, Henry Schwerdt (74) son of Robert Schwerdt, of South Australia, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion, that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets - Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah

(There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).^[1]

Henry Schwerdt

Qur'ân is the Word of God

The beauty and profound understanding of the Quran is undoubtedly something which cannot fail to draw the admiration of any man who cares to study it. A most remarkable fact about the Quran is that it has not suffered at the hands of the translators as other books have done. All Muslims of the East, both far and near, understand, love and respect the Quran as it was written and feel that it is the Word of God. Another remarkable fact about the Quran is that there has not been and there is not one who can write anything to equal its beauty, philosophy and simplicity; and that, in spite of its being so voluminous, one can find quite small boys who know it by heart; whereas a much smaller book could never be so learnt, simply because it would not appeal to them as does the Quran.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January, 1937, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 1.

It is almost impossible for a Muhammedan to forsake the study of his Quran when once he has begun it; because it is so beautiful and inspiring, and contains nothing but what is true.

I do not believe that Christ was the son of God, but I believe that he held the same place as Muhammad, i.e., a Prophet of God, as also was Moses.^[1]

J.H.D.

Straightforwardness and logical footing is the basis of Islam

I think one of the happiest moments of my life was experienced on the 22nd August.

It was on this very memorable day that I became a Muslim. I had been seriously contemplating the step for nearly a year, during which time I made a fair study of Islam.

The part which first became embedded in my mind was the plain straightforwardness and logical footing on which this religion has its basis.

Oft of an evening I have been riding along the waterways in Egypt and have stood and admired the simple way in which the people worship; moreover, one is struck with the devotion of the individual who realizes he is in direct communication with God.

Eventually I found I was unable to continue to follow the doctrines in which I had been brought up.^[2]

Captain Jalaluddin Davidson

[1] *Islamic Review*. April-May 1924, Vol. 12, Nos. 4 -5, p. 183.

[2] *Islamic Review*. November 1919, Vol. 7, No. 11, p. 393.

Islam appeals to me ...!

The special features of Islam which appeal to me are: the Oneness of God, freedom from sectarianism, and the abolition of priesthood.^[1]

James E. Stookes

Islam is the True Faith

I was first attracted to the faith in 1917, when I heard a Muslim speaker in London. He had the effect of shattering my belief in Christianity. Now, I believe Islam to be the True Faith.

I have been trying hard to convert my wife. She is unfortunately, a Roman Catholic, but I am convinced that, by the grace of Allah, I shall eventually succeed.^[2]

John Fisher
Newcastle-on-Tyne

Religion of Allah

Certain unauthorised versions^[3], can be bought quite cheaply, and I have one which contains anti-Islamic footnotes and states that the Holy Prophet (may Allah Bless Him) received his tuition from Christian monks.

It gives me great pleasure to state that my wife has not renounced Catholicism, and I am convinced that could she attend one Muslim service, her conversion would be complete.

[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1926, Vol. 14, No. 9, p. 317.

[2] *Islamic Review*. February 1934, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 55.

[3] Various translated versions of the Noble Qur'ân

It means much to me that my two boys, when they are old enough, will be able to follow the Blessed Religion of Allah.^[1]

John Fisher
Newcastle-on-Tyne

Islam eases my conscience

After a few weeks of careful study I could compare the Holy Quran with the Bible. It was obvious that I should follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. My conscience demands that I should follow.

The sincerity and simplicity of his religion appeals to me, and to ease my conscience, I must and will follow Prophet Muhammad.

There are no mysteries in his teachings, every little thing is explained to us in a clear manner. I earnestly hope and pray that when I go back to my people in Wales, Allah (all praise is due to Him) may use me as an instrument in His Hands to open their eyes and lift them up from the darkness in which they are sunk.^[2]

D.H. Jones
September 11, 1931

[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1935, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 109.

[2] *Islamic Review*. October 1931, Vol. 19, No. 10, p. 382.

Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) lived a system of ethics which stands alone

A man who, towards middle age, changes his religion may justly claim to have good reasons for an action of paramount importance in his life.

I cannot believe that a system of ethics is enhanced by abnormalities which capture the popular imagination but are rejected by a logical being. So the Christian traditions surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, the belief in the Trinity, and in the Resurrection are not only unnecessary but positively distasteful to those who understand that perfection needs nothing to support it in the way of propaganda.

Again where is the historical proof of Jesus Christ's life as portrayed in the Bible? Is it not extraordinary that history, which chronicles with certainty events hundreds of years before Christ, makes but the vaguest references to any person at all answering to the description of Jesus? Many arguments may be advanced to prove that New Testament phenomena rests but on a foundation of faith.

There are no distinctions in Islam. Muslims of all colours and nations come together without that pharisaical pride, which even the Christian clergy are not free. Muslims rich and poor, are distinguished by an implicit faith in God. The Holy Prophet Muhammad taught us that material things are of little account and pointed the way to Paradise. The Holy Prophet lived a system of ethics which stands. It is the Divine message practically illustrated by one specially chosen.

Muslims glory is in the fact that nothing supernatural or of a miraculous nature attaches to their belief, and when I reflect on the simplicity of Islam and on Muslims' ever-present

consciousness of human insignificance before God, I am proud to be a follower of the greatest Prophet of all time.^[1]

A. Kane

Islam is the intelligent and sincere Faith

Of the insincere and blatantly unconcerned Christian teaching I am utterly sickened; its dogmas are nauseating and its ministers repulsive. My brain cries out for some more intelligent and sincere faith, and I think, I have found it.^[2]

Lionel Ashworth

London

I find in Islam everything

The copy of the Holy Quran and the other Islamic literature which I have received during the past few weeks has impressed me tremendously.

I find in Islam everything that I wanted from Christianity but failed to find there. The beliefs which I had before I encountered Islam were very vague - mainly, I suppose, because I had not really considered them sufficiently. You have offered me a religion which seems to me to be perfect in all its various aspects.^[3]

T.H. McC Barklie

Clontarf, Dublin

[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1930, Vol. 18, No. 10 (The Failure of Christianity), p. 345.

[2] *Islamic Review*. September 1931, Vol. 19, No. 9, p. 342.

[3] *Islamic Review*. August 1933, Vol. 21, No. 8, p. 280.

**I feel convinced that in Islam there are all
important points which indicate that
Christianity remains incomplete**

Having been brought up from childhood to manhood in Christianity, and being familiar with all the elements of that religion, I feel convinced that in Islam there are all important points which indicate that Christianity remains incomplete. I became fully convinced when day after day I watched Muslims at prayer, and observed the cleanly way in which they confront^[1] their Maker.

I became attracted and kept reading books ... and which finally have brought about my conversion to the faith of the last Holy Prophet Muhammad.^[2]

Muhammad Mustapha Colley
Bathurst, Gambia

**The conception of Islam is as wide as
humanity itself**

The conception of Islam is as wide as humanity itself ... and is not obscured by such pagan beliefs as Atonement, Redemption and Saviourship — the basis of the Christian religion ... It is belittling to our intellects to be expected to believe that belief in these myths, borrowed from creeds of the Dark Ages of ignorance and superstition, will be essential for our salvation. The books on Islam I have read and am passing them on among my friends, so that they may get some gleamings of the truth so long debarred to them.^[3]

Omar Ali R.T. Dobson
London

[1] Actually, here instead of the word 'confront,' the use of 'stand in front of' would have been more appropriate — *Editor*

[2] *Islamic Review*. November-December 1938, Vol. 26, No. 11-12, p. 401.

[3] *Islamic Review*. March 1929, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 81.

**I did not believe in the Trinity. The religion
of Islam breathes an unparalleled spirit
of toleration**

For the past few years I had been gradually slipping away from the Church of England. I had taken considerable thought concerning its ... dogmas, and have come to the conclusion that they are no good. I could not believe in anything except a human conception of Christ... and hence did not believe in the Trinity, (therefore, I embraced Islam).

The religion of Islam, breathes an unparalleled spirit of toleration towards other religions by insisting not only on a respect for the founders of other religions but an actual faith in them. It is a strange fact that while a fanatical Hindu, Jew, or Christian can afford to show disrespect to Prophet Muhammad, a Muslim can only, at the peril of his faith, reciprocate that feeling towards Buddah, Moses, or Jesus.^[1]

Sir Omar Hubert Rankin (Wellington)

**Broad-minded teachings of Islam caused me
to embrace Islam**

Broad-minded teachings of Islam caused me to study the Quran more closely, and I embraced the faith.^[2]

J. Omar Lester
Manchester

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1929, No. 17, No. 1, pp. 1, 430.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1926, Vol. 14, No. 6, p. 85.

The simple beauty of Islam has brought us peace

We think that the teachings of the Christian Church are too dogmatic ... How noble a life you may lead, yet, if you do not agree, you are doomed for ever. The simple beauty of Islam has brought us peace and understanding, and we are quite happy.^[1]

Mr. & Mrs. G. Petterson

The Islamic Religion is just what I have been wishing for

The Islamic Religion is just what I have been wishing for; it is so easy to understand, so natural and beautiful. I have read it over and over again. I know it cannot be anything but wonderful and good for me to study it, especially as my own religion has been impossible for me to believe. I never could believe that anyone could die for peoples' sins. I always believed that Jesus was one of the greatest and best persons that ever lived, one of the prophets. How can it be possible that we, if we could not believe, Jesus had died for us, should be lost for ever? I have been thinking of the multitude of people having other beliefs. How could it be possible that God who is love should be so cruel? I know He is not so. I think religion is necessary for happiness and every one who can believe in his religion and daily study and think and wish to do what is right and ask God to help him, and really believe and know that God can do any thing that he thinks is best for him, to leave everything with God and to live after the golden rule, anyway to try hard to do so, is safe and can be happy.^[2]

R.B.

Stockholm, Sweden

[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1927, Vol. 15, No. 10, p. 345.

[2] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, pp. 306,307.

I find peace and comfort in Islam

It was a pleasure to read them (the books). Somehow I found peace and comfort in Islam. I never felt satisfied with the Christian religion, something was lacking in it to my idea. Such passages as 'Born in Sin', etc., did not appeal to me.

Here indeed, I felt, was a true religion ... I hope to improve and become a worthy follower of Islam.^[1]

Robert E. Walker

Edinburgh

In reality, I hate Christianity, so I cannot afford to quarrel with my bread and butter

The name which you have chosen for me will do very nicely, and I will adopt it forthwith.

A lady called upon me two days ago to ask if I would care to attend her Church - Wesleyan. I informed her that I was a Muslim. Her reply rather shocked me. She said: "I myself do not believe in the Christian Religion, and in reality I hate it, but I am employed by a minister to deliver tracts and to try to increase the membership of the Church, so I cannot afford to quarrel with my bread and butter." Do you think it is 'playing the game' and acting honourably to accept payment for assisting a particular religion and then saying bad things concerning it to others?^[2]

E.J. Sadik Bromley

Portsmouth

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1930, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 1.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1933, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 202.

Islam coincides with my views

I have now been over a year in my adopted faith, and I would like to say that in proportion as my knowledge of Islam increases, my conviction and sincerity rise to greater heights. I celebrated my anniversary by writing to the Vicar of the Church where I was baptized, confirmed and received communion, telling him that I no longer believed in the tenets of the Christian faith. I had taken the only possible step and embraced a religion which coincided with my views, namely, Islam.^[1]

Salim R. De Grey Firth
Leeds

Islam appeals to conscience and reason

Islam appeals to conscience and reason, and sets man above sectarian or racial prejudice. It reforms human character by instilling into him the cosmopolitan creed of God and nature - service of mankind.^[2]

Togo Tzushima
London

Islam teaches self-reliance without the aid of priesthood

Islam teaches self-reliance without the aid of priesthood and so helps us to find ourselves. It is that human touch and that self-reliance which is so much needed, today to cement our

[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, p. 305.

[2] *Islamic Review*. November 1927, Vol. 15, No. 11, p. 385.

civilization and commercial life, bringing all races together in one great brotherhood in the cause of humanity.^[1]

A. Vaughan-Spruce
Worcester

Islam is simple and reasonable

The thing about Islam that appeals to me as portrayed by the *Review* is that it is so simple and reasonable, uncluttered as it is by a lot of saints, dogma and ritual.

Though I am a member of the Anglican Church, I was not raised in the Church, but became a member after I was twenty years of age. I have received, and still do, much comfort from my Church but cannot agree with it on many points of faith and dogma.

As for myself, I believe that Islam offers a more satisfactory solution to the problems of our modern civilization than does Christianity. Therefore, I am sure that there are many people in this country who would embrace Islam if they could be brought in contact with it. They are not satisfied with Christianity as it is taught and practised.^[2]

Winthrop Kimball

[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1928, Vol. 16, No. 9, p. 305.

[2] *Islamic Review*. January-February 1933, Vol. 21, Nos. 1-2, p. 27.

Islam is a beautiful religion

Islam is a beautiful religion, and those who keep the precepts must be living as near to God as it is possible for mankind to do, and thereby find peace.^[1]

Ameena Agnes Deeves

Islam has overwhelming advantage over Christianity

The next result of my careful study is to have an immense admiration for Muhammad, the great Prophet and Reformer, and for his democratic religion, which I now feel it a great satisfaction and happiness to me to embrace.

Though I quite admit that reformed Christianity is a great religion, yet I cannot possibly ignore that Islam does not only teach the best principles of Christianity, but has also without any doubt an overwhelming advantage over Christianity in the sense of its philosophical and spiritual ideals and in the rules which it lays down for a sounder social system.^[2]

Miss Amina A. Bamford
Kew Road, Richmond S.W.
December 10, 1914

Islam gives me a God worthy of worship

I have found in Islam a religion that is compelling in its simplicity. My early thoughts of God did not inspire reverency

[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1926, Vol. 14, No. 10, p. 357.

[2] *Islamic Review*. January 1915, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 17.

so much as fear; the 'Wrath of God' seemed more real than 'His Mercy'.

'What we think of God moulds our very actions!

'Islam gives me a God worthy of worship and an inspiration to follow'.^[1]

Amineh Browne

Islamic Faith is the most devout

The Church of England, unfortunately, is too narrow and bigoted, and the whole thing seems to lack philosophy and it does not seem altogether a simple faith... Islamic faith is the most devout... carrying a vast amount of truth and knowledge with it.^[2]

Miss Eileen Rahima Lacey
Worcester

Islam has taught me the habit of prayer and belief in One and only God

Having ceased to believe in the various dogmas of Christianity, I have embraced Islam. Islam has taught me the habit of prayer and belief in One and only God (Allah). I have now a far happier outlook on life than heretofore. Thus Islam became my choice, my spirit having guided me to the one true Religion.^[3]

Halima Marie Matthews

^[1] *Islamic Review*. May 1931, Vol. 19, No. 5, p. 145.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1928, Vol. 16, No. 6, p. 185.

^[3] *Islamic Review*. July 1930, Vol. 18, No. 7, p. 225.

Islam's pure and simple tenets and sincere brotherhood are marvellous

After my first visit to the Mosque, on one Eid day, I became interested in Islam, and eventually embraced it. Its pure and simple tenets and sincere brotherhood are marvellous.^[1]

Miss Hamida B. Bond
London

I feel happy to embrace the true, simple, sincere and natural faith of Islam

I feel happy to embrace the true, simple, sincere and natural faith of Islam. It is free from dogma. There is no intercession (priesthood) in it. Its broad-mindedness and elasticity, with simple principles appeal to my reason.^[2]

Jessie Ameena Davidson

The tenets of Islam are practicable and reasonable

The Christian dogma and superstition does not appeal to me, and the tenets of Islam are practicable and reasonable.^[3]

Miss Joan Fatima Dansken
London

[1] *Islamic Review*. December 1927, Vol. 15, No. 12, p. 425.

[2] *Islamic Review*. June 1926, Vol. 14, No. 6, p. 197.

[3] *Islamic Review*. October 1929, Vol. 17, No. 10, p. 345.

A lot of present-day troubles of the world can be solved by following the principles of Islam

Having read some of the articles in the *Islamic Review* and particularly the correspondence that is published regularly in it, I had decided to change my faith to Islam many months ago but I was not quite sure of myself. I wanted proof that I was doing right. I am not quite well versed in the Islamic literature yet what little I have read from the Holy Quran I am more than convinced that Islam is the only True Religion based on equality. If I may say so a lot of present-day troubles of the world can be solved by following the principles of Islam, which means peace.

[The following is the declaration of faith of Miss Davies:]

I, Miss Myfanwy Davies, of Hampton Street, S.E. 17, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets - Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others - and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah

(There is but one God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger)^[1]

Miss Myfanwy Davies

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1939, Vol. 27, No. 6, p. 201.

In Islam salvation is offered to men and women alike

When I happened to come across the utterances of Paul and other early Fathers towards womenkind - i.e., 'An organ of the devil', etc., I studied the religion of Islam, and in this I find the salvation offered to men and women alike, without intercession of priests.

Your *Review, Sources of Christianity and Ideal Prophet* are really very interesting, and if these books are broadcasted among the educated Christian quarters, it will no doubt, make them get disgusted with the so-called Church Fathers' inventions which they usually introduce from time to time.^[1]

Miss J.C.A. Perera

Islam applies to the body as well as to the soul

More than anything else in Islam is the distinguishing feature of unity. Even in Unitarian Churches, though there is a desire for absolute unionism, the services are nearly all different, and its members differ greatly though they have the same principle at heart. The only hold any Church could have, the right to hold over its members would be that of moral right regarding their actions, and since there is only one morality there should be only one Church; instead, however, their laws are built on dogma and creed instead of morality. However beautiful may be the ideas, they become merely mechanical and artificial when forced.

Islam takes into consideration every point and phase of life. It applies to the body as well as to the soul, on account of its hygiene. Its simplicity acts as a calm upon the mind, and tends to produce peace and comfort, rather than distraction by ritual, music, and religious pictures and performances. Islam is a religion open all day

^[1] *Islamic Review*: June 1927, Vol. 15, No. 6, p. 224.

and every day of the week, and not only on Sundays, merely to be forgotten till the next Sunday comes around.^[1]

Shamsa Aameena
(An English Muslim Lady)

In Islam ... our God is the God of mercy and compassion

In Islam, we need no intercession, for our God is the God of mercy and compassion. We are not born in sin, but come into the world with a soul as pure and white as the driven snow and that we all have the chance of entering the Kingdom of Heaven and not as the Christian faith says:

‘Unless ye be baptized ye cannot enter in the kingdom of heaven’.^[2]

Teresa Gordon

[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1917, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 154,155.

[2] *Islamic Review*. January, 1927, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 1

and every day of the year...

...the first day of the year...

...the second day of the year...

...the third day of the year...

...the fourth day of the year...

...the fifth day of the year...

...the sixth day of the year...

Chapter Two:

VIEWS IN BRIEF

- a) **Views of the Reverts in brief about Islam**
- b) **Views of the Reverts in brief about the Noble Qur'ân**
- c) **Views of the Reverts in brief about the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)**

Chapter Two

VIEWS IN BIKER

- a) Views of the Reverts in Biker about Islam
- b) Views of the Reverts in Biker about the Noble Qur'an
- c) Views of the Reverts in Biker about the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)

Chapter Two:

a) Views of the Reverts in brief about Islam

Islam guides humanity in the daily workday life

I would like to say that whereas Islam guides humanity in the daily workday life, the presentday so-called Christianity, indirectly in theory and invariably in practice, teaches its followers, it would see, "to pray" to God on Sundays and to "prey" on His creatures for the rest of the week.^[1]

Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton
Sussex, England

Islam is indeed what I wanted!

It is in the belief that in it, I have at last, found the True Religion which brings peace and contentment, that I have turned to Islam.

I read books on almost every kind of faith until I came to Islam, and the more I read of Islam, the more certain I became that I had found something which was more convincing to me in the nature of what I was looking for, than any I had tried before.

Having then decided that Islam was indeed what I wanted, I realized that I must find someone to whom I could appeal for help and advice. It now remains for me to do my utmost to become a true and good follower of Islam.^[2]

Abdur-Rahman Stanley Anyan
England

[1] *Islamic Review*. February 1924, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 77.

[2] *Islamic Review*. April 1936, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 139,140.

The Religion of the Future will be Islam and nothing else

It was in El-Kuds that I received my first impression of the beauty of Islam. What I had known before about this religion was only what is being taught in schools nearly all over Europe - that Muhammad was but a plagiarist of Christianity and Judaism, and that the faith he founded was a wild, and barbarous faith which had for its aim the massacre of poor Christians, especially those in Armenia.

Christianity is going farther and farther from God, because it has made the prophet Jesus God.

It is my hope and belief that Islam has a future, especially in Northern Europe where people today are sighing for a religion which will give them more than Christianity, which has failed in every respect, and that the religion of the future will be Islam and nothing else.^[1]

Ali Ahmad Knud Holmboe

Islam has been for ever and shall for ever exist

I am, from the bottom of my heart, convinced that Islam has a future, whereas Christianity has failed. I believe that humanity can be happy if only it lives after what the Prophets Muhammad and Jesus preached. Christianity is full of dogmas which I do not understand, neither do I understand the need for them. Islam is life itself. Christianity will die because it has no foundation. Islam has been for ever and shall for ever exist. For a Muslim, progress is not simply a matter for the external self of man. It is contained neither in civilization nor in technical progress, but in

^[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1931, Vol. 19, No. 10, pp. 345, 348, 349.

the total freedom of the soul from all sorts of slavery to the material world.^[1]

Ali Ahmad Knud Holmboe
Denmark

In Islam I have found the elements which make for stability

In Islam, however I think, I have found the elements which make for stability. Its simplicity, its freedom from ritual, its toleration of science, philosophy, and political forms of government, its lack of social distinctions and racial antipathies, its freedom from mysteries reserved entirely for the select few or the wealthy and socially influential, and its possibilities for the future wider than those contemplated by any other of the modern forms of faith make it, when rightly understood, the best expression which I have yet found for my social, political and religious ideals.^[2]

David Omar Nicholson

Moderation and temperance are keynote of Islam

The simplicity of Islam, the powerful appeal and compelling atmosphere of its mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer - these factors attracted me from the first.

[1] *Islamic Review*. July 1933, Vol. 21, No. 7, p. 226.

[2] *Islamic Review*. April 1935, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 107,108.

The broad-minded tolerance of Islam for other religions recommends it to all lovers of liberty. Muhammad admonished his followers to treat well the believers in the Old and New Testament, and Abraham, Moses, Jesus are acknowledged as co-Prophets of the One God. Surely this is generous and far in advance of the attitude of other religions.

Moderation and temperance in all things, keynote of Islam, won my unqualified approbation.^[1]

Col. Donald S. Rockwell
U.S.A.

Islam alone can satisfy the needs of every member of the human family

Christianity must go the way of all things, and henceforth perish and forever to make room for the True Religion of God to mankind, and that is Islam, which is Truth, sincerity, toleration, looking to the interests of man and pointing him to the Right Way. Islam alone can satisfy the needs of every member of the human family, and Muslims are the only people among whom can be found the "True Book of Brotherhood" in reality and not mere "make-belief" as in Christianity.^[2]

Sir Jalaluddin Lauder Brunton
England

[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1935, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 121,122.

[2] *Islamic Review*. July 1938, Vol. 26, No. 7, p. 250.

Islam alone offers the solution of present-day problems

To the Western mind, the chief appeal of Islam must be its simplicity. Admittedly, there are one or two other faiths which are as easy of approach but they sadly lack the vitality of the Faith of the Prophet (may Allah bless him), and the spiritual and moral elevation which it offers.

Islam must also appeal by virtue of its tolerance... Strangely Christian intolerance awakened my first interest in Islam.

The Churches are utterly incapable of grappling with present-day problems. Islam alone, offers the solution.*

John Fisher
Newcastle

Islam has always attracted me both by its simplicity and by the devotion of its followers

Since adopting Islam as my faith I feel that I have come to a turning point in my life, and to account for this, to give you some idea as to why I have become a Muslim, I have subjected myself to what I might call a self-psychological analysis.

Islam had always attracted me both by its simplicity and by the devotion of its followers ... I was taught to regard all religions other than Christianity as blasphemous and their adherents as heathens.

Islam has given me a very practical method of breaking down the barrier of materialism in one of the Five Pillars of Faith, namely prayer. The Muslim prayer keeps me constantly aware of my duty to God, to my soul, and to my fellow creatures.^[2]

Khalid D'Larnger Remraf

[1] *Islamic Review*. March 1934, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 61,62.

[2] *Islamic Review*. March-April 1930, Vol. 18, Nos. 3-4, pp. 129, 132, 133.

I acknowledge the superiority of Islam over all other existing religions, all of which are nothing but dogmatic!

Islam stands for progress, and so the world must evolve until it becomes far purer and far more enlightened, whilst Christianity has always repressed genius. Jesus, too, we know very little of, and so he cannot be a 'pattern to guide us,' but we know every day of the life of Muhammad.

Islam teaches nobility, self-sacrifice, and good-works, these are the things that bring us to Paradise. Beliefs are nothing if not accompanied by good actions!^[1]

Dr. Shaikh Khalid Shel Drake
London

Islam is the only religion that will ever be acceptable to the modern civilization

Islam is the only religion that will ever be acceptable to the modern civilization and myself, and my own generation in particular.

I am now supremely confident that I have found the truth at last. Now that I have a religion, I can really understand and follow, I feel that I can face life with renewed vigour. It is one of my ambitions to bring the light of Islam to some of those who are as dissatisfied with their own beliefs as I was (with Christianity) and to give them that peace of mind which is the keynote of our great and glorious creed (Islam).^[2]

T.H. McC Barklie

^[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1914, Vol. 2, No. 8, p. 377.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. August 1933, Vol. 21, No. 8, pp. 245, 248.

I have found the real peace and light in Islam

For ten long years I have been in a wilderness of doubt and despair, and I am happy, at last, that I have found real peace and light in Islam. I am, indeed, really happy to be a member of that great Islamic Brotherhood, the Universality of which has never been challenged and which has practiced its ideals of fraternity and equality for the last 1,400 years or more, while the followers of other creeds have done only lip service to the precept and conveniently ignored the practice thereof. Apart from this simple faith of Islam in One God, Allah, and His last Prophet Muhammad, whose teachings comprise of all that is necessary for the moral, material and spiritual needs of humanity, is surpassing the teachings of all the other founders of religions.^[1]

Omar Proutt

Islam had always been my religion

After thoroughly studying the Holy Quran I came to the knowledge that Islam had always been my religion. Now, I realize that my place is among my Muslim brothers to glorify Allah for bringing salvation to mankind.

It does me immense pain to realize why I had not accepted Islam as my faith earlier. I close with the promise that my life from now onwards will be dedicated to the service of the best religion of the world -- *Al-Islam*.*

J.L. Ch. Van Beetem

[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1934, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 10.

[2]* *Islamic Review*. September 1931, Vol. 19, No. 9, p. 304.

The purity and simplicity of the Islamic Faith and its obvious Truth made a special appeal to me!

The purity and simplicity of the Islamic Faith, its freedom from dogma and sacerdotalism and its obvious Truth made a special appeal to me. The honesty and sincerity of the Muslims, too, are greater than anything I have seen in Christians.

Another beauty of Islam is its equality. It is only Islam that has real equality maintained between man and man and no other religion has anything like it. The Faith of Islam generates unity.

The religion of Islam is also the cleanest religion in the world, because Muslims have to wash the exposed parts of the body five times a day, a practice not found in any other religion of the world.^[1]

A.W.L. Van Kuylenburg
(Known as *M.A. Rahman*)

In Islam I have found the true faith for which I had been seeking so long

I devoted a considerable amount of my spare time to a thorough study of an English translation of the Holy Quran, and as I read over and over again, certain of the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), I could not help but see that here, at last, in Islam I had found the true faith for which I had been seeking so long.

I would like to say that I feel confident, that if only people in this and other Western countries can be brought to appreciate the full meaning of Islam, and what it stands for, the ranks of Islam will be daily swelled, only unfortunately there is a vast

^[1] *Islamic Review*: February 1941, Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 50.

amount of misapprehension in the minds of many 'Free Thinkers' and others who still cling to their old creed simply because they require the moral courage to abandon a faith, with the principles of which they are, at variance, and to embrace Islam.^[1]

Walker H. Williams

I have accepted Islam because it fits in so well with my own ideas

A man becomes a truer Christian or a Jew by way of Islam, than by any way advocated by the Christian or Jewish people today.

In Islam, there is tolerance and an acknowledgement of universal brotherhood. So, I may say, that I have accepted Islam because it fits in so well with my own ideas about Allah and His beautiful plan. It is the only Faith I really can understand. Indeed, such is its simplicity and beauty that even a little child can understand it.^[2]

Amina Le Fleming

Islam is the religion I have been seeking for

Islam is the religion I have been seeking for since my school days. My mind was dissatisfied all along with the Christian teachings till I was old enough to have independence of thought to shake them off. I came in touch with the true religion of Islam. I became interested in Islam, whose keynote is simplicity

^[1] *Islamic Review*. November 1933, No. 21, No. 11, pp. 366,367.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. October 1935, Vol. 23, No. 10, p. 362.

- for instance, belief in the Unity^[1] of God. This is why it appeals to me.

The religion of Islam has given me peace and happiness such as I never had before.^[2]

Miss Joan Fatima

If Britain and Europe were converted to Islam, they would again be powerful forces for good

There is no version of Christianity which is really satisfactory. Christians believe that because of the fall of Adam and Eve, all human beings are born in a state of original sin, and are unable by their own actions to merit Heaven. Muslims, however, do not believe that people are punished for the sin of Adam and Eve. They believe that all human beings are born of innocence, and can only lose their hope of Heaven by their own sins when they are old enough to be guilty of deliberate wrong-doing.

If Britain and Europe were converted to Islam, they would again be powerful forces for good. British and European Muslims are some of the best.^[3]

Khadija F.R. Fezoui
England

[1] 'Unity' is not the proper word to use, instead the word 'Oneness' describes monotheism in the real sense — *Editor*.

[2] *Islamic Review*. January 1930, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 18.

[3] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*. p. 146,147.

Chapter Two

b) Views of the Reverts in brief about the Noble Qur'ân

The Noble Qur'ân contains what every soul mostly requires

Since my youth, I have been greatly impressed by Islamic civilization in all its aspects, its poetry and architecture, and very often I have told myself that a people who could give to the world so vast a treasure of beauty and significance in every branch of culture must also have attained to the highest levels both in philosophy and religion.

In my enthusiasm for Islam, I began to study all religions, from the most ancient to those of the present day, comparing each with the other, and subjecting them to very close criticism; and little by little, I became convinced that the Muslim worship was the true Religion, and that the Holy Quran contained what every soul mostly requires for its spiritual elevation.^[1]

Count Eduardo Gioja
Italy

The Christian Bible may be 'the Book nobody knows' in America, But the Qur'ân is the Book everybody reads in Islam!

The Christian Bible, being the textbook of Christianity, is a book which I have read many times. I doubt if there is a person who does not shudder while reading its pages, filled as they are

^[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1935, Vol. 23, No. 9, pp. 329, 331, 332.

with bloodcurdling slaughter, rapine and destruction, along with its tales of incest, rape and other vile obscenity. Indeed, after reading the Bible one cannot help but wonder as to the nature of this "God of the Christians."

The Christian Bible may be 'the book nobody knows' in America, but the Quran is the Book everybody reads in Islam. Yes, indeed, and it is an advantage to Christianity that the Bible is 'the book nobody knows'. The Bible was the first cause in leading me away from Christianity.

I found that Islam appeals to one's reason; it does not contain the pessimism of Buddhism, it is not void of Divinity like Shintoism or Confucianism, nor it is a "money-made religion."^[1]

Harry E. Heinkell

**I studied a Muslim translation of the Noble Qur'ân
and was astounded to read such noble precepts
and inspiring passages!**

I studied a Muslim translation of the Holy Quran, and was astounded to read such noble precepts and inspiring passages, such wise and practical advice for everyday life. It made me wonder why I had been taught that Muhammad was a false prophet, and how I had not heard the truth about this wonderful religion earlier.

Islam, if sincerely followed, must bring that peace to the mind and body which the world itself means, and create a perfect social order.^[2]

Hasan V. Mathews

[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1932, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 258.

[2] *Islamic Review*. March 1941, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 82.

The Noble Qur'ân is full of truths, and its teachings are so practical and free from dogmatic tenets and mysteries!

As a Roman Catholic, I had the opportunity of studying the Catholic faith to a great extent. I was doing my best to convince myself that Catholicism was the only true faith, but alas! its mysteries, dogmas and the compulsory 'must believes' did not permit me to remain quiet. I started my search for the Truth and remained engaged in this for many years quite silently.

In Hinduism and Buddhism I found such 'vacant spots' that the only alternative left to me was to study Islam. At one time I really held Islam in abhorrence. I had no Muslim friends, for Islam was so repulsive to me that I did not want even to associate with its adherents. Little did I dream that ... books on Islam would make a new man of me. I was gradually becoming so observed in the lovely teachings of Islam that it did not take me long to go earnestly further into it. I began to love Islam because of its straight and non-mysterious path. It is clean and simple, yet so full of deep studies that I soon felt the inevitable was drawing nigh.

The Holy Quran, some passages of which I read, simply struck me with wonder, for I had the idea that there was nothing to rival the Bible. I found, however, that I was hopelessly mistaken in this. Indeed, the Holy Quran, is so full of truths, and its teachings so practical and free from dogmatic tenets and mysteries, that I was daily being drifted into the religion of 'Peace & Love' which Islam certainly is.^[1]

*Mumin Abdur-Razzaque
Selliah, Ceylon*

^[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1934, Vol. 22, No. 8, p. 261.

In the blessed pages of the Noble Qur'ân I found solution to all my problems, satisfaction to all my needs, explication for all my doubts!

My opinion of Islam was not favourable one before I read the Holy Quran. I took the Holy Book with curiosity, and opened it with scorn, expecting to find in it horrible errors, blasphemies, superstitions and contradictions, I was biased, but I was also very young and my heart had no time to harden completely yet. I went through the *Surah* reluctantly at the beginning, eagerly then, and finally with a desperate thirst for Truth. Then, in the greatest moment of my life, Allah gave me His guidance and led me from superstitions to truth, from darkness to light, from Christianity to Islam. In the blessed pages of the Holy Quran I found solution to all my problems, satisfaction to all my needs, explication for all my doubts. Allah attracted me to His Light with irresistible strength, and I gladly yielded to Him. Everything seemed clear now, everything made sense to me and I began to understand myself, the universe and Allah.^[1]

Saifuddin Dirk Walter
Mosig : U.S.A.

Ye serve ONE GOD, unite

Listen to the voices, which call to you. If ye listen, ye will hear a voice saying: "Ye serve ONE GOD, unite, ye follow ONE BOOK, in which is set no crookedness, unite, ye face ONE QIBLAH from the four corners of the earth, ONE QIBLAH, a constant reminder that ye are: One People".^[2]

M. William B. Bashyr Pickard

^[1] *Islam; the First and Final Religion*. pp. 133,134.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. August 1932, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 246.

The Qur'ân has never been altered, twisted, paraphrased and transcribed as the Bible!

The Bible I always heartily disliked -- it gave me neither comfort, consolation, nor the smallest help whatever. When I grew up I found it a mass of contradictions, extra ordinary fables and impossibilities that one felt disgusted and saddened instead of being helped and comforted. The Bible is the result of a collaboration of dozens of different authors.

The Holy Book of Islam - the Quran - on the contrary, has come to us through only one man, namely the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It has never been altered, twisted, paraphrased and transcribed as the Bible, but has remained true to its original copy. The Quran appealed to me. The doctrine of Islam appealed to me. These, then, are some of the reasons, why I have embraced Islam, a religion that is comforting, uplifting and sustaining, and why I have discarded one that has never, from the first word I learnt of it, ever inspired, encouraged, or uplifted me at all.^[1]

Ameena Annie Spieget
England

The superiority of the Qur'ân over the Bible to me lay in its all-embracing universality!

The superiority of the Quran over the Bible to me lay in its all-embracing universality in contrast to the narrow, rigid, nationalism of the Jewish Scriptures which is one of the reasons, why Jew to this day have never been able to outgrow their tribal mentality. As this broad, all-encompassing universality in approach, makes for the superior morality, it has exerted a

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1919, Vol. 7, No. 6, p. 206.

drastic effect on the historical development of these faiths and the civilizations shaped by them.^[1]

Maryam Jameelah Begum
(Formerly *Margaret Marcus*)

The Noble Qur'ân is a mine of infinite wealth

I learnt of this worldwide brotherhood, possessing no racial or class distinctions; of the 'Oneness' of God; of the respect and reverence ascribed to all the former prophets of God; and of the true meaning of Islam - Peace. It sounded wonderful, and I yearned to know more of this faith, which is so practicable and broad-minded.

To me the Holy Quran is a mine of infinite wealth; with such guidance - for every day of one's life - no one need fear or go astray. I am a much happier person than before, though many trials have come to me because of my changed views.^[2]

Miss Rahima Griffiths

The more I read the Qur'ân, the more I became convinced that it is the only true religion

I studied Christianity, but, even stripped of all the trappings of ritualism and superstitions, it could not satisfy me because I could not accept the fundamental principles of Christianity - the divinity of Jesus, and the doctrine of the original sin and redemption.

[1] *Islam; the First and Final Religion*. P. 137.

[2] *Islamic Review*. December 1933, Vol. 21, No. 12, p. 406.

So naturally I turned to Islam. I say naturally because I always had a sort of nostalgia for Islam, brought up, as I was in its atmosphere, from my earliest childhood. It was like coming home, and the more I read the Quran, and the books on Islam by Muslim writers, the more lucid and convincing, the more I became convinced that it is the only true religion, a religion for peoples who think and do not want to shut their eyes to the realities of life and the discoveries of science.^[1]

Mrs. C. Sa'eeda Namier

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1935, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 2,

Chapter Two

c) Views of the Reverts in brief about Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

The teachings of our Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) answered all my questions

And happiness, to me, is spelt Islam - Islam, the only true faith. The only faith which can be accepted by any thinking individual, and the faith which alone can lead the suffering world towards the Light.

Imagine, if you can, my delight when I discovered that everything I read about Islam coincided with my own views, and that the teachings of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless and keep him) answered all my questions. *Surah* after *Surah* of the Holy Quran revealed to me the Truth, and I gave thanks to Allah that He had in His Mercy, accepted my Surrender.^[1]

Salim R. De Grey
Firth, England

At last I was able to accept Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as an Apostle of God

At last, I was able to accept Muhammad as an Apostle of God; firstly, he was needed; secondly, my own conclusions had been independent and still coincided; and thirdly, apart from both the

[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, p. 285.

former, the realization of the Divine quality of the Holy Quran and the Prophet's teaching flooded upon me clearly.^[1]

Dr. Thomas Irving

The Great Arabian Prophet! In persecution and hardship, he had shown unshakable steadfastness and reliance upon God!

So passed away from the affection and devotion of his followers, the figure of the Great Arabian Prophet. In persecution and hardship, he had shown unshakable steadfastness and reliance upon God; in success, he dealt mercifully with his conquered enemies and at the height of his power and affluence did not abandon the great virtues of simplicity, frugality, and urbane kindness of disposition towards high and low equally.^[2]

William B. Bashyr Pickard

The Islamic conception of Prophethood is the original conception

It is that fact, more than all others, that made me change my faith from Christianity to Islam. The Islamic conception of Prophethood which, in my opinion, is the original conception of it in the Hebrew Tradition as well, is very different. The Prophet, receiving as does the direct touch of the perfect attributes of God, is, according to Islam, the moving

^[1] *Islam; the First and Final Religion*. p. 127.

^[2] *Islamic Review*. December 1939, Vol. 27, No. 12, p. 476.

embodiment of all positive virtues, whose very company transforms the most sinful into a virtuous man. In fact, it is absurd to think that the Fountainhead of all virtue and purity will speak to a person who is more impure than an average man of the world, as the Prophets are depicted to be in our Old Testament Records, or that he should be leading a whole nation into moral conduct and spiritual elevations. The Quran, therefore, gives me a great reassurance when it asserts that all those stories in the Old Testament that hold up the Prophets in a bad light, are spurious.^[1]

Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton
President of the Muslim Society in the Great Britain

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1937, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 68-70.

Chapter Three

AT THE THRESHOLD OF ISLAM

a) Men at the Threshold of Islam

b) Women at the Threshold of Islam

... of all ... whose ...
... fact it is ...
... that the ... of all ...
... who is ... than the average man ...
... in our ...
... whole nation ...
... The ...
... in ...
... Chapter Three

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CHAPTER III
THE THREE BRANCHES

- a) Men at the threshold of Islam
- b) Women at the threshold of Islam

Chapter Three:

a) Men at the Threshold of Islam

Why Islam appeals to me?

✓ The writer of these lines is a convert to Islam. To the western mind, the chief appeal of Islam must be its simplicity. There are one or two other faiths which are as easy of approach but they sadly lack the vitality of the Faith of the Prophet (may Allah bless him!), and the spiritual and moral elevation which it offers.)

The simple austerity of Islam cannot appeal to emotional men or hysterical women, or those who love the histrionic in religion. For such there is room in religions other than Islam. Such cannot find satisfaction but in places and systems where the eye is pleased with a riot of gorgeous colour, the ear charmed with classical music and the heart moved by profusely flowered altars and pathetic tableaux. For there is no appeal whatever to the brain. And what is more, in some of these religions one is not permitted to think for oneself in religious matters. The brain must be primarily a receptacle for anything the ordained priest chooses to plant there.)

✗ What a contrast we find in the Holy Prophet's injunction to his followers: "Seek knowledge, though it be available only in China."

✓ The Holy Prophet (may Allah bless him!) was aware of the enormity of the sin of attempting to atrophy man's intelligence.

✓ Islam must also appeal by virtue of its tolerance. Muslims are taught to venerate all the prophets of God, including Jesus Christ. Strangely enough, it was Christian intolerance that awakened my first interest in Islam. While yet a boy, I attended a missionary lecture and was greatly impressed by some of the

speakers who had lived among the "Bloodthirsty Mohammedans." When, a few years later, I had the good fortune to listen to a Muslim Missionary, I was greatly impressed by his wonderful forbearance in dealing with a crowd who had left their own (Christian) meeting to heckle the "heathen." His words greatly impressed me and shattered completely my staunch Christian beliefs.

On several occasions, having asked a Christian priest a certain question, I have been answered thus: "I cannot tell you but you must believe it; that is where 'Faith' comes in."

How different is Islam wherein no question is beyond or beneath answering!

Goethe, after reading the Holy Qur'ân, remarked: "If this is Islam, then every thinking man among us is in fact a Muslim."

The Churches are utterly incapable of grappling with the present-day problems. Islam alone offers the solution. This seems to be a mere assertion. But a little thought convinces us of this truth.

The mind of the Western world has been for too long prejudiced against Islam.

Now and then a shaft of light comes through from unexpected sources as, for instance, when General Smuts stated a few years ago that for each convert of the combined Christian churches in Africa, Islam gets ten.^[1]

A.H.A. Rahman

^[1] *Islamic Review*, January 1940, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 2,3.

The reasons for my change of Faith

[The following is the declaration of faith of Mr. Abdur-Rahman Stanley Anyan:]

DECLARATION

I, Stanley Anyan, of Bromfield, Adel, Leeds, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets - Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah.

(There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).

(Sd.) *Stanley Anyan*

It is in the belief that in it I have at last found the true Religion which brings peace and contentment, that I have turned to Islam.

As a child I was brought up in the Church of England until the age of ten, when I was sent to a Methodist School. On leaving there I went back to the Church, where I was confirmed. After a time, however, on thinking matters over, I realized that there was something lacking, and that I was not getting the contentment and the peace of mind that I desired. So I thought the best thing was to break away and seek elsewhere.

I then tried various other forms of worship including Christian Science, Spiritualism, etc., but I could not anywhere find that for which I sought.

I then began to visit the religious section in the Public Library, in the hope that I might find the object of my search in some other religion not represented in my town. I read books on almost every kind of Faith until I came to Islam, and the more I

read of Islam, the more certain I became that I had found something which was more convincing to me in the nature of what I was looking for, than any I had tried before.

Having then decided that Islam was indeed what I wanted, I realized that I must find someone to whom I could appeal for help and advice; but, being at that time unaware of the existence of the Muslim Mission in England, I was rather puzzled as to the best thing to do. Then happened, what seemed to me, rather a strange thing. I was passing a bookshop when I noticed, in the rack outside, a paper which I had not read for some time: so, for no particular reason I bought it. Later on, while casually glancing through it at home, I was very greatly surprised to see in the answers to the Correspondents column, the word "Mohammedanism," and on reading further I realized that it was telling someone else the very thing I was looking for. It gave the address of the Mosque at Woking. It was very strange that I found what I wanted in the ~~last~~ place I expected to find it. It almost seemed to me as if some unseen influence had guided me to it. I wrote to the advertiser and then to the Mosque, and received, by return, helpful literature and guidance for which I am most grateful. It now remains for me to do my utmost to become a true and good follower of Islam.^[1]

A.R. Stanley Anyan

Why I became a Muslim?

The purity and simplicity of the Islamic faith, its freedom from dogma and sacerdotalism and its obvious truth made a special appeal to me. The honesty and sincerity of the Muslims, too, are greater than anything I have seen in Christians? The ordinary Christian puts on religion on Sundays as a respectable habit.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1936, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 139,140.

When Sunday is over, religion is discarded for the rest of the week. With Muslims, on the contrary, there is no distinction between Sunday and other days. He is always thinking of what he can do in the service of God. Another beauty of Islam is its equality. It is only Islam that has real equality maintained between man and man and no other religion has anything like it. The faith of Islam generates unity. I myself have seen the believers praying. They follow only one *Imam*; when he bows down, they also bow and when he goes down to the ground to kiss the dust of the earth, they do the same. That is why I have embraced Islam. One thing more, Islam recognises no distinction of rank. Even a king prays next to a *Fakir*. The religion of Islam is also the cleanest religion in the world, because Muslims have to wash the exposed parts of the body five times a day, a practice not found in any other religion of the world.^[1]

A.W.L. Van Kuylenburg
(Known as *M.A. Rahman*)

Why I embraced Islam

I was born in a Rajput family, who were staunch devotees of the Hindu gods and goddesses. Since childhood I was forced to go to the temples and pray and worship the deities. However, my conscience started pricking me that this is not the real God who can give or take anything, but I did not have the courage to rebel or go against my parents who were so devoted to them.

My mother, who was and is possessed by some goddesses used to sit before the temple in our house day and night and was just crazy about them.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. February 1941, Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 50.

I, as a child, would just not like the dancing of all the women who were so-called possessed by these goddesses.

A Muslim family was our close neighbour. As relationship developed, I started going to their house and sometimes reached their house when they were praying. The style and manner of their worship (*Salât*) impressed me. It was a style which I did not see in any religion.

Slowly and steadily, I developed friendship with Muslims and started staying with them. In a short while my entire friends circle and environment were full of Muslims, at that time I was studying in 11th class. The urge to become a Muslim was growing stronger and stronger day by day.

After college hours I decided to take up a part-time job, and I got one as a stenographer. As days passed, I expressed to my boss but he convinced me that Hinduism is the only ancient religion and no other religion is superior to it. Like this he kept me convincing for 3 years, i.e. till March 1984. My parents got me engaged to a beautiful Rajput girl. In college all the bad vices caught hold of me.

Problems:

My reputation in St. Vincent's college was going from bad to worse and it was sure that I would be denied admission in the third and final year. Exactly the same happened. After the second year, the principal denied me admission and asked me to go to some other college which was just impossible because no college would give admission to any student in the final year.

I started praying to the gods and goddesses of the Hindus and time was passing, but no returns. Three months had passed and the principal was not giving me admission.

I lost all hope then suddenly a new ray of hope caught my heart - "Allah," the Unknown, who had no figure, no structure.

I prayed to Allah, the Almighty, that if I get admission in this college I will become a Muslim after my marriage. And what a miracle, the thing which could not happen in three months happened in two days. And the faith became stronger.

Then I did not have to wait till my marriage for becoming a Muslim. I asked my fiancée, who was a Hindu, if she was ready to marry me even if I am converted. She used all the possible sentimental words and said that she also would like to convert after marriage. Needless to say, I did not consult my parents.

Finally I read the *Kalimah* on 2nd November, 1985 and declared in the *Maharashtra Herald* that I have embraced Islam. And then the problems started. My parents first made my life impossible in the house and my engagement broke. My fiancée's words had blown with the wind and she lost interest in me.

Meanwhile, my father had booked a flat in Fatima Nagar and they decided to shift there from 1st. January, 1985 leaving me all alone to fight the world at such a tender age. The society and the non-Muslims opposed a lot. But when *Iman* comes in a person's heart, he fears only Allah and none in this hypocritic world.

Study of Islam:

I started my study of Islam and at the very first sight I was charmed by its captivating beauty and the stream of knowledge of the Holy Quran. I began to feel that the best of knowledge is being added to my educational vocabulary and that is of the Holy Quran.

Things changed, I as a person was completely reformed of the vices, whatsoever. Keeping the entire *Hadith* before me, I have learnt to live a clear, clean and pure life. As for the circumcision, it was natural, right from childhood. May be Allah had decided that I should lead an Islamic life in the future.

We have to sacrifice our parents, brothers, sisters and the former society, to acquire this wealth of Islam, but born-Muslims are given this wealth without any hardship, without any pain.

(Islam is the only religion, which moulds life in a very fascinating way. You all have got Islam by birth, but I have got it by choice. This is the only difference, a great difference)

Now, my new name being *Abdullah Aleem Khan*, I am residing with my old grandmother at 10, NPS Lines, East Street, Old Poolgate, Poona-411 001, leading a life with full satisfaction of having achieved the Truth. My former name was *Manoj Chandrapal Pardeshi*.

I pray to Allah, the Almighty to strengthen the *Iman* of all the Muslims of the world and help them in leading a pure and a pious life. *Amen!*^[1]

Abdul-Aleem Khan

Why did I embrace Islam?

Why did I embrace Islam? My only convincing answer to this question is that (Almighty Allah in His Glory helped me in admitting the Greatest Truth and testifying to the biggest reality to the World.) I, however, know fully well that human nature and its disposition refuse to be convinced of certain facts and realities without satisfactory proofs and cogent arguments. Keeping in view man's nature, I feel that this reply of mine would not satisfy those who are not inclined towards, nor do they feel any interest in, searching for the Truth, nor those on

^[1] Courtesy: *Radiance*.

Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*. May 7, 1986, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 10,11.

whom the light of truth has not dawned, I am, therefore, left with no alternative but to reduce to writing some of the reasons and causes that induced me to embrace Islam and to stick to it. While staying in an European society, I express my joy and jubilation, that the people living in these societies do not change their religion nor do they deviate from their faith for the sake of economic, political or social temptations nor do they rush to embrace any religion, unless it works as a strong incentive and an effective factor to open up their hearts and generate spiritual tranquillity. Otherwise, they remain contented with infidelity and apostasy.

Here then, if one pauses to consider, one will come to the conclusion that my own act, or for that matter, the act of any individual in the European society, of embracing Islam does not imply earning economic profits or attaining social advantages. The matter is rather the other way round. Firstly, we the peoples of the European society, attach no importance to religious matters. However if there is anyone from among the European society who cares for religion, the aim of such a one is nothing but to find God. As such, my own interest in Islam meant nothing but search for the Truth and the direction of right thinking.

A desire of search for the Truth arose in my heart. A longing to find the Truth crept into my self. This was when I saw that many doubts and misgivings had been growing and rising in my imagination and memory about the Christian beliefs and its fundamentals. At the same time the capacity of Christianity fell short of providing resistance and protection against those doubts and misgivings. Christianity used to press that all its tenets be admitted without proof and argument.

To cite an example, my heart is not inclined to accept the Christian belief that Glorious Almighty God sent Prophet Jesus Christ (*alai-his-salaam*) for the whole world as an expiator of

the sins of all the servants of God. It also did not appeal to me that the entire humanity was sullied with various colours of sins including disobedience, and all the sins of the servants of God were forgiven, following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I also felt that God Himself inevitably possesses full power to save His servants and to keep them away from committing sins and crimes. I also felt that He has all the might to forgive, on His own, the sins of His servants without any explanation being necessary. Thus Glorious God does not need any explanation to forgive the sins of His servants. Even so, I felt that the belief of making the Prophets a ransom for the sins of the entire humanity is tantamount and similar (God forbid) to imputing motives of wrong-doing and injustice to Almighty God. On the other hand, man may commit sins and crimes without any hesitation and hitch. Whenever I expressed these doubts to any Christian scholar or priest, he advised me to banish from my mind these doubts and instigated me to accept those beliefs of Christianity, without any reservation. They strongly pressed me to give up the idea that they are not convincing, so that these doubts and views may not grow nor flourish in my mind. The desire to search for the Truth had been constantly growing till I arrived at a very critical juncture which denies all faith and (revealed) laws.

In those days I had the opportunity to come across a religious and capable Muslim who, inspite of being charmed by the glamour of European culture and civilization, used to take pride in stating that he was a Muslim. He affirmed that, through the blessings of Islam, he enjoyed contentment of the heart and mental tranquillity. On the other hand, a feeling of weirdness and disgust against the name of religion had got hold of my heart. This assertion of his filled my heart with a sense of astonishment and I was drowned in a sea of thought: Is there a religion which provides heart's contentment and mental peace to those who profess and follow it? This idea induced me to acquire knowledge about Islam and its disciplines. (Now I claim

by dint of my studies that Islam is the immortal religion of God which has the ability to elate the hearts of those who submit to it. It helps them in all their affairs and difficulties. It removes all doubts and suspicions arising in the hearts of the people from the teachings and beliefs of other religions.)

One of the most important teachings of Islam that influenced my heart is that it does not call man to submit to it without thinking and reflection. On the other hand, man has been invited to think and reflect deeply and clearly and weigh every Islamic belief on the scale of understanding and wisdom before accepting it. In Islam God Almighty is the source and fountainhead of justice. It is, therefore, not possible that God should make any man a ransom for the sins of all mankind. According to the Islamic belief God Almighty possesses all eternal, exalted attributes and is free from all shortcomings and defects. For this reason Islam maintains that this notion is against wisdom and beyond conception, that God Almighty has bestowed on man the liberty to commit sins and has given him free rein to indulge in offences under the theory of expiation.

These are, thus, the eternal teachings of Islam which cleared up from my mind the tendency of hate against religion and religious regulations. They led me to the conclusion that religion is a permanent, independent code of law which ensures for man everlasting prosperity, eternal honour and endless victory and triumph.

At this critical stage, on the one hand, I made an extensive, intensive and analytical study of Islam, from the standpoint of abiding law of life. On the other hand I focussed my keen attention on the question, how Islam provides man with peace of mind and tranquillity of the self in the present age in which new problems and contemporary issues crop up from day to day. So when my heart became restive and my self calmed down from both the directions, I embraced Islam. For lack of space it is not

possible for me to express all the impressions and the emotions that my mind received. It is, however, necessary to clarify the lessons with which I was inspired in Islam: It is that Islam directs the entire humanity towards the real goal of its creation and guides it to achieve those lofty aims. It conveys the message of peace and security to the human society; establishes bonds of fraternity and equality among them and obliterates all differences and disputes including those of colour, race and nationality. It rescues them from social and economic exploitation and from all other shapes of racial discrimination. It leads them to a vast expanse of right guidance and a path that is uniform and straight.

Not only does Islam oppose stagnation and deterioration in life, but it also calls all mankind to achieve advancement and development. It allows the individual to earn money and wealth and attain industrial and commercial development. It gives him the right to wages and awards as long as these activities are lawful and are not ill-gotten. So Islam is a complete and comprehensive evolution. It embraces all aspects of revolution and excellence. It is a belief that advances, along with the entire humanity, in the right and straight direction, where man feels that he is a member of an international community, understands his duties and is solicitous about the demands of life.

When about ten years ago I embraced Islam peace and tranquillity returned to my distracted, troubled and defiant nature.

Praise, gratitude and thanks to God that I am enjoying a life full of contentment and satisfaction.^[1]

Dr. Abdul Karim Herbert

^[1] Courtesy: *Al-Kifa* (Delhi) rendered from Arabic into English by Iqbal Husain Ansari.—Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*, 22 June 1983, Vol. 32, No. 14, pp. 38,39.

Why Islam appealed to me?

[Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, Bart., formerly Sir Charles Edward Archibald Watkins Hamilton, was the fifth baronet of the first (1776) and third baronet of the second creation (1819), succeeded to these baronetcies on the death of his father, the late Sir Charles Edward Hamilton, in 1915. He was born on 10th December 1876. He was a Lieutenant in the Royal Defence Corps; Recruiting Officer, August 1914; Military Representative 35th Regimental District; late Lieutenant, 4th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment; and late M.S.H. and President of the Selsey Conservative Association.

He married (first) in 1897, Olga, only daughter of Rear-Admiral Sir Adolphus Fitzgeorge, K.C.V.O., and granddaughter of Field Marshal H.R.H. the late Duke of Cambridge, first cousin of Queen Victoria; and (second) in 1906, Algosta Marjorie Blanch, only daughter of George Child, of Widford, Hertfordshire. He had one son from his first wife, George Edward Archibald Augustus Fitzgeorge, who was born in 1898, at whose baptism, his late Majesty King George and Queen Mary attended in person as sponsors, and who died in action as a Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards in Flanders in 1918. On the death of his second wife in 1927, Sir Archibald married for the third time.

Sir Archibald was a descendant of William Hamilton, one of the six Kentish petitioners, brother of Sir James Hamilton of Donalton, direct ancestor of the Duke of Abercorn, and also Baron Hamilton of Paisley, who married Mary, daughter of the King James II of Scotland.

Sir Abdullah embraced Islam on 20th December, 1923 and had since been an ardent preacher of the Islamic faith.

He died of heart failure on the night of Friday, the 17th March 1939. He was 62 years of age. He was buried in the Brookwood Muslim Cemetery. His grave lies by the side of another and older stalwart of Islam, the late Al-Haj Lord Headley El-Farooq. They were great friends in life and close comrades-in-arms in the cause of Islam. Lady Hamilton embraced Islam subsequently.

Sir Archibald Hamilton, the well-known Sussex baronet, embraced the faith of Islam and thus became the second titled Englishman to renounce Christianity for the banner of the Prophet.

In the following article, written specially for *The People*, Sir Archibald states quite frankly the reasons for the change of creed *Editor*].^[1]

Since arriving at an age of discretion, the beauty and the simple purity of Islam have always appealed to me. I could never, though born and brought up as a Christian, believe in the dogmatic aspect of the Church; and have always placed reason and commonsense before blind faith.

As time progressed, I wished to be at peace with my Creator, and I found that both the Church of Rome and the Church of England were of no real use to me.

In becoming a Muslim I have merely obeyed the dictates of my conscience, and have since felt a better and truer man.

There is no religion that is so maligned by the ignorant and biased, as is Islam; yet if people only knew, it is the only true solution for the problem of socialism, inasmuch as it is the religion of the strong for the weak, the rich for the poor. Humanity is divided into three classes. First, those on whom God has, out of His bounty, bestowed possessions and wealth;

[1] *Islamic Review*. February 1924, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 49-51.

secondly, those who have to work to earn their living; and, lastly, the great army of the unemployed, or those who have fallen by the wayside though no fault of their own.

In these evil days of stress and keen competition, when almost everyone lives and works at a tremendously high pressure, we have to find a solution in keeping with these three classes. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, under Divine inspiration, tells us, in the Holy Qur'ân, the last of the revealed Books (we Muslims believe that God sent His messengers to all races and climes in the person of Buddha,^[1] Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., and that all the revealed Books, in their pristine purity, had Divine origin), that those who are fortunately placed must give *at least* 2½ per cent of their annual income to those in need.

We are, at the same time, enjoined to refrain from creating professional beggars; but to help only those who are in just need, and require a helping hand to be placed on a footing to make a fresh start.

When I say that Islam is a socialistic creed, I do not mean that it is akin to modern socialistic ideas, as known to us in the West; seeing that we Muslims are enjoined, in every Friday congregational prayer, to be loyal to the ruler, whoever he may be^[2]; for rebellion is a sin. If we cannot remain peacefully under a tyrant, we must go elsewhere.

Again, Islam recognizes genius and individuality. It is constructive and not destructive. For example, if a landowner who is rich and is not in the need of cultivating his land, refrains from it for some time, his property *ipso facto* becomes public property, and, according to Islamic law, passes into the hands of the first person who cultivates it.

[1] Buddha is not a Prophet or Messenger — *Editor*.

[2] This binding is in accordance with some conditions in Islam — *Editor*.

Islam strictly forbids its adherents to gamble or to indulge in any games of chance. It prohibits all alcoholic drinks and interdicts usury, which alone has caused enough sorrow and suffering to mankind. Thus, in Islam, none can take a mean advantage of another who is less fortunate.

We neither believe in Fatalism nor in Predestination, but only in Premeasurement; that is to say, the fixity of the laws and the intelligence to follow them.

To us, Faith without Action is a dead letter; for in itself it is insufficient unless we live up to it. We believe in our own personal accountability for our actions in this life and the hereafter.

Equality of women:

// Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment.

I do not think I need say much about the Universal Brotherhood of man in Islam. It is a recognized fact. Lord and vassal, rich and poor, are all alike. I have always found that my brother Muslims have been the soul of honour and that I could believe their word. They have always treated me justly, as a man and a brother, and have extended to me the greatest hospitality, and I have always felt at home with them.

In conclusion, I would like to say that whereas Islam guides humanity in the daily workaday life, the present-day so-called Christianity, indirectly in theory and invariably in practice, teaches its followers, it would seem, to "pray" to God on Sundays and to "prey" on His creatures for the rest of the week.

Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, Bart.

Why I embraced Islam?

It is my ardent love for Truth that obliged me to let all know why I, a former devout Methodist, embraced Islam.

I was born in a Christian environment and a family of devout Methodist. At a tender age, I was already an active member of the United Methodist Church and dreamt to become a missionary someday to convert those pagan, barbaric and bloodthirsty people called Muslims (as what we learned in our schools) to Christianity. I was so fervent to join anything regarding our faith. I even disturbed my kins in their daily chores just to help me memorize verses from the Bible. With the increase of schooling (both the Sunday school and Bible Correspondences) and being in contact with the Bible and everything about Christianity, I had opportunity to ponder over its meaning. My firm faith generally in Christianity and particularly in the United Methodist Church began to crumble due to many contradictions, discrepancies, irrational beliefs and blasphemies in the Bible and pagan practices in the dogmas of the Church. I found out that I was a blind follower of a pagan faith called Christianity for all the past years.

1. Godhead of Jesus (peace be upon him).

“Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, E’loi, E’loi, la’ma sa-bach’tha-ni?” (which is, being interpreted:) “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (St. Mark 15:34).

2. Divine Sonship

Another Christian dogma is that Jesus (p.b.u.h.) was the Son of God or the only Begotten Son of God.

This dogma also is not in conformity with the sayings and teachings of Jesus (p.b.u.h.). In the Bible this expression has been used for many earlier prophets (peace be upon them).

Solomon (p.b.u.h.) was called the Son of God:

“He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.” (1 Chronicles 22:10)

Israel was also called the Son of God:

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus sayeth the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first born.” (Exodus 4:22)

And also the peacemakers:

“Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.” (St. Mathew 5:9)

“I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.” (Psalms 2:7)

The following remarks of Jesus (p.b.u.h.) will further show that it was only in metaphorical sense that he called himself a Son of God:

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?”

If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken:

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (St. John 10:34-36)

Further, Jesus (p.b.u.h.) referred himself as the son of man in many verses of the Bible. Like for instance:

“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of man;” (St. Matthew, 17:22)

“For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.” (St. Mark, 13:34).

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake.” (St. Luke 6:22).

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (St. John 3:13).

3. Atonement

“The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.” (2 Chronicles 25:4).

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezekiel 18:20).

The quoted verses clearly show that the dogma in “Atonement for the Original Sin” is baseless.

If God really sent Jesus (p.b.u.h.) to redeem humanity upon his death in the Cross as Christians claim, then God of the Christians contradicts His own words and it shows that He is a merciless and unjust God. He has discrimination, over His creatures by letting a sinless man to suffer for the sins of others.

4. Trinity

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”
(Deuteronomy 6:4)

Jesus (p.b.u.h.) said:

“I can of mine own self do nothing:” (St. John 5:30).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” (St. John 13:16).

and “My Father is greater than I.” (St. John 14:28)

“There is but one God.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

“Now a mediator is not mediator of one, but God is one.” (Galatians 3:20).

Do not the above verses and many other verses in the Bible refute the dogma in Trinity and affirm the Oneness of God? Indeed they do!

To whom, was Jesus (p.b.u.h.) sent?

Jesus (p.b.u.h.) said: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (St. Matthew 15:24).

Therefore his mission is not universal. And he further said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill, for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (St. Matthew 5:17-19).

These verses clearly state that Jesus (p.b.u.h.) never brought a new religion and Christianity can never be attributed to him.

Thus, Christianity itself and its foundations crumble under the above verses.

By the time I reached my junior class in the high school, I was a complete Atheist. When I entered college, I was a Communist. But I was dissatisfied with many things in Communism, like the

rule of a selected few and of its materialistic ideologies. I studied Hinduism but its polytheistic concept about God and its evil caste system discouraged me. In Buddhism, you workout for your own salvation and its monastic life leads to the annihilation of human kind. While in Judaism, its standpoint is racialistic and its ideal is the salvation of the Israelite race alone. Now what about non-Israelites like us? And, in Shintoism, I found it, superstitious rather than rational. All of the above religions and similar faiths I studied would never lead humanity to salvation rather Self-perdition.

After that futile search, I was about to give up. However, my mind still found no peace at all, especially when I looked around and saw the whole creation always follow the Law of Nature.^[1] The sun rises and sets at an appointed time, the rain waters the plants in which they bloom with colourful flowers and bear others. And if everything appears just by accident, then why not the guava tree bears apple fruits and other trees bear fruits not their own? Why was I born? And other many unending questions. Then my faith comes back to me again. I believed that there is some One Who is All-Mighty, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Wise, Who created everything.

Fortunately, a friend lent me a book entitled "*Islam Our Choice*". The book contains the impressions of eminent converts to Islam. At the back cover there are the addresses to whom one can write for books and information on Islam. I did not know anything about Islam then, so I requested Islamic literature from the addresses. As soon as the books arrived I eagerly studied them and thinking to find polytheistic beliefs, superstitions and other pagan practices like the rest of the religions I studied before. But I was mistaken. Islam is a perfect Monotheism and Guide for all human kind to attain a happy life on earth and the

[1] Here he means the laws of Allah (God) —*Editor*.

Hereafter. *Al-hamdulillah!* I found Truth in Islam and it is really what I believed.

In 1972, I uttered the *Kalimah* (Declaration of Faith): *La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah* [There is no deity but Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is His Messenger] deep within my heart and have considered myself a Muslim since then.

Last October 28, 1975, Brother Abu Muslim Noshahi of Muslim Academy in Wazirpura, Sialkot, Pakistan suggested my Islamic name to be Abdullah which means 'Slave of Allah'.

On the 18th day of February, 1978, I formally embraced Islam and signed the form "Pledge of Adoption of Islam" which was adopted, confirmed and signed by Al-Haj Muhammed Ja'fer, General Secretary of the *World Federation of Islamic Missions*, in Karachi, Pakistan on the 2nd Day of Rajab, 1396 A.H.^[1]

Very eager and dynamic, I communicated immediately to all people I met about Islam. To let them know the Truth and be saved. The environment suddenly became hostile to me. I was left alone. My kins forced me to recant Islam and become a Methodist, Catholic, Atheist or any materialistic or pagan group and never be a Muslim. I remained, however, to be like a steel and did not budge an inch, ready to suffer any consequences for my becoming a Muslim. I managed to convert four of my nephews (Abdur-Rahman Chua, Ibrahim Tangalin, Sulaiman Balan, and Abdul-Ghaffur Balan). Thus, it further enraged my kins already boiling hatred against me. They tortured us mentally and physically and subjected us to slave-like

[1] Actually, to become a Muslim, there is no need of formally signing any kind of form or pledge. The simple utterance of *Kalimah* with inner belief, after a *Ghusl* (ritual bath), is sufficient. Afterwards the Muslim has to gain the knowledge of the principles of Islam etc., so as to adopt the Muslim life — Editor.

treatments. Our Islamic books were burned; we were prohibited to offer *Salat* and to perform other Islamic practices; forced to eat *Harams*; carry heavy loads and uprooting grasses with our barehands under the burning sun at midday without headcover. We only took rest late at night and started working early in the morning and sometimes before we can have rest it was already time to work again. We were also occasionally beaten until our faces were swollen and some parts of our bodies oozed blood and forced to say 'we are Methodists'. Later, my two nephews were sent away from me.

My two other nephews found time and chance to escape. And last July 20, 1978, I also managed to escape with the aid of Aminah, who later became my wife and embraced Islam.

Women of my wife's kins do understand us while others do not. We hope some day we can convince them to understand what is Islam. *In sha Allah*.

Since we are the only Muslim family here in the town of Bani (Pangasinan), the hostile and ridiculous attitude of almost the whole society towards us and the unwholesome environment, made us feel that the atmosphere, we live in, is not our own. We feel very much isolated from the rest of our brethren.

Despite the threat to my life to refrain from propagating Islam, we intensified our propagation and won new adherents to Islam.

I am a graduate, Bachelor of Science in Commerce, major in Accounting but still jobless due to the main reason that I am a Muslim.

I topped the examination given by applicants in one company but I was not hired. For almost three years, I was jobless.

On Ramadan 8, 1400 A.H. my wife gave birth to a girl and we named her Fatimah. On August 31, 1980 we managed (*Alhamdulillah*) to get my mother to come to the fold of Islam.

And on Zilqadah 30, 1401 A.H. Khadijah was born. And now we are five in the family in which I should struggle for survival.

Despite the many misfortunes we had upon embracing Islam, we remained steadfast and firm in our Faith, and we will keep on repeating the *Kalimah* with all our hearts until the last breath.

"La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah"

O! Allah make us true Muslims according to the Principles of Islam despite the stormy days we are facing ...*Amin!*^[1]

Abdullah Colobong Mangaoang
(Formerly *Edwin C. Mangaoang*)

Why I became a Muslim?

I have always been a Muslim. I mean this not only in the sense in which the word is used in the *Qur'ân Sharif* to signify an adherent of natural religion, but very early in life I gained some realisation that Islam as generally practised was nearer to that natural religion than were the other great established religions.

It was, I think, the disparity between the Christian professions of brotherhood and the attitude engendered by the imperialist ideology, the sole glorification of English institutions, colour prejudice and the presumption of two codes of ethics ... one for Europeans and another for "those lesser breeds without the Law," which first turn my attention to the study of non-European cultures, from, however, a non-religious standpoint. I then discovered that, contrary to what I had been taught, civilisation did not end with Greece, and that, East of Greece existed a culture which had played an important part in the history of the world, a culture which had, in fact, been the means

[1] *Minaret*. September 1984, pp. 19-24.

of handing on to Europe that heritage of Greece of which she is so justly proud and which had enriched the Greek heritage by many traits and characteristics of that Saracenic civilisation which had preserved the culture of Greece during the period of European barbarism.

It was, strangely enough, the scripture master at school who, by instilling into us the principles of the "Higher Criticism" — principles which to him confirmed their truth, awakened in me my first serious doubts as to the authenticity of the Christian scriptures. The simplicity of Islam and the certainty of the basis on which it rested (the *Qur'ân Sharif* being recognised even by the most hostile critics as being as surely the word of Muhammad as we recognise it to be the Word of God) presented a strong contrast to the shifting and uncertain character of the Christian scriptures, which come to us in a tongue alien to their first adepts and belonging to a region far removed from their original home. When, in addition, are incorporated in these scriptures things in themselves difficult to accept, things for whose inclusion there is no obvious religious reason, things taken from other sources, whose development, sometimes inside and sometimes outside Christianity, can be explained psychologically by quite human causes, one feels the need for some surer, some simpler basis on which to build one's faith and form one's life.

Islam, with its simple logical scheme of God sending His prophets from time to time to raise humanity, to tell humanity that there was but one God and that consequently humanity was one and that all men were brothers. Islam differing from the original Judaism only in that it teaches that God does not limit His mercies to any one people, supplied that basis.

Although a school-fellow, somewhat older than myself, to whom I probably owe the socialistic trend of my thoughts, did shortly afterwards try to convert me to an atheistic position, it

seemed to me then, and seems to me still, that Islam does not set for the believer those problems which have been the cause of so many Europeans abandoning all faith, while on the other hand, many things in Islam can only be explained on the assumption of its truth.^[1]

Abdul Qadir Pickard

Islam in America

Just the other day, I made a presentation at a Toastmasters Club to a group of about fourteen people, most of whom were entirely unacquainted with Islam. This was an opportunity for me to reflect on my perception of Islam, and to consider what the future is for Islam in America. With the help of Allah, perhaps you will find something worthwhile and thought-provoking in the summary of the talk which follows.

Islam means submission to God and Muslims are those who submit to God. But Islam is more than an idea and it is more than a religion. It is a total way of life. I have heard that Islam is the second largest religion in the world today. As an American, I find that amazing. Only recently have Muslims become a significant community in this country. Why? For an answer to this question, we must look at history. The major events that occurred within Islam can help to explain why Islam only recently has begun spreading in America.

Islam spread rapidly throughout the world shortly after Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) brought forth the word of God. The Christians of the time feared Islam for they did not understand it. Possibly the Christians feared mostly the idea promoted by Islam that people not only are allowed to think

^[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1940, Vol. 28, No. 8, pp. 283-285.

freely and to criticize those in authority, but that in Islam, it is an obligation to speak out when someone in authority has committed an error.

Perhaps it was the Christian fear of losing control of the minds of the people that caused many Christians to overlook the fact that Islam is not against Christians or Jews, in fact, Islam accepts Jesus and the Old Testament prophets as true messengers of God. Whatever the true reason, a great ideological wall was formed between Christianity and Islam, and this wall still stands (to some extent).

What is ironic about the situation of Islam in the world today is that Muslims are often thought of as backward people. Many early Muslims were scholars and scientists. Under the umbrella of Islam, advances were made in medicine, astronomy, mathematics and other sciences, advances which could not be matched by the works of any other people of that era.

Some Christian scholars did study the works of Islamic scholars, though with peril to their lives because of Christian dogma against new ideas. However, for some reason, the Muslim society did not investigate scientific advances made in the West; at least, that is how it appears. And perhaps it was fear of Western culture which caused Muslims to stay away from America while the West gave America its best minds.

Islam did not come early to America, but it is coming to America now. As an American Muslim, I am proud to be a part of the Orange County, Los Angeles Muslim community. We are all dedicated to bringing a truly Islamic Society to this country. We have an increasing number of Islamic Centers being established in the area with active participations by large number of Muslims. As a native American Muslim, I feel Allah has blessed this country greatly by bringing Muslims to America. Perhaps Allah has brought Islam to America to be

nourished and to grow in the environment of freedom which we enjoy.

As for myself, I am excited to be a Muslim, today, in America. ^[1]

Abu Badr Siddiq
(Former *Sidney Hoyt*)

My belief in Islam

['My Belief in Islam' is the title of a letter which Mr. Ali Ahmad Knud wrote to the Hedjaz Minister in London before proceeding to *Hajj*. He was a young Muslim journalist. 'My Belief in Islam' was published in *Islamic Review*, July 1933, Vol. 21, No. 7, pp. 221-227. We feel much pleasure in reproducing herewith an article written by Mr. Ali Ahmad namely 'Why I Became a Muslim?' which was published in the *Islamic Review*, October 1931, Vol. 19, No. 10, pp. 345-349 — *Editor*].

I herewith ask for permission to go to the Hedjaz, and to obtain this permission, I think it necessary to give some particulars about myself.

I am 29 years old, born on 22nd April 1902, at Horsens in Denmark. As is the custom there in my country I was baptised in my infancy, and brought up as a Protestant Christian.

When I was 20 years old, I had finished my studies and became a journalist, and as such undertook some very interesting journeys. In 1922, I travelled in Poland, and at this time war was going on between Poland and Russia. From that place I was appointed correspondent of an important Danish paper - *The Politiken* of Copenhagen. In 1923, I went to Ireland, Scotland

[1] *Yaqeen International*. April 17, 1986, Vol. 34, No. 23, pp. 275,276.

and Iceland, and in the summer of 1924, I passed on to Lapland as a representative of the papers *The Nationaltidende* of Copenhagen and the *Helsingi Sonomat* of Finland.

In the autumn of 1924, I proceeded to Morocco, where I wrote an account of the wars of Abdul-Karim. During this journey, I wrote a book too, but my present views are not at all in accordance with what I said in that book. The fact is that when I was in Morocco for the first time, I, like most other European journalists, was unable to understand much of what was really happening.

Still I was interested in the Oriental countries, and nearly throughout the year 1925, I travelled in Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Persia, all the while writing articles for the newspaper *The Nationaltidende* of Copenhagen.

In 1926, I became the editor of a newspaper in Copenhagen, and in 1927 I married, and undertook with my wife a journey to Albania. From this year also begins my interest in Islam, although this interest, as you will see from the statement that follows, had to pass through some severe ordeals during the next two years.

In 1927, I proceeded with my wife to Morocco to learn Arabic. Here a child was born to us - a girl, who is now living with her mother in Denmark. I stayed about two years in Morocco, after which we returned to Denmark. Then I proceeded to London, while my wife stayed with my parents at home. It was, now, my firm intention, uninfluenced by anyone else, to embrace the faith of Islam, and so I did in the Mosque in London. I signed a declaration wherein I simply stated that I believed in One God, and that I believed Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) to be His Prophet. I had, by this time, studied literatures on Islam, known Ghazzali from what was found in Europe from the translations of his writings, and most of the great Islamic thinkers. But this journey in its later stages made me realize for the first time what Islam

really was, and this was so very essential to my moral progress. For the first time, this journey made me believe in Islam with all my heart, where it has now sunk so deep that there is no possibility of its being ever shaken. Since then my religion always comes before everything else, and my life, if God so wills, shall be devoted to the cause of this faith - an ambition which I value so much. Some details will give you an idea of what it was on this journey that shook my soul in such a way that I emerged out of it as an altogether changed man.

About the 15th of March 1930, I drove in my car from an Italian fort in Tripolitania to cover a distance of about 500 kilometers through the desert, before we could reach another fort. We lost our way completely, and for eleven days the boy and myself walked round and round in the desert in utter bewilderment. We had only a small quantity of water, and got nothing to eat with the exception of a porcupine. We were threatened by jackals and hyenas, and the last two days both of us were nearly mad. Then it dawned upon me what a pitiable creature man, stripped of his civilization, was. I developed during these eleven days a firm belief in the One Almighty Allah. I took a vow that I, if saved, would ask His help to work for what was right and never to waver in that. At that time I also saw that although we were gifted in one way or another, everything comes ultimately from Allah, and that we were to use His gifts only in His way, and then it might be that we should be happy.

I have been very happy from this moment on, although very few persons have had so many difficulties in life. I was taken prisoner by the Senoussis in the mountains. I told them, as it was true, that I was a Muslim. Having doubted for a while, which was only natural for them to do, they believed me. And then those "rebels" in the mountains, perhaps the best men I have ever met in my life, began to tell me their own story, at the hearing of which I was very much moved, and felt myself ashamed of being a European. Believe me, though these people

were in tattered rags, poor and half-starving, still they shared everything they had with me. What a difference between them and those brutal, nicely-clothed officers I had to meet later. I met the Italians after having parted with the Senoussis. They would force me to tell them where these Arabs were. On my refusal to do so, I was put into prison, and today I thank Allah for this imprisonment, for had I not been thus imprisoned, I would not have been able to tell Europe all about the sufferings of the Muslims in North Africa. After my release from this imprisonment I went to Egypt, and began writing in the papers about what I had seen. The Italian Government wanted to stop me, and, as I was on my way to Cafra, where it was my intention to help the people against the Italians, who were making preparations for a raid on their territory, I was arrested by the Egyptian Government, as I was misrepresented to them by the Italian Minister at Cairo as a Bolshevik. I could easily prove, however, that the allegation was false. I then asked the Egyptians to let me proceed to Cafra, but they refused. Eventually Cafra was taken by the Italians by a horrible operation in the beginning of the current year.

I went to Copenhagen, and wrote a series of articles on the real facts about the North African Colonization. At this time I also wrote my book "The Desert Burns," a copy of which I have sent to the Woking Mosque. It will also appear in other non-Danish languages in a few months' time, for it is my intention that all the world should know the truth about this matter.

To give you an idea of this book, I translate below a few lines from its preface:-

"In the beginning of the year 1931, the Italians captured, with the help of Abyssinian troops they had imported into Cyrenaica, the oasis of Cafra in the southern part of the Libyan Desert. A handful of Arabs, who during the last twenty years had marvellously defended their faith and

homes against the Italian invasions for colonization, had, at last, to give in, overwhelmed by the Italian shower of *mitrailleuse* (machine gun) bullets, which a civilized nation uses, in these days, to subdue a reluctant people."

The rest of Europe knows nothing about this affair, excepting the message contained in a single telegram from Rome - "Our troops have succeeded in taking Cafra." And how can Europe know of it! Very few Europeans who visit the Orient can speak the language of the people. The wires that are sent abroad are all inspired by Italian diplomacy, and they tell us only when a European is attacked by the "rebels" in the interior. But why do these attacks at all take place? Why the peaceful Arab population, whose religion teaches them patience, tolerance and simplicity - why should they turn rebels? It is of this that the book will tell.

The scene of the book is in Cyrenaica. It is this country which for the moment has the greatest interest. It is here that the Italians have introduced thousands of Christian Abyssinians from Eritrea. They wear crosses on their breasts, and this makes them excellent representatives of the white-man's civilization. The book is a challenge to the hollow claim, so often made on behalf of Europe that "We Europeans are called upon to teach the barbarians, culture and to have their countries as protectorates."

The book was well received in Denmark, and beyond its frontiers too, and it is fervently hoped, however contrary the fact may prove, that it will awaken some interest in the rest of Europe. Even if Europe can only understand what Islam is, I shall have achieved much in my object.

The press comments on the book were as follows:-

The *Politiken* (Copenhagen):-

“Knud Holmboe is a Muslim, - a fact which should not frighten the reader. It is very easy to imagine a smart journalist who becomes a convert to Islam, while pursuing his journalistic aims, casting aside his religion as a cloak, to be used only, on ceremonial occasions, but in the case of Knud Holmboe such is not the case. Here the religion and the man is essentially one. He never doubts the truth of what he says. For him his Allah leads the path. This fact makes the book fascinating, and we cannot but believe what he says. We follow him on his way. We, no doubt, see the adoration of marabouts and sheikhs in North Africa, but, as Knud Holmboe tells us, such practices are against the teachings of Islam, according to which only One can be adored, and that is Allah.”

The Goteberg Handels och Sjöfartst idning Bmai (Sweden):-

“He is from the bottom of his heart convinced that Islam has a future, whereas Christianity has failed. If you ask him why he has become a Muslim, he gives the answer in the book. I believe, he says, that humanity can be happy if only it lives after what the Prophets Muhammad and Jesus preached. Christianity is full of dogmas which I do not understand, neither do I understand the need for them. Islam is life itself. Christianity will die because it has no foundation. Islam has been for ever and shall for ever exist. For a Muslim, progress is not simply a matter for the external self of man. It is contained neither in civilization nor in technical progress, but in the total freedom of the soul from all sorts of slavery to the material world. This, Knud Holmboe tells us, is Islam and we too, after reading his book, begin to doubt our progress through the so-called civilization.”

I have tried here to give you an idea of the external causes of my transformation. The internal ones are far too difficult for me to

be able to describe them. I can only tell you that my belief in Islam is firm, and, if God does not allow me to go astray, it shall never be shaken. For me there are two possibilities for mankind - (1) Atheism, as in Russia, where the machines are gods and where everything is sure to end in a great disaster, in spite of all the intellectual progress of her people - or (2) Islam, which, to me, is the simple faith in the One Almighty God and wherein the Qur'ân tells us how to reach Heaven - the presence of this God. I, therefore, firmly believe in the following:

- 1) In the One God, as described in *Surah* 112.
- 2) In our Sayyidina Muhammad as the *last* Prophet of God, and as one who received the Qur'ân as revealed from God, the teachings of which, therefore, can make mankind happy if they only would try and follow them.
- 3) In the five prayers or concentrations on the Divinity, the observation of which will enable one to live a virtuous life.
- 4) In the prohibition of every kind of intoxicant; because God has given us the body as a seat for the soul, it is our duty to maintain its wholesomeness.
- 5) In the institution of *Hajj*, which forces every man, however great and clever³ he may be in the eyes of the world, to go back to the original simplicity of life, which is so essential for the progress of the soul.
- 6) In all the Prophets raised by God. But the previous Books being tampered with by human hands, the Holy Qur'an is now the only and final guide for humanity.

All this I believe in, and it is my intention and solemn pledge to try my best to fulfill the commandments of God in my practical life, and, through the light that I may obtain through such obedience, to help the unhappy humanity to know the Truth.

Your Excellency, I have tried to explain in a few lines why I have become a Muslim. I hope that you, as a brother Muslim, will understand that for me Islam is a truth and serious truth. The reason why I continue to be a journalist and an author is that thereby I shall be able to help my Islamic brethren in their sufferings.

Ali Ahmad Knud Holmboe

Why I became a Muslim

[Mr. Holmboe is a Dane, and a journalist of established repute in his country. He is the author of a good many books, a recent one being *Ørkenen Brænder* (published by C.A. Reitzels Forlag, Copenhagen, 1931). The book was well received by the Danish Press and exposes the claim of the Europeans who profess to hold sway over Eastern countries under the pretence of "teaching culture and civilizing the barbarians." We shall have, in one of our next issues, the pleasure of introducing the writer of this article by means of a photo of him.

Our readers will be interested to know that Mr. Holmboe is in Amman, Transjordan, waiting for the *visa* to proceed to the Hedjaz to participate in the *Hajj* during the year 1932. - Ed. I.R.]

It was in El Kuds that I received my first impression of the beauty of Islam. What I had known before about this religion was only what is being taught in schools nearly all over Europe - that Muhammad was but a plagiarist of Christianity and Judaism, and that the faith he founded was a wild and barbarous faith which had for its aim the massacre of poor Christians, especially those in Armenia.

When I visited Jerusalem about five years ago I had been through the religious evolution common to Europeans. As a result of the school-Christianity, with its teaching about Jesus as our saviour and his death on the Cross for our redemption, I became a doubter very early in life. I made the mistake, which is not uncommon, of connecting the word "Christianity" with religion, and for a long time my ideas about life were completely negative.

A sincere human being, perhaps every human being, cannot exist indefinitely without religion, without an ethical foundation for his conduct. I sought the Truth, and was impressed by the musical beauty and the art which I found in the Roman Catholic Church.

And about this time I came to Jerusalem.

It was Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Golgotha, which is situated at the summit of a narrow staircase, and is divided between the Greek and the Roman Catholic priests, and the great Easter mass was about to take place. People from all over the world had come to see the mass on Golgotha itself.

Then it began, and speedily developed into a violent tussle between the Greek and Roman priests. Prelates clothed in velour and silk were quarrelling like angry old women; chairs were thrown about, and the words used were worse than those heard in any marketplace. In one corner a peasant from the Carpathians was telling his Rosary. In a glass receptacle on the wall was placed a smiling Madonna. She wore a bracelet-watch shining with diamonds, and a few years ago had been decorated with the French Croix de Guerre.

At that moment I understood that Christianity in all the aspects in which I knew it, had very little in common with true religion; that spirit which like a red streak goes through all religions; and that the man "Christ," whom they have made a gold-bedecked deity, would not have been a Christian if he had lived today.

I was all but in despair. Once more I was sunk in the deepest doubt, the most poignant anxiety. I went out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and into the Mosque of 'Omar which stands where once stood the Temple of Solomon. In the Mosque of 'Omar there was absolute quietude; no priests celebrating the mass or preaching or changing bread and wine into God, no music to hypnotize and lead the heart away from clear understanding.

I placed myself in a corner and saw how Muslim after Muslim quietly came in, left his shoes near the entrance, knelt with his face turned towards Mecca and said his prayer. Here was no artistically sculptured Christ; here man was alone with Almighty God, from Whom a little light is reflected in the hearts of all.

This made a most profound impression upon me, and my ideas about Islam began to change. A few days later I went to my good friend, the Muslim teacher Adel Gabre (Adil Jabir), in El Kuds, and borrowed an English translation of the Holy Qur'ân. It was the version by Rodwell and I found it difficult to understand.

I did not know then that the Arabic cannot be translated by philologists, that only he who in truth is able to understand its limitless beauty may faintly reflect this in a translation. Muhammad was a Bedouin,^[1] unable to read or write, but so impressed was he by the Divine inspirations which he received that he was forced to communicate what he saw to the whole world. He recited verse after verse of the Book, which was dictated to him under Divine Inspiration.

Then I began to study Arabic, and this led me to Islam.

Xauen, in Spanish Morocco, is situated on a mountain, and here one day, when I was tired of civilization and its hollow surface-

[1] 'Bedouin' is a word used for a nomadic Arab of the desert, while Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him صلى الله عليه وسلم), although being unlettered, was not a Bedouin. He had a fair complexion and beautiful face — *Editor*.

life, I went to a Mosque. There was only a carpet of straw on the floor and at first I was alone. Then an old man came in. His clothes were ragged and he seemed sick, but his face was like a light. He looked at me for a moment, then he came to where I was sitting, gave me his hand and said, "You are not from here? Why do you come to the Mosque?"

I answered that I did not know myself, but that I found peace in the Mosque, and I asked him to tell me something about Islam.

"Do you know what God is?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"If you imagined," he said, "that all the ethical ideals of humanity had reached perfection, this could only form a small part of God. The sight of God has crushed the hearts of the prophets and the angels, when they understood a little part only of His All-Might. What is your religion?"

I replied, "I have none."

He looked at me very seriously, took my hand and continued: "Very few foreigners understand Islam - especially among you who come from Europe, with your ideas of civilization and material progress as the only things worth living for. Our great philosopher, El-Ghazali, says that "in every human being there are the incarnations of a dog, a swine, an angel, and a devil."

"What is an angel?" I asked.

"An angel," he said, "is the bright element in your soul. An angel is the picture of God in your heart. If you have veiled this picture, you cannot see God, God cannot be proved. God is - you see Him or you see Him not. And if you walk in the wrong way, you walk in darkness away from God. But..." he continued, "...everybody has something of the angel in his heart. Therefore everybody has a duty, not to develop the swine or the dog in himself. The angel - the incarnation of light - imprisoned

with a swine or a dog. This is what we call hell, the greatest misery of all. Therefore you must find the straight road to God, the way whereby you may be able to approach nearer to His Majesty. This road is Islam.”

“But why not Christianity or Hinduism or Theosophy, or any other of all the many religions of the world?” I asked.

The old man smiled. “All religions contain something of the truth - something of Islam. But Christianity is going farther and farther from God, because it has made the prophet Jesus God. And it has placed the priest between man and God. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him!) does not teach, as is said, too, in the Qur’ân, any new religion. Muhammad is only taking the essential from already existing religions, which are leading man far from God. In Islam the road to God is our only dogma. We have no priests, we have no pictures in our Mosques. How can you express God by a picture? We can but pray to Him and Him alone.”

“Who, then, was Muhammad?” I asked.

“Only a prophet like Jesus, Moses, Abraham, Buddha^[1], and a thousand others; one of the elect, who saw the greatness of God and had to proclaim it to the whole world. Christianity is leading men away from God, it takes from men all responsibility by teaching that Christ is the saviour and that he died for our sake. Muhammad does not teach any such thing, and says that Jesus, too, never claimed for himself that he was God. Often in the Qur’ân it is said: “I am only a man like you.” Islam tells us that each man, for himself, has the duty of developing his soul. He must pray five times a day, so that the picture of God and of the road to God must remain with full clearness in his soul. Therefore intoxicants are prohibited; therefore he must fast one month of the year to keep his body a healthy place for his soul. The difference between Islam and all other religions is that other

[1] Buddha is not a Prophet — *Editor.*

religions say that through faith you may act; Islam says, rather, that through action faith must be born.”

A few months later I was converted to Islam, the religion which I shall follow, if God will, until I die. In the Libyan desert last year, I went through eleven dreadful days without food and with very little water. My belief was not shaken. A little later I witnessed the horrible outrages committed by the Italians against our Muslim brethren in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and for the first time in my life I felt ashamed of being a European.

It is my hope and belief that Islam has a future, especially in Northern Europe, where people today are sighing for a religion which will give them more than Christianity, which has failed in every respect, and that the religion of the future will be Islam and nothing else. Islam alone, in spite of Bolshevism, Socialism, and all other modern ideas for the happiness of mankind, is able to make every individual completely happy, and for this reason society, though today more corrupt than ever, is still worth living in.^[1]

Ali Ahmad Knud Holmboe

My adherence to Islam!

As a Doctor of Medicine, and a descendant of a French Catholic family, the very choice of my profession has given me a solid scientific culture which had prepared me very little for a mystic life. Not that I did believe in God, but that the dogmas and rites of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular never permitted me to feel His presence. Thus my unitary sentiment for God forbade my accepting the dogma of the Trinity, and consequently of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

^[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1931, Vol. 19, No. 10, pp. 345-349.

Without yet knowing Islam, I was already believing in the first part of the *Kalimah* — *La ilaha illa-Allah*. (There is but One God), and in the verses of the Qur'ân.

So, it was first of all for metaphysical reasons that I adhered to Islam. Other reasons, too, prompted me to do that. For instance, my refusal to accept Catholic priests, who, more or less, claim to possess on behalf of God the power of forgiving the sins of men. Further, I could never admit the Catholic rite of communion, by means of the host (or holy bread), representing the body of Jesus Christ, a rite which seems to me to belong to totemistic practices of primitive peoples, where the body of the ancestral totem, the taboo of the living ones, had to be consumed after his death, in order better to assimilate his personality. Another point which moved me away from Christianity was the absolute silence which it maintains regarding bodily cleanliness, particularly before prayers, which has always seemed to me to be an outrage against God. For if He has given us a soul He has also given us a body, then we have no right to neglect. The same silence could be observed, and this time mixed with hostility with regard to the physiological life of the human being, whereas on this point Islam seemed to me to be the only religion in accord with human nature.

The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Qur'an, I began to study it, before my conversion, with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual, and I owe much to the magnificent work of Mr. Malek Bennabi, entitled *Le Phenomene Coranique*, which convinced me of its being divinely revealed. There are certain verses of this book, the Qur'an, revealed more than thirteen^[1] centuries ago, which teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do. This definitely converted me and converted me to

[1] Fourteen centuries ago — *Editor*.

the second part of the *Kalimah*—‘*Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah*’ (Muhammad is the Messenger of God).

This was my reason for presenting myself on 20th February, 1953 at the Mosque in Paris, where I declared my faith in Islam and was registered there as a Muslim by the Mufti of the Paris Mosque, and was given the Islamic name of ‘Ali Selman’.

I am very happy in my new faith, and proclaim once again:

“I bear witness that there is but one God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is God’s servant and Messenger.”^[1]

Ali Selman Benoist

(France)

Doctor of Medicine

What led Prof. Arthur Alison to embrace Islam?

Professor Arthur Alison is the Head of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in the University of London. For several years he had been the President of the British Society for Psychological and Spiritual Studies. In the course of his study of religions, he got acquainted with Islam. When he compared Islam with the religions and creeds he had studied, he found it suited his inborn nature and satisfied his requirements.

He was invited to the First Islamic International Conference on the Medical Inimitability in the Quran held in Cairo from 29th September to 6th October 1985, under the auspices of the Egyptian Medical Syndicate. In the conference he presented a paper on the psychological and spiritual methods of therapy in the light of the Holy Quran, in addition, to another paper on

[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*. Pp. 121-123.

sleep and death in the light of Verse 42 of *Surah Zumar* (39) in the Quran which he presented in collaboration with Dr. Mohammed Yahya Sharafi. The facts presented in the conference were an eyeopener to him.

At the concluding session of the Conference attended by Shaikhul Azhar Jad Al-Haq, the Egyptian Minister of Awqaf, Dr. Mohammed Ahmady and Dr. Mohammed Yahya Sharafi and in the presence of Press Reporters and T.V. Correspondents, Professor Arthur Alison stood to declare that Islam is the religion of truth and inborn nature with which God has created man. Then he uttered the two testimonies (*Shahadatain*): saying that he bears witness that there is no god, but Allah and that Muhammad is the Prophet of God.

In an interview given to the Arabic weekly, *Al Muslimoon* of London, he narrated the story of his conversion to Islam saying:

“In the course of my study of psychology and related subjects as the President of the British Society for Psychological and Spiritual Studies, I got acquainted with religions. I studied the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism and some other religions and creeds. When I studied Islam, I compared it to other religions.

“During the Conference on ‘Medical Inimitability in the Quran’, I could realise that the difference was great. Then I was convinced that Islam is the most proper religion that befits my inborn nature and conduct. In the heart of my hearts I had felt that there is a God controlling the Universe. He is the Creator.

“Therefore when I studied about Islam, I found that it did not conflict with reason and science. So I believed that it was the revealed religion from One and Only God. As I witnessed the truth, I uttered the two testimonies. The moment I uttered it, I was overwhelmed by a strange and ineffable feeling mingled with ease, comfort and satisfaction.”

He went on to say that the material world is now in a critical stage, what they say and see, does not explain the facts exactly. Here lies the responsibility of Muslims who could meet the wandering and perplexed humanity. Then the humanity will find themselves hand in hand with religion, science, this world, the Hereafter, and achieve an integration in the shade of which man can be happy.

Prof. Abdullah Alison added that he along with Dr. Mohammed Yahya had presented in the conference on the 'Medical Inimitability in the Quran' a paper focussing on the meaning of the Quranic verse:

"It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those (souls) for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Verily, in this are signs for a people who think deeply." (*Surah Zumar, 39:42*)

Through this verse, he said, they could prove that death and sleep are similar phenomena in which souls depart from the body. In the case of sleep, the soul returns to the body and in death, it does not. This verse reminds us that taking souls means both sleep and death. This fact has been proved through parapsychologic studies which are related to three main domains as given below:

Out of Body Experience (OBE)

Some persons are reported to have this experience in which they found their bodies in some other place or lying in a bed. This is called the Out of Body Experience. Studies have revealed that about 10% to 20% of the cases subjected to study had, had this experience.

Coma resembling death

Suffering from serious ailments, some persons enter a state of coma. The attending physicians declare them to have been clinically dead. But due to some medical aids they may regain consciousness. These persons narrate strange events they saw during such a state. Such experiences are worthy of study scientifically and in the light of the Quran.

Dreams

When some persons dream, they know that they are dreaming. Experiments in these domains have proved that sleep is the departure of certain object from the body which God has called as "soul."

Prof. Abdullah Alison added that when he attended the conference on the 'Medical Inimitability in the Quran' and learned various facts in the Quran and *Sunnah* related to the creations which have been confirmed by Science, he realised that Quran could in no way be a human creation. What was revealed to the Holy Prophet 1400 years ago proves that he is the Prophet of God. Therefore, he said, he uttered the two testimonies and became a Muslim with the name Abdullah Alison.

He spoke on the necessity of using the scientific facts in Islam as a means of Islamic *Da'wah* in the West, adding that it was the most appropriate way. The Western way of pursuing knowledge, he says, creates an impression that man is a limited quantity of cells and the universe a bunch of visible and audible objects. Whenever man discovers something, he realises he is more and more ignorant. When we learn more and more in the field of psychology and related subjects, this fact becomes more clear.

The learned Professor disclosed that he could set up an Islamic Psychological Studies Institute in London in the light of Quran and *Sunnah* and the studies related to Medical Inimitability in the Quran, with a view to showing the scientific facts, contained in the Quran, to the Western world. This Institute will include an

Islamic library with English and Arabic books, in addition, to another Institute for conducting scientific research in the light of Quran.^[1]

K. Mohammed
Doha, Qatar

Some reasons for accepting Islam

A thinking person pondering over the trend of modern thought will come at last to the conclusion that he must think for himself. There are so many schools of thought and so many methods of expression that, unless he is content to be an automaton reflecting only the opinions of his environment, and at all times ready to agree with the conventional or popular view, he must be prepared to go out into the desert and there reflect and find guidance. There alone will the thinker be able to find the inspiration which will enable him to impart his own ideas to others.

Various paths will lie before him. He has the ancient and traditional path of Roman Catholicism, with its claim of infallibility—a church which to many minds must make a powerful appeal because of its ritual, its antiquity, the vast number of adherents which it possesses all over the world and its multitudinous methods of religious activity.

He may think of Protestantism in general as according to all the right of individual expression of opinion, and of its claim that it grants liberty of conscience, thought and action; but he will find, on examination, that this is but another form of traditional belief as arbitrary and as formal as the creed which it supplanted and

^[1] *Yaqeen International*. April 7, 1986, Vol. 34, No. 23, pp. 270,271.

often more inquisitorial than the ancient forms of intolerance and authority.

Rationalism will appeal to many minds because of its ready acceptance of modern science, its condemnation of priestcraft and the excellent service it has given in breaking down the hidebound hostility of the past to any real freedom of thought in either religion or politics. Such iconoclasm is undoubtedly necessary before the human mind can ever find freedom or an opportunity to think over new discoveries.

Socialism or communism, with their gospel of social, economic and political equality as the immediate goal of human effort, will certainly make progress if only because of the clear necessity for some new re-organization of human society which even, though it be purely materialistic as its opponents assert, yet offers a change from the chaos into which modern society has drifted in recent years, more especially since the late Great European War with its wholesale shattering of illusions, and this has led many to look for an entirely new set of human ideals, if the human race is to make any lasting progress.

In recent years many new societies have been formed, each claiming to be the new guide for which the world is looking, and the number of societies and brotherhoods now in existence, is but an expression of the time-spirit. If any or all of them could act up to their claims so eloquently and cleverly put forward, then the transition periods from one age to another would be much easier than that produced by the sudden and violent methods which the last few years would seem to have called into existence.

In Islam, however, I think, I have found the elements which make for stability. Its simplicity, its freedom from ritual, its toleration, its lack of social distinctions and racial antipathies; its freedom from mysteries, reserved entirely for the select few or the wealthy and socially influential, and its possibilities for

the future wider than those contemplated by any other of the modern forms of faith make it, when rightly understood, the best expression which I have yet found for my social, political and religious ideals.^[1]

David Omar Nicholson

How Islam won me

[Col. Donald S. Rockwell was born at Taylorville, Illinois, U.S.A., and was educated at Springfield High School, Washington. He completed his studies at the Universities of Washington and Columbia where he won many scholastic honours. Col. Rockwell was a poet, an author and literary critic and also was Editor-in-Chief of 'Radio Personalities'. 'Beyond the Brin' and 'Bazar of Dreams' are his well-known works. He was a famous world-traveller and visited many Muslim countries – *Editor*].

The simplicity of Islam, the powerful appeal and compelling atmosphere of its mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer—these factors attracted me from the first. But after I had determined to become a follower of Islam, I found many deeper reasons for confirming my decision. The mellow concept of life—fruit of the Prophet's combined course of action and contemplation,—the wise counsel, the admonitions to charity and mercy, the broad humanitarianism, the pioneer declaration of women's property rights—these and other features of the teachings of the "Man of Mecca" were to me among the most obvious evidence of a practical religion so tersely and aptly

[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1935, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 106-108.

epitomized in the cryptic^[1] words of Muhammad: "Trust in Allah and tie your camel." He gave us a religious system of normal action, not blind faith in the protection of an unseen force in spite of our own neglect, but confidence that if we do all things rightly and to the best of our ability, we may trust in what comes as the Will of Allah.

The broad-minded tolerance of Islam for other religions recommends it to all lovers of liberty. Muhammad admonished his followers to treat well the believers in the Old and New Testaments; and Abraham, Moses, Jesus are acknowledged as co-Prophets of the One God. Surely this is generous and far in advance of the attitudes of other religions.

The total freedom from idolatry, even in the modified form of image-worship and adoration of the myriad figures and faces of saints in church windows, statute niches and shrines, is a sign of the salubrious strength and purity of the Muslim faith. There literally is but One God in mosque, home, mind and heart—Allah, undiluted by adulation of gilded pictures and tinted plaster models of many saints, unconfused by likenesses of the Prophet himself, forbidden by the wisdom of the inspired mind which gave to a pagan people the monotheistic Qur'ân. The concept of the Unity^[2] of God is not dimmed by the separate worship of a prophet, nor by belief in the division of the godhead into a trinity, with divine inclusion of a saviour in the spiritual person of the deity, as in the Christian faith. Muhammad, revered as a human revealer of Divine wisdom, has not been elevated to divine status by overzealous disciples and the reflected glory of the roseate glow which martyrdom always casts over its victims.

[1] It is not correct to use the word 'cryptic' while describing the style of the Prophet ﷺ, instead 'enchanted' would have been a suitable word — *Editor*.

[2] Instead of 'Unity', the correct word is 'Oneness' — *Editor*.

The original teachings of the Prophet of Allah have not been engulfed in the maze of changes and additions of doctrinaires. The Qur'ân remains as it came to the corrupt polytheistic people of Muhammad's time, changeless as the holy heart of Islam itself.

Moderation and temperance in all things, keynote of Islam, won my unqualified approbation. The health of his people was cherished by the Prophet, who enjoined them to observe strict cleanliness and specified fasts and to subordinate carnal appetites.

This summer I visited all of Spain's great cathedrals, many originally built as mosques, and immediately afterward I knelt with thousands of Moors in the mosques at Fez, Marakesh, Rabat, Meknes, Tetuan and other Moroccan cities.

As the noble strains of organ music and sonorous chanting reverberated through the vaulted arches of the dim cathedrals, and the pleasant odour of incense was wafted between the lofty columns of the colossal Spanish churches, I had to admit that these are valuable aids to the staging of a good show. But religion should not lean on the props of a stage spectacle—rather austere purity of prayer without embellishment. Music and incense produce emotional reactions, the products of ecstasy instead of spiritual fervour. They have their place as stimulants for the religious sluggards; they are the wine and coffee of Christendom.

But when I stood in the inspiring mosques of Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Algiers, Tangier, Fez and other cities, I was conscious of a more powerful reaction—the potent uplift of Islam's simple appeal to the sense of higher things, unaided by elaborate trappings, ornamentation, figures, pictures, music and ceremonial ritual. The mosque is a place of quiet contemplation and self-effacement in the greater reality of the One God, Allah. It does not need to employ a three-ring circus of sight, sound and smell to attract and hold its faithful congregation.

The democracy of Islam has always appealed to me. Potentate and pauper have the same rights on the floor of the mosque, on their knees in humble worship. There are no rented pews nor special reserved seats.

With full respect for the traditions of another great religion, monasticism does not seem to me a necessary or healthful adjunct of spiritual guidance. Men of normal family lives can appreciate the problems and understand the frailties of their fellow men better than a priest leading an ascetic life, and of course the spectacle of a renegade priesthood, betraying the code of their cloth for the temptations of the flesh, is a deplorable one. Naturally Islam has never developed a priesthood nor bureaucratic church government.

The Muslim accepts no man as a mediator between himself and his God. He goes direct to the invisible Source of creation and life, Allah, without reliance on a saving formula of repentance of sins and belief in the power of a teacher to afford him salvation.

The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless of race politics, colour or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in my travels, and this is another feature which drew me toward the Faith. I have been hospitably received by Muslim brothers from London, Paris, New York, Morocco, India, Persia, Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Poland; and my heart has warmed to them all as earnest workers in this great cause.

The copies of the *Islamic Review* which reached my hands in America were a source of further encouragement to cling to my adopted Faith, and it is a pleasure to pause in my editorial duties to express my appreciation and admiration of the noble work being done at Woking, and to assure my friends throughout the Muslim world of my zealous purpose to aid in the Islamic

Renaissance and to establish the Crescent more firmly in the Western world.^[1]

Col. Donald S. Rockwell

Reasons for my acceptance of Islam

Since my youth, I have been greatly impressed by Islamic Civilization in all its aspects, its poetry and architecture in particular, and very often I have told myself that a people who could give to the world so vast a treasure of beauty and significance in every branch of culture must also have attained to the highest levels both in philosophy and religion.

When I recall the wonderful Alhambra, which is the most perfect and complete example of Arabic residential architecture, I feel myself to be as it were in a dream of beauty. It is as though that miraculous building the Alhambra had been raised from the earth by the magic wand of a genie, like the enchanted palaces of the "Arabian Nights."

Tenuous, almost evanescent in appearance, despite the solidity of its structure, it seems impossible that such slender columns should sustain those massive arches of a shape which is an exclusive Arabic creation—and I say to you advisedly that it was well that the Muslims did not concern themselves with the painting of figures preferring to concentrate all their creative power on ornamentation—so that they have become supreme in that most impressive medium of artistic expression. Nobody on earth has been capable of inventing so many wonderful diversities of decorative design as have the Muslims. The marvellous arabesque, devised to decorate domes, walls, tiles, plates, metal work, furniture, bookbinding, stuffs and

[1] *Islamic Review*. April 1935, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 121-124.

innumerable other things are unique, and will so remain. Italians have been great masters in the painting of figures, but as regards ornaments they will never attain to the beauty and elegance of the Arabia.

When Charles the Fifth set foot in the Alhambra, he exclaimed— “If I was Boabdil I would rather be under its ruins than abandon it.” Rather should he have said “God bless Boabdil, who left this marvellous palace intact.”

And Sultan Abu Abdullah Mohammad, although forced to flee, weeping for his lost town, before the powerful army of Ferdinand, was a hero and not a coward, as many historians and Theophile Gauthier have let it be understood, and his mother was wrong in saying to him— “Thou criest like a child for a lost throne thou hast not been able to defend with thy sword.”

Yes, poor and good Boabdil, thou wert artist more than soldier, and hast preferred to sacrifice the glory of the moment rather than destroy an immortal work of art—thine enemies can hardly conceive of the mighty struggle that was fought out in thy soul between artistic conscience and the vanity of a theatrical gesture.

No, they do not understand. How wouldst thou countenance so horrible a spectacle? How couldst thou contemplate those wonderful walls of that dream palace wherein thou hadst dwelt as King crushing one on another, grinding to pieces those ornaments created by the inspired genius of thine artists? No, those people understand nothing! I imagine thee, brother Sultan Boabdil, bowed on a prayer carpet, in itself, I wager more precious in its beauty than the whole of Spain, praying to Allah and imploring Him to send thee light, and guide thee in the decision of what to do in that desperate moment—and I am sure that, in thy heart presently thou didst hear a voice saying,— “Leave this palace for the joy of the believers of the future—offer no useless resistance to the powerful army of Ferdinand,

and fly from here." And thou didst flee —and the barbarians led by the Cross burst into thy enchanted palace, and instead of standing awestruck at the wonderous things they saw, they plundered it of all its estimable treasures. But the praise to Allah! —the palace remained intact, and now we may enter it, and, with the help of our knowledge and imagination, we may see how it must have been in the golden days of thee and thy court.

Thou hast sacrificed the glory of the moment to the worship of beauty —and now the entire world enjoys this sacrifice.

Yea, Sultan Boabdil, thou wert a hero—thy soul, so great, could not tolerate a crime so horrible. What can I say of the wonderful Arabic potteries, the inlaid metals, the glasses, tapestries and bookbinding? A visit to the South Kensington Museum in London would give an idea of what was proper to a rich Arabian house in the old times—and not a rich house only, but to every house, even the humblest because everything was so artistic that all the survivals are now kept in glass-cases in Museums. Islamic art diffused a new light of beauty on the Europe of the early Renaissance. Its products are unique in the world—and what of its miniatures and MSS.

I had the joy of handling several ancient Qurans. What miracles of art they are! Neither the Italians nor any other people have ever been able even to approach them. And who were the geniuses who wrote the Romances related by Sheerazade? They are unknown—but that book which they produced is as fresh as if it was written yesterday, and gave a new impulse to the world's literature. It contains a deep philosophy and all human wisdom extant at that time— and many of those fantastic imaginations such as flight, travel under the sea, television and hearing from a great distance, are now realities, and those who wrote such a wonderful thing in those far off days, had prophetic genius.

I forbear to speak him of great thinkers, poets, philosophers, astronomers and politicians, because neither space nor occasion will permit. So I return to my subject.

In my enthusiasm for Islam, I began to study all religions, from the most ancient to those of the present-day, comparing each with the other, and subjecting them to very close criticism; and little by little I became convinced that the Muslim worship was the true religion, and that the Holy Quran contained what every soul mostly requires for its spiritual elevation.

I made a deep study of the Quran, unfortunately only through translations—but I can well imagine how beautiful and suggestive it must be in its original tongue.

I was born under the Catholic religion, but all my family fought for the deliverance of Rome from the domination of the Pope—my father being imprisoned for about one year in a deep, dark and damp cell—my uncle, in prison too, and afterwards sentenced to death. They were conspiring together with Garibaldi for the purpose of opening the gates of the City to him, but the plot was discovered, the Pope's government being well served by very clever spies—and my uncle was just able to save himself by escaping to Africa, where he remained for the rest of his life.

My poor father had a very difficult time, having spent all his huge fortune for the deliverance of Italy. When at last the Italian troops entered the Eternal City, I was a very little child, but growing under the influence and suggestions of my father, I never approved of the superstitions of the Catholic religion, — so complicated and so unlikely. The Prophet Jesus prophesied the brotherhood of all mankind, and said that in the sight of God we are all equal, without any difference between man and man, rich and poor.

But if you enter a Catholic Church you will see for yourself what a great difference exists between poor and rich—the latter

kneel on velvet cushions in the first row, near the altar, the poor on hard boards, far behind—and if we will suppose, somebody wants to speak to a Cardinal, he must ask for an audience, putting down the subject of his request, which is very often, if not always, rejected, for Cardinals consider themselves the princes of the Catholic Church. What has all this to do with the simplicity and brotherhood preached by the Prophet Jesus?

His followers were poor and simple; and I am quite sure that if he were to come on earth again and preach against the luxury and haughtiness of those who pretend to represent him on earth, certainly they would put him on the Cross or its modern equivalent once more.

And the Pope, who proclaims himself Christ's Vicar on earth, is the most aristocratic person imaginable. Arrayed in purple velvet, silk, laces, ermine, wearing a tiara sparkling with priceless stones, sitting on a throne of gold, surrounded by guards in gorgeous uniforms, and priests in rich robes, kneeled to by everybody (but never by me) amid clouds of fragrant incense—beautiful, of course very beautiful, all that brilliant theatrical pomp, but very, very far from being amenable to any spiritual impression.

For the Catholic ceremonies, the Pope gives his hand, or, what is worse, his foot, to be kissed—can a gesture more arrogant be imagined? Can this sort of imitation of an ancient Roman Emperor, self-styled divine, represent the poor Jesus who dressed in a rough shirt and a poor mantle, and walked barefoot? What must a man of intelligence think of a contrast so outrageous? And suppose you wish to be present at a ceremony in honour of a saint, or some similar festival in St. Peter's Church in Rome, you must have a ticket, and go to your numbered seat, just as in a theatre—and inside the Church there are galleries expressly built for the occasion, for the Diplomatic Corps, the aristocratic families and other social categories.

On the other hand, how beautiful and simple is a Mosque, and how poetical must be a pilgrimage to Mecca, where one cannot distinguish rich from poor, they being all equal before the face of Allah!

Now all my spiritual aspirations are to be able to become a *Haji* — with my artistic imagination, I can sometimes see myself quite alone in the Arabian Desert, with miles upon miles of it stretching right away like the sea; alone in the presence of Allah; like a grain of sand in His hands contemplating the stars, and absorbed in the imposing solitude, far from all the miseries of this world and astonished by the infinity of creation, more and more persuaded that the more science discovers new prodigious and marvellous natural laws, the more we must recognise in them the endless power of Allah! And what of the joy of consorting with my brothers-in-Islam—white, brown or black—feeling no difference among them, and turning towards the Holy Ka'aba all together?

Allah created no different colours of skins, and each one has a good reason to be content with his own.

I adore brown and black skins. The further one goes towards the Pole, the more one finds pale skin and fair hair; the further one goes towards the Equator, the more one finds brown or black skins—it seems to be a question of absorbing the hot beams of the sun. Ice represents death: the sun represents life. I love the sun and fly away from the ice—and what is of worth in a man is not without but within. Is not the shell of an oyster brown, but the pearl inside white and shining? So I compare the pearl to the soul. I enjoyed very much painting portraits of brown or black people. Had I a dark skin, I should be happy. It is more suitable for a man, and once under the hot sun of Arabia, if I have the chance of going there one day, I hope to become brown! Brown skins, white turbans—what a picturesque effect—and I so hope to paint a new

portrait of myself when I have become a sunburned man, and a *Haji*.

I hope my Muslim brothers will forgive me for this little vanity, for, after all, painting is my profession.

So I return to my main subject. I became more and more convinced that no other worship could be compared with the Muslim religion, dictated by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah!). But before embracing a religion different from that under which he is born, and which is also professed by all his friends and compatriots, a man must put himself under continuous control till the moment for formally declaring his conviction comes of itself, imposing on us its high power. The grace of Allah cannot descend on our souls if He will not give us the light of truth, and I was awaiting that moment: but there was always a doubt in my conscience—could I continue to paint portraits and yet avoid being a great sinner? That was the point which stopped me for a long time from declaring my faith, and I sought advice on the point from some very wise Muslims. Some of them answered me to the effect that painting portraits was not considered a great sin: others told me that nowadays many good Muslims are painting portraits. For myself, I remember that many Sultans, very good Muslims, had their portraits painted. At the National Gallery in London you can admire the very expressive portrait of Muhammad the Fifth by Gentile Bellini, and in books of art in my possession representing ancient portraits, there are two of Boabdil, the last Sultan of Granada, one in plain clothes, and the other wearing Royal Crown. But what is more surprising is that there is one of a Sultana unveiled. What more? My dear brother Haji Ali Reza explained to me that although to paint portraits may be considered as a sin, it is not so great a sin as to put me in danger of Allah's displeasure—and he is a leader in Islamic religion. So I continued to paint portraits. At last the moment for the formal declaration for my faith revealed itself, it was one

night when I was suddenly awakened after a strange dream. I dreamed that I was fighting for my life in a very rough sea, but after a desperate struggle against the fury of the waves I was able to reach the shore. At that moment a voice greater than the great noise of the roaring sea shouted to me! "Who saved thee from drowning, —and why art thou delaying thy faith?" A few hours later I went to Haji Ali Reza, who received my profession of faith, giving me with his usual kindness and great bountiful instruction regarding prayers and other details of the religion. And so I became a Believer.

Now I care not if, little by little, as has actually happened, all my old Catholic friends shut their doors in my face, for I am sure that for every Catholic friend I lose I shall acquire ten new friends among my brothers-in-Islam.

I began to feel the inevitable consequences of embracing my new Faith ever since I began to frequent Muslim gatherings, but now, after my formal profession of Faith, and my last visit to the Mosque at Woking, I have received signs of open hostility, and as a matter of fact, just a few days after the prayers at the Mosque, I received by post a threat of death.

I laughed at it because if Allah will put me under His protection, no power on earth can harm me, and I am sure that I can continue for the remainder of my life working on till the day fixed by Allah for my return to His embrace, always thanking Him till my last breath for His many gifts, and especially for my artistic temperament, which permits me to imitate with my art the wonderful beauty of the creation, to glorify whatsoever Allah with His boundless generosity is offering to our eyes for the joy of our souls.

I hope to live long enough to see with my mortal eyes, in no long time, erected in the heart of London the beautiful Mosque designed by our young and already clever architect Sheikh Abdul-Hamid. Only the deep soul of a Muslim could imagine a

Mosque such as he has conceived of, and only a Believer has the right to build it, no other. *Praise be to Allah, the King of all kings, the Creator of all things!*^[1]

Count Eduardo Gioja
Italy

Why I embraced Islam

“There was a door to which I found no key:
There was a veil past which I could not see.
Some little talk awhile of me and thee
There seemed—and then no more thee and me...”

Brought up and confirmed in the Church of England, like many other Englishmen, I spent most of my boyhood in an old Cathedral city—a city which, at that time, was “... famous for its large number of churches and public-houses!”

I remember being taught the Ten Commandments by teachers and others, learning the Catechism, reading the Bible, and so on, but beyond imbibing a kind of morbid emotionalism, and passing various school examinations in “religious knowledge,” I am afraid my upbringing was lacking in what one would call real spiritual discipline, which would adequately equip me for the adventure of life.

During 1918-1919 I happened to see some service with the Royal Air Force in Egypt. While here, an English friend and I had the opportunity of attending a midnight observance of *Maulud-un-Nabi* (Birthday of the Prophet). I remember this impressed us greatly at the time,—the chanting in Arabic, the flag of the Holy Prophet floating in the breeze, the sincerity of

^[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1935, Vol.23, No.9, pp. 329-336.

the worshippers, and their kindly hospitality. But I must admit that at that time we were there merely as sight-seers.

It was on my return to England, after demobilization, that my enquiries and questionings commenced. What actually first prompted the quest after wisdom was a little book—“Thoughts are Things”—by a New Thought writer, Prentice Mulford. This helpful little volume showed in simple language the power of thought: how wrong thoughts attract an environment of wrong, and how, *vice versa*, correct scientific thinking tends to attract what is desirable, and so on.

This search lasted some four or five years, during which I read and studied widely, and attended various lectures and discussions. Theosophy, Buddhism, Yoga Philosophy, Spiritualism, Sufi Mysticism, Catholicism, New Thought, Pelmanism,—all came in turn under my scrutiny, but though I could see certain eternal truths enshrined in all these philosophies, so far I “came out by the same door as I went ...”

It was not until 1924 that I first became acquainted with the simple teachings of Islam, so eminently reasonable and satisfying. Happening one day to go into a public library in the Midlands, I came upon a current copy of the *Islamic Review* and coming to the pages “What is Islam?” I there and then knew that I had come to the end of my search.

I read a code of laws, which, if faithfully observed, would lead to success, both temporal and eternal, to peace and mind and serenity, and which would also show how the effects of past mistakes could be nullified. I read of a royal philosophy, simple in form, yet profound enough for a lifetime of study, which would enable the individual soul to orientate itself and its activities correctly, and to take its rightful place in the mighty universe.

Shortly afterwards I formally accepted Islam and was received into the Brotherhood by Imam Khawaja Nazir Ahmad.

Since those days I have always been able to view world affairs from the real standpoint—the standpoint of the Muslim,—instead of having false beliefs and materialistic opinions forced on me by the world, which is the case with thousands who are unable to discern truth from falsehood, or even right from wrong!

Finally, Islam forbids the cardinal sin of selfishness, and teaches that one cannot be happy if one's brother is unhappy. A well-known Eastern thinker once said: "Our vocation is our real lamp in life, whatever our occupation may be." After our daily needs are satisfied, and we have made due provisions for our future material welfare, let us, Muslims, all find a vocation. It may be in lightening our brother's burden in a material sense, or it may be spiritual help we can give him. But let us find that vocation, for it will be our only passport to lasting happiness, the only justification for our existence both here and hereafter.^[1]

Fazl Karim Saunders

My experience of Islam

After embracing Islam, Mr. Frederick Hameedullah Bowman delivered a lecture on 'The Message of Islam' in August 1939. We reproduce his declaration of faith before giving his 'Experience of Islam'.

DECLARATION

I, Frederick Hameedullah Bowman, of Liverpool, England, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be

^[1] *Islamic Review*. November-December 1935, Vol. 23, No.11-12, pp. 402,403.

His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah.

[There is but One God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.]

(Sd.) *F.H. Bowman*

In response to a request from the *Imam Sahib*, I have much pleasure in outlining the circumstances in which I first heard the truths of Islam. My mother, Alice Bertha Bowman, poetess and novelist, whose writings have been appreciatively accepted by Royalty, contributed, many years ago, articles and verses to "The Allahabad Review." This paper was published in India by the late Sarbuland Jung M. Hameedullah, afterwards Chief Justice of the Hyderabad Deccan. As a small boy, I read this publication and others in which her contributions appeared, and I conceived an early ambition to see my own name in print, especially as my mother's story, "A Romance of Llangollen," had won an authorship prize in "The Anglo-Indian Week's Times." I myself showed aptitude for literature at school and became editor of the Fifth Form Magazine. I was contributing to the public press before I left school, and Mr. Hameedullah, then a barrister, took a keen interest in my literary progress. I adopted his name. Now that he has, alas, passed away, my devoted gratitude is retained by his family, and I regularly correspond with his distinguished son, Mr. Mahmudullah, Home Secretary of the United Provinces of India, who so ably maintains the high traditions of his ancient Delhi ancestry. When I was at school, there was a Muslim mosque in Liverpool and I attended many services there with my mother. So interested did I become that I even tried to emulate the local Sheikh, and, in a home-made robe, I mounted a box at home to address my own meeting of neighbours and spread the truths of the Muslim Faith. The mosque eventually closed, and, for some time, I was out of

touch with the Faith. I went on the stage, wrote many professionally toured plays, produced shows myself, had my stories and serials published by the leading London firms, wrote films and acted in some of them, and composed various songs. I have always sympathized with suffering animals, which was one of the characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, His humanity extended to the lowest of creatures. I am now President of the Animal Service Association, which I founded for the protection of the beasts of burden. My latest song is "Women and War," a plea for peace. I have for some years been the editor of my own paper, "The Talking Picture News," and had the honour of being presented to King George the Fifth at the June Levee in 1934 at St. James's Palace. I noticed this year that the *Imam Sahib* of the Woking Mosque was to deliver an address on Islam at the Southport Religious Conference, so I went over to hear him. It gave me great pleasure to meet him afterwards, when we had a most interesting chat. I hope we shall keep in touch with each other. I was born in Liverpool, and my people were Protestants. I have, however, always preferred to think for myself, and the Muslim view of God has always appealed to me.^[1]

Frederick Hameedullah Bowman

Liverpool, England

The Religion of the Thinker

For many years the cry has been going up from the Churches, as voiced in the religious press of Christendom, that no progress is being made; indeed, it is evident that each year, in spite of the most strenuous efforts, people generally are taking less and less interest in the activities of the clergy. Many reasons are

[1] *Islamic Review*. March 1940, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 81-83.

advanced to account for this indifference, but the real one is generally shirked. The Creator has endowed man with a brain for use, and the more he uses it the less likely is he to remain contented with the doctrines which sufficed for his unsophisticated and credulous ancestors.

In the Middle Ages the only people to use their brains were the priests. In their hands exclusively lay that most potent of all weapons, education; so much so that any person who could read and write was automatically claimed as a "clerk," that is, he was regarded as a learned man, and enrolled on the side of the clergy in their long struggle for — not the souls of men, oh no! — political power and wealth. It was a struggle between brains and brawn, between the educated man and the illiterate soldier, between the astute scholar and the stupid man-at-arms, which could have but one result. The Church basked in prosperity—and it was possible for a John and an Alexander Borgia to become Pope! It must, of course, be admitted that there were not a few good and pious men who tried to show their flocks the way to Heaven, but with the unsurmountable handicap of using for their ministrations Latin, a language of which it is safe to say that not one person in a thousand of their congregations understood a single connected sentence. At the same time, should anyone presume to exert his powers of thought to question the accuracy or truth of what he was told, his shrift was indeed short. Heresy, for which death by fire was the penalty, was the Church's answer to the bold inquirer after truth. This simple system still prevails with the majority of Christians, for the Church of Rome allows no one to question the infallibility of its teaching, although the modern penalties are not quite so drastic.

What do we find when the Church lost its monopoly of education, and the use of printing spread books among the people? Men began to think for themselves, and though it took centuries to come about, men finally dared to question the truth

of all the old fables which had so long gone unchallenged outside the Church.

For very many years, say until the end of the nineteenth century, Fashion, that implacable goddess, decreed that attendance at church was essential for society, but now that she has changed her mind we see the hollowness of the sham which filled the Parish Church each Sunday. It is probable that a very large number of those who now attend church do so more from some impulse remaining from their young days than from any real feeling that they are reaping any moral benefit.

And yet mankind has the need for religion in some form or another. The present craze for amusement all the time will have its reaction, and it is certain that the thinking man will not turn to a religion which says, "Unless ye believe certain very dubious truths and take an impossible view of your Creator ye cannot be saved." No proofs are offered and an implicit faith in the improbable is demanded. It is not reasonable to ask intelligent persons to agree to such a proposal, and I believe that Mr. Benard Shaw's prophecy is likely to come true; but here is the opportunity for us Muslims. The world may possibly gravitate towards "a religion something like Islam," but it is for us to strain every effort to turn it to Islam pure and simple. Soon there will be more inquirers after truth than ever before in the history of mankind. They will not be content with the old catchwords; they will require a religion which answers all their questions, which does not treat them as children who are forbidden to speak direct to a loving Father but must make their requests through the governess. Again I say, let us Muslims be ready to grasp this opportunity.

Personally, I come of a family of seekers after truth. My great-grandfather, Dr. Pye-Smith, published his famous work on the relation between Scripture and Geology in 1843, by which he incurred the most violent denunciations, being regarded by

many as a direct enemy to religion; yet he merely led the way—nobody can nowadays seriously disagree with his views on the subject, revolutionary as they were then thought. I myself, in spite of, or possibly because of, a religious upbringing in the Church of England, could not remain easily satisfied. Living in Malaya, and in close contact with good Muslims, I could not but inquire further and further into the truth of Islam, until I was quite convinced that here was the perfect answer to all my questions, and the Heaven-sent solution to those problems which Christianity avoids answering.^[1]

Geoffrey H.R. Pye-Smith

(Ja'far bin Dawud)

Why I embraced Islam?

As a child I had felt an inner urge to learn all I could about Islam, and I had carefully studied an old Qur'an translation which I had found in the library of my home town and which dated back to 1750. It was the edition from which Goethe also drew his knowledge of Islam. At that time I had been deeply struck by the absolutely rationalistic and at the same time imposing composition of the Islamic teachings. I had also been very much impressed by the gigantic spiritual revolution which they evoked in the Islamic nations of that time. Later, in Berlin, I had the opportunity of working together with Muslims and listening to the enthusiastic and inspiring commentaries which the founder of the first German Muslim Mission at Berlin and builder of the Berlin Mosque, gave on the Holy Qur'an. After years of active cooperation with this outstanding personality and his spiritual exertions, I embraced Islam. Islam supplemented

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1931, Vol. 19, No. 6, pp. 185-187.

my own ideas by some of the most ingenious conceptions of mankind ever thought of. The belief in God is something sacred to the religion of Islam. But it does not proclaim dogmas which are incompatible with modern science. Therefore, there are no conflicts between belief on the one hand and science on the other. This fact is naturally a unique and enormous advantage for a man who participated to the best of his ability in scientific research. The second advantage is that the religion of Islam is not an idealistic teaching which runs along blindly beside life as it is, but that it preaches a system which actually influences the life of a human being ... the laws of Islam are not compulsory regulations which restrict personal freedom, but directions and guides which enable a well-contrived freedom.

Throughout the years I have noticed time and again with deepest satisfaction that Islam holds the golden mean between individualism and socialism, between which it forms a connecting link. As it is unbiased and tolerant, it always appreciates the good, wherever it may happen to come across it.^[1]

Dr. Hamid Marcus^[2]

Scientist, Author and Journalist
Germany

My acceptance of Islam!

[Professor Haroun Mustapha Leon, Ph.D., LL.B., F.S.P., accepted Islam in 1882. He was a Fellow and Honorary Member of many learned societies of Europe and America. He was an able philologist, and was that time contributing a series of articles on the 'Entomology of Man's Language' to

^[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*. Pp. 125-126.

^[2] The writer was also the editor of *Moslemische Revue*, Berlin.

the 'Isle of Man Examiner'; moreover, he contributed a number of articles in *Islamic Review* and *Islamic Culture*. His services to this important branch of science had frequently been recognised by the learned bodies. The Potomac University (U.S.A.) conferred upon him the degree of M.A. Dr. Leon was also an earnest geologist. He frequently lectured on scientific and literary subjects before learned and other societies. He occupied the important position of Secretary-General of 'La Societe Internationale de Philologie, Sciences et Beaux-Arts' (founded in 1875), and was the Editor of the 'Philomathe', a scientific magazine, published from London. Dr. Leon received many decorations from the late Shah Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan, and the Emperor of Austria — *Editor*].

One of the glories of Islam is that it is founded upon reason, and that it never demands from its followers an abnegation of that important mental faculty. Unlike certain other faiths, which insist upon their votaries implicitly accepting certain dogmas without independent inquiry, but simply on the authority of "The Church", Islam courts inquiry and counsels its disciples to study, search, and investigate prior to acceptation. The Holy Prophet, of ever-blessed memory said:

"Allah hath not created anything better than reason, the benefits which giveth are on its account, and understanding is begotten of it."

On another occasion he said:

"Verily, I tell you, a man may have performed prayers, fasts, charity, pilgrimage and all other good works; but he will not be rewarded but by the manner in which he hath used and applied his reason."

The parable of the 'Talents' narrated by Saiyiddena 'Isa, *i.e.*, Jesus (on whom be peace) is in strict accordance with Islamic doctrine, as also is the maxim: "Prove all things; hold fast to that

which is good." The similitude of those who follow blindly and who neglect to use the intelligence which the Divine Giver of all good hath bestowed upon them, is declared in the imperishable pages of Al-Qur'an (*Surah Al-Jumu'ah* — the Assembly or Friday Prayer, 62:5) to be that of "an ass laden with books."

The noble and learned Caliph, Hazrat Ali (on whom be peace) said:

"Muslims believe that Islam is a term synonymous with truth, and that under the glorious and ever-brilliant sun of Islam, by the light of reason and knowledge, truth can be obtained; but in order to obtain that knowledge, and thus attain that truth, man must use his reasoning faculties."

A most pregnant pronouncement on this question was given by our Holy Prophet only a few days prior to his decease.

There he lay, the last and greatest of the grand chain of mighty men whom Allah, in His everlasting Mercy and Compassion, had sent to the world as inspired messenger of truth and of righteousness, his saintly head pillowed upon Hazrat Ayesha's loving knee.

The true believers of Medina, old and young, men and women—nay, even the children—had gathered, in loving sympathy, there, around the mat whereon lay *Mustapha Al-Amin*, the chosen, the faithful, *Ar-Rasul-Allah*. Tears glistened in their eyes, and coursed down the cheeks of even the most grizzled and valiant of the veteran warriors of Islam. Their leader, their friend, their beloved pastor, and, above all, their Prophet, he who had led them from the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the radiant brightness of the truth, had brought them into Islam, the habitation of peace, was about to pass away from them. No wonder, then, that their eyes became fountains of tears, and their hearts were heavy and oppressed.

In the agony of distress, almost of despair, one exclaimed: "O Prophet of Allah! thou art ill, thou mayest die, then what is to become of us?"

"You have Al-Qur'an," said Allah's Messenger.

"Oh, yes, *Rasul-Allah* but even with that enlightening Book and unerring Guide before us, we have had at times to ask from you advice, counsel, and instruction, and if you are taken from us, O Prophet, who is there to be our guide?" said the Companions.

"Do as I did and as I have said", was the reply.

"But, O Prophet, after you have gone, fresh circumstances may arise which could not have arisen during thy blessed lifetime; what are we to do then? And what are they to do who follow us?"

The Prophet slowly raised his illustrious and saintly head, and with the lurid light of prophecy and inspiration shining radiantly from his noble eyes exclaimed: "Allah hath given to every man as a personal monitor, a conscience and as a guide, his reason; then, use them in respect of all things and Allah's blessing will even guide you aright."^[1]

Prof. Haroun Mustapha Leon

Why I am a Muslim?

In writing this statement it is not my intention to enter into a lengthy discourse of comparative religion, nor is it my desire to write a critique of the Islamic faith. Instead, I shall try to give a comprehensive explanatory statement as to why I am a Muslim.

My early religious training was in the Christian faith. This, however, was a matter of birth, not of choice—our early

^[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*. Pp. 119-121.

religious training is generally in the faith of our parents. Later in life our religion is usually accepted as a matter of fact. We, however, question and examine everything except our religious faith, particularly if it is Christianity.

The Christian Bible, being the textbook of Christianity, is a book which I have read many times. I doubt if there is a person who does not shudder while reading its pages, filled as they are with bloodcurdling slaughter, rapine and destruction, along with its tales of incest, rape and other vile obscenity. Indeed, after reading the Bible one cannot help but wonder as to the nature of this "God of the Christians."

Almost every Christian home contains the Bible, but it is generally used as a mantelpiece decoration. If it were the custom of the printer to deliver this book with its edges uncut, it would no doubt remain so for many years. Charles Francis Potter, D.D., in his book "The Story of Religion" wrote: "The Christian Bible may be 'the book nobody knows' in America, but the Qur'an is the book everybody reads in Islam." Yes, indeed, and it is an advantage to Christianity that the Bible is "the book nobody knows." The Bible was the first cause in leading me away from Christianity.

Having lost all interest in Christianity, I began a study of other world religions, as well as various "ologies" and "isms." All this was followed by agnosticism and atheism. However, there is, I believe, in mankind an innate certainty deeply rooted which persists in proclaiming the fact that there is a God, a Divine Creator, Master of the Universe. But not the God who glories in bloodshed, atrocities and sensuousness. It was this "innate certainty" which caused me to return to a further study of religion. I was particularly attracted to the Islamic faith because it is rational, devoid of obscenity, and it does not tax one's credulity.

I found that Islam appeals to one's reason; it does not contain the pessimism of Buddhism; it is not void of Divinity like Shintoism or Confucianism, nor is it a money-made religion. I

found that it invites and encourages the pursuit of knowledge. The pages of history are filled with facts citing the hindrances which Christianity placed in the pathway of progress and civilization. It was a traditional saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad of Blessed Memory that "whoso pursueth the road of knowledge; Allah will direct him to the road of Paradise; verily the angels spread their arms to receive him who seeketh after knowledge; verily the superiority of a learned man over a mere worshipper is like that of the full moon over the stars." Joseph McCabe (an agnostic) in his book "Religious Controversy" wrote: "There is hardly a science which is not greatly indebted to the Mohammedans."

I do not hesitate to state that were Islam better known in the Western World, it would astound the civilized world by its gain in adherents. The reason why it is not better known, is that it is with difficulty that one can obtain authorized or even unbiased literature pertaining to the Islamic faith. However, I am sure, time will rectify this condition.

In bringing this article to an end, I wish to state that I am very happy to add my voice to the millions who proclaim to the world *La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah*—There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger. ^[1]

Harry E. Heinkel

^[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1932, Vol. 20, No. 8, pp. 257-259.

How I came to choose Islam?

I first came into contact with Islam five years ago, when I heard a Muslim explaining his religion at an outdoor meeting. My original purpose of joining his audience was to be entertained by the hecklers present, but as I listened, I became attracted by the unusual charm of the speaker and was interested in his subject so much that I attended eagerly many further meetings.

Shortly afterwards, a few copies of the *Islamic Review* came my way, which, besides increasing my knowledge of the religion, made me wish to learn more. Consequently, I studied a Muslim translation of the Holy Qur'ân, and was astounded to read such noble precepts and inspiring passages, such wise and practical advice for everyday life. It made me wonder why I had been taught that Muhammad was a false prophet, and how I had not heard the truth about this wonderful religion earlier.

Naturally, I remembered quite a few of the laws, warnings and consolations this Book contained, and whenever afterwards I encountered Muslims I watched to see if they obeyed them—and they do so to the letter. They never raised their voice or interrupted in argument, always restrained their anger under extreme pressure, were always eager to help each other, and the Muslim ladies always wore clothes conforming to Islamic requirements. On one occasion I heard several young men discussing with much concern whether attending dances would contravene a certain Qur'ânic commandment. Such earnestness and strict adherence greatly impressed me, at the same time made me resolve to study the religion more deeply. After doing so I realized that Islam, if sincerely followed, must bring that peace to the mind and body which the word itself means, and create a perfect social order. Daily I grew fonder of the creed.

My conversion is the result, and I am extremely happy to be able to take this step. I take this opportunity of expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my brothers and sisters in Islam, whose

zealous work and many sacrifices for the Sacred Cause have greatly encouraged and helped me. May Allah make me a worthy member of such a community! ^[1]

Hassan V. Matthews

Why I renounced Ahmadiyyah

I swear before Allah and man that I have no malice whatsoever against Ahmadiyyah or the Ahmadis. I strongly believe that every person is individually responsible to Allah for his/her faith and for whatever religion he/she follows. My main concern with this exercise is to declare, in unmistakable terms, my finding that *Ahmadiyyah is not Islam*. This is necessary because a number of Ahmadis in Nigeria had said it to my hearing on a number of occasions that my being an Ahmadi had contributed to their becoming Ahmadis when they did. This placed a heavy burden on me when I came to discover the truth about Ahmadiyyah. This exercise is, therefore, among other things, aimed at removing this burden from myself. All praise is due to Allah the Most High for His guidance.

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islâm) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur’ân) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided”. (*Surah An-Nahl*, 16:125).

My aim with the present exercise is also to explain to others who are genuinely in search of truth about Ahmadiyyah in case Allah may, out of His mercy, grant them better understanding and show them the right way. My prayer for such people is that,

^[1] *Islamic Review*. March 1941, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 82.

after having granted them understanding and shown them the right way, Allah may help them to be courageous enough to abandon the wrong way and follow not the untrue.

“And who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of his Lord, then he turns aside therefrom? Verily, We shall exact retribution from the *Mujrimûn* (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, etc.).” (*Surah As-Sajdah*, 32:22)

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds! They are those who deny the *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of their Lord and the Meeting with Him (in the Hereafter). So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall not give them any weight. That shall be their recompense, Hell; because they disbelieved and took My *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and My Messengers by way of jest and mockery.” (*Surah Al-Kahf*, 18:103-106)

There is currently a universal upsurge against the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of India who, before his death in 1908, distinguished himself and his adherents with the name Ahmadiyyah.

The upsurge is principally among the Muslims who consider that the Ahmadis are stealthily trying to usurp their right in the name of Islam.

The struggle is paramount in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan because it is there, more than anywhere else, that the Ahmadiyyah pinch is most greatly felt since it affects them not only religiously but also politically.

As her full nomenclature indicates, Pakistan was created on the basis of Islam. Consequently, here Constitution stipulates, among other things, that the highest political post of the country must be filled by a Muslim.

This directive was not meant to serve as religious intolerance; rather its aims was to protect the interests of Islam which has always been the State Religion of Pakistan.

It was, indeed, in order to safeguard the ideological frontiers also that Pakistani Muslims have ever since the country's independence cried out to their governments that Ahmadiyyah should be declared a minority religion, (rather non-Muslim—*Editor*), and that the Ahmadis should be recognised as belonging to the minority groups from among whom neither Prime Minister nor President can be elected.

This is because the vast majority of Muslims all over the world do not recognise Ahmadiyyah as part of Islam, and the Ahmadis as Muslims. Let us consider the arguments for and against this stand of the world Muslims against the Ahmadis.

In my childhood, I was brought up to revere the Indo-Pakistani Ahmadiyyah missionaries who guided and controlled our religious activities. When the missionaries came to our elders and, through the elders, to us, we believed all that they told us in toto because of the implicit confidence we had in them.

Their preachings appeared plausible to us, and we accepted their arguments in good faith. They made references to Islamic books in order to substantiate their claims, and we accepted the references without cross-checking them because of our confidence in them.

Their method was to alienate us against the orthodox Muslims in whom they found faults in the way they practised Islam. The missionaries claimed to present "the true Islam" to us in the name of Ahmadiyyah.

They often impressed on us that the stiff opposition which Ahmadis suffered in India before the Partition, and subsequently in Pakistan, was a conclusive proof of the truth of Ahmadiyyah. After all, no Prophet is readily accepted in his own town or country. This also appeared plausible to us, hence we followed them with unalloyed confidence.

It was indeed, with such confidence that I addressed the Ahmadiyyah Youth Conference in October, 1972. Subsequently, certain events made me reconsider the hitherto accepted claims of Ahmadiyyah with a view to cross-checking their references.

My aim was actually to strengthen myself against the gathering opposition to Ahmadiyyah. As a University scholar, I was conscious that my pronouncement in support of Ahmadiyyah must necessarily be backed up with authentic references to Islamic sources.

In my cross-checking of the Ahmadiyyah missionaries' references, however, my findings were rather disappointing: I must say before Allah and man that the more I scrutinise the claim and the purported references for them, the more I discover that the Ahmadiyyah Mission are deceiving the world and playing on the ignorance of many of their followers.

In many cases, they quote authors who are explicitly opposed to Ahmadiyyah ideas; but so cleverly do they quote that they give the impression that the authors support Ahmadiyyah views.

It is only by going to the source references and reading what the Ahmadis had quoted within the context in which they are set that reader, and the seeker after truth, will realise how much the Pakistani Ahmadiyyah missionaries try to deceive the world.

For example, an often-quoted "tradition" by the Ahmadis in support of Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophethood is that 'A'ishah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

says: "Say that he is seal of Prophets but say not that there is no Prophet after him."

It should be pointed out that this reference to the Prophet and his wife is not found in the six authentic books of *Hadith*, viz. *Al-Bukhari*, *Muslim*, *Abu Daud*, *Ibn Majah*, *Tirmizi* and *Nasai* nor in *Muwatta* of Imam Malik or *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal or in *Mishkat Al-Masabih* which is an anthology of the foregoing universally recognised books of *Hadith*.

Anyway, even though the supposed *Hadith* from 'A'ishah is worthless and unreliable, since it has become rather high in the estimation of the Ahmadis, let us consider the weight of authentic *Ahadith* against it. It should be remembered that the Ahmadis quote the *Hadith* in order to prove the *Khatam-un-Nabiyyin* does not mean the last of the Prophet in respect of time.

In conveying the meaning of this term; Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gave an illustration as follows as contained in *Sahih Muslim*, *Fada'il* 26:

"The similitude of me and the Prophets is like that of a man who built a house, completed and perfected it, except for the place of a brick. People were entering it and wondering about it saying: 'Were it not for the place of the brick.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) says: 'I am the place of the brick. I came and I put an end to the Prophets.'"

From the above quotation of universally authentic *Hadith*, it becomes very clear that Prophet Muhammad's own understanding of *Khatam-un-Nabiyyin* was that he was the highest and the last of all the Prophets of Allah, and that no other Prophet will come after him. This is why the Qur'an which calls Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Seal (or Last) of the Prophets, also emphasizes the fact that he had no son. It declares:

“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets; and Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything.”
(*Surah Al-Ahzâb*, 33:40)

In their obsession to prove the prophethood of Ghulam Ahmad at all costs, the Ahmadiyyah Mission surprisingly and shamelessly twist the meaning and interpretation of certain verses of the Qur'an to suit their set purpose. One of such twistings is their translation of the Qur'an 4:70 (orthodox numbering 4:69). They say: “And who so obeys Allah and *this messenger of His ...*” (italics mine). What the Ahmadiyyah Mission translate as “and this messenger of His” is in Arabic *wa-rasul* which, by all standards, means “and the Messenger” or “and the Apostle.” It cannot mean any other thing. What the Mission have actually translated outside the Qur'anic context, is “*wa rasulahu hadha*”, meaning “and this messenger (or apostle) of His.” If this practice of the Mission were to be pursued to its logical conclusion, then it means an attempt on their part to interpolate the Qur'an: a grievous offence indeed from the Islamic point of view. For if the English translation of the Qur'an, as rendered by the Ahmadiyyah Mission, alone were published, so much of that translation will be found to be different from the original text. Is it not high time that all Nigerian and African Muslims who associate with the Ahmadiyyah Mission reconsidered their association, if they are genuinely interested in Islam ushered to the world by Prophet Muhammad on whom be peace and blessings of Allah the Most High?

The Ahmadiyyah Mission (they are also called Qadianis) have interpolated the first part of this verse only in order to follow it up with their misinterpretation of the whole verse to suit themselves. The whole verse reads as follows: “Those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those on whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets, the truthful ones,

the martyrs and the righteous ones: those are in a beautiful company.”

In misinterpreting the verse, the Qadianis claim that by obeying Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) a person can rise to the dignified position of a prophet. They say: “such Messengers who may appear after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) must necessarily be the followers of his *Shari'ah*, the Holy Qur'an, as they are vouchsafed this spiritual rank through the obedience of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and not independently which subsequently implies that he is the last law-bearing prophet. Nobody will ever come to supersede him or abrogate his law.”

The reason for this misinterpretation is only to prove that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet and a messenger of God as against the overwhelming opinion of Muslims including that of Prophet Muhammad himself. One wonders why the Mission did not inform the world of the interpretation of the verse by “authentic dictionary of Qur'anic vocabulary” like *Mufridat* of Raghib; or what the books of *Hadith* and renowned commentaries of the Qur'an say about the verse. The Qadianis cannot certainly deny the knowledge of what these authorities of Islamic teachings and expositions have put down for posterity on the verse.

Commenting on the verse, Ibn Kathir (Beirut edition, 1969) says on page 522 of Vol. 1 as follows:

“That is, whoever acts upon what Allah and His Messenger have enjoined; and avoids what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, then, Allah the Sublime and Glorious, will make him live in His noble dwelling and grant him companionship with the Prophets, then with those enumerated after them who are the truthful ones, then the martyrs, then the generality of the believers who are the righteous ones that behave well both secretly and

openly. Then God Most High praises them by saying, 'Those are in a beautiful company'."

Many books of *Hadith*, including those of Muslim, Ahmad bin Hanbal and others give the incident which led to the revelation of the verse:

It is related that one of the Ansar in Medina came to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) one day with a sad countenance. So the Prophet asked him the reason for his sadness: "Fellow, why do I see you sad?" "O Prophet of Allah, I thought of something." "What is it?" "We come to you day and night, looking at your face and keeping your company; whereas tomorrow you will rise with the Prophets and we will not be able to reach you."

The Prophet gave him no reply, then Angel Gabriel brought the revelation of the verse, saying that those who obey Allah and the Messenger shall, on the Day of Judgement, be with the Prophets, etc.

These are straightforward commentaries and reason for the verse. They are, indeed, too clear to need any further elucidation. I only wish that the Ahmadis could reflect properly and reject the religious indoctrination that their *Moulvis* (rather, preachers — *Editor*) have so successfully bedevilled them.

Certainly no one or any group of persons can deceive all the people for all the time. There must be a stop to it one day. Nigerian Ahmadis, please reflect and reconsider.

As for the Mission's reference to Qur'an 7:36 (i.e. 7:35), (7:37 Pickthall) it is the same story of misinterpretation out of context in order to buttress their erroneous view on the continuation of Prophethood after Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Along with contradicting the Qur'an, the Ahmadiyyah doctrine of not joining prayers led by other Muslims also contradicts an authentic directive of Prophet Muhammad as contained in the

Hadith of Ibn Majah, *Fitnah*, 8; also Hanbal, IV, 278, 357 and 383. In the *Hadith*, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is reported to have said: "My community will not agree over an error; incumbent on you (i.e. Muslims) is (the decision) of the great majority. Whoever keeps aloof from the Community to the measure of a handspan, he has indeed taken off the nose of Islam from his neck." This *Hadith* is certainly too clear to need any explanation.

Their doctrine of not marrying their daughters to non-Ahmadi Muslims also comes under this category. In supporting this doctrine, they refer to the Islamic injunction that Muslim women should not be married to non-Muslims. By analogy, therefore, it means that Ahmadi consider non-Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims. If, therefore, Ahmadi consider themselves as Muslims, then this doctrine indicates that Ahmadi, as Muslims, consider non-Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims. They can justify the doctrine only if Ahmadiyyah is declared as an entity different from non-Ahmadi Islam, otherwise the doctrine is both unjustifiable and indefensible. If, therefore, the Saudi Arabian Government, or any Government for that matter, should consider Ahmadiyyah as non-Islamic, and the Ahmadi as non-Muslims, who can conveniently blame them, knowing the full facts?

Another Ahmadiyyah trait that estranges them from the Muslims is the clever-way by which they try to impose themselves on the Muslims. Knowing that they are not accepted by the Muslims, they try to keep educated members of their group in governmental key positions, and work indirectly through such individuals for the interest of Ahmadiyyah in the name of Islam.

I think it is high time the Ahmadi made their stand clear to the world. Are they Muslims, or a distinct group originating from among the Muslims? If they are Muslims, then they have to follow the consensus of Muslim opinion and abandon the idea of

“follower-prophethood” after Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.); co-operate with other Muslims to stabilise and consolidate Islam. They are highly needed for this duty; and they can perform the duty well only by associating with other Muslims rather than alienating them through heretical beliefs and practices. If the Ahmadis are a distinct group and a new formation, then let them stand apart from other Muslims and declare their identity, so that those who will embrace Ahmadiyyah will know from the start that they are entering a new religion rather than having a wrong impression of being Muslims.

It is certainly not enough to retain the name Ahmadiyyah just because Ghulam Ahmad is believed only as a *Mujaddid*. This is because he was not a *Mujaddid* in Islam. Many reformers of Islam had appeared at different times before him and each of them had carried out specific duties for the overall progress of Islam. None of them had claimed prophethood. It is not a condition in Islam that a reformer should himself form a distinct group and give it a distinct name. No former *Mujaddid* of Islam had done that before Ghulam Ahmad. The greatest, so far, of the reformers of Islam was Al-Ghazzali; he never formed a distinct group with a distinct name.

I am aware that the Movement, within the context of Nigeria, and certain other Ahmadis, e.g. the Lahoris, do reject the idea of follower-prophethood and claim that Ghulam Ahmad is only a *Mujaddid*, i.e. a Reformer. It should be pointed out, however, that non-Ahmadi Muslims do not make any difference between the two groups. This is why the Saudi Arabian Government treats them alike. The Government's argument for this action is simply that if there is any major difference between the two groups, why do they bear the common name Ahmadiyyah? To all non-Ahmadis the name Ahmadiyyah is derived from its founder's name, i.e. Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. Another name for them used by their opponents, is Qadianis, which is derived from the name of the birthplace of Ahmadiyyah, i.e. Qadian in

India. Whether we like it or not, Ahmadiyyah is either going to fade away and remain only in history books like Mu'tazilah, or end up in another religion distinct from Islam. (Those who like Lahories accept a repudiator of Muhammad as the last Prophet, as a *Mujaddid* (reformer) only cheat themselves and others that they are Muslims (*The Universal Message*).

If it is true that Ahmadiyyah is Islam, why then are the Ahmadis converting Muslims into Ahmadiyya? Does such conversion not suggest that Ahmadiyya is a religion by itself? If Ahmadiyyah is not a new religion, why are the Ahmadis taught by their Pakistani overlords that whenever an Ahmadi gets to a new place and finds no other Ahmadi around, should pray alone until he is able to convert others into Ahmadiyya and then pray in congregation with such converts? These are pertinent questions to the problem of Ahmadiyya. I wish that Nigerian and African Ahmadis could reflect, and reconsider their association with Ahmadiyya. If it is Islam in which they are interested, they must realise that Ahmadiyya is not the answer.

If I am proved wrong, let my father reject and disown me, and let the Ahmadis collectively curse and "crucify" me. But if I am proved right, then it becomes incumbent on all Nigerian Ahmadis, including my relations, both by blood and affinity, to reconsider their association with Ahmadiyyah, pray fervently to Allah Almighty as I have done to show them the way of Islam and help them to follow it.

"And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance."
(*Surah Ta-Ha*, 20:47).

In conclusion, I wish, very seriously and sincerely, to appeal to all those who still cling to Ahmadiyyah in their genuine love of, and search for Islam, to realise that to all intents and purposes, Ahmadiyyah is not Islam. The fact that its founder gave it that name is indicative that it is a new religion from the beginning. Furthermore, certain basic beliefs and practices of Ahmadiyyah

alienate it from Islam. I concede the fact that everyone is free to choose and follow whichever religion he/she likes (but not said under false colours — *Editor*). This is, indeed, tantamount to the requirement of the rule of law, and the provision of fundamental human rights.

Nevertheless, it is also important that a person must be very clear in his/her mind what he/she is doing. There is no gainsaying in the fact that Ahmadiyyah is a religion other than Islam. Let its die-hard followers, therefore, remember and reflect on the Qur'anic statement:

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.” (*Surah Al-Imrân, 3:85*)

“The truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily, falsehood is ever bound to vanish.” (*Surah Al-Isra, 17:81*).

May peace be with those who follow the guidance!

The undermentioned publications are recommended for reading and circulation as these contain:

- (i) a fearless and frank exposition of the hollowness of claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (of Qadian) to Prophethood;
- (ii) the historical perspective of the rise of Ahmadiyyah (Qadiyanism);
- (iii) the evolution of Ahmadiyyah doctrines;
- (iv) aspects of Ghulam Ahmad's life and character;
- (v) critical study of the Ahmadiyyah Movement and of its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad;
- (vi) survey of the activities, claims, aims, objects and “revelations” of the Ahmadiyyah and
- (vii) their plots and conspiracies against Islam and Muslims:

1. *Save Muslim Africa from the clutches of the Qadianis (Ahmadis) apostasy* — a revealing booklet, by Adam Muhammad Traore of Ghana.
2. *Islam versus Ahmadiyyah in Nigeria*, by Dr. Ismail A. Balogun.
3. *Islam and Ahmedism*, by Dr. Muhammad Iqbal.
4. *His Holiness*, by Phoenix.
5. *Qadianism: A critical study*, by Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadvi.
6. *Qadyaniat: An analytical study*, by Ehsan Elahi Zaheer.
7. *Qadianism on trial* (The Case of Muslim Ummah against Qadiani's presented before the National Assembly of Pakistan).
8. *The Qadiani Problem*, by Sayed Abul-Ala Maududi.

Can be had from:-

- (i) Maktaba Dar-ut-Tasnif, Dar-ut-Tasnif Ltd.,
Shahrah-i-Liaquat, Saddar,
Karachi-3, Pakistan. Telephone 524325
- (ii) Malik Sirajuddin and Sons, Publishers and Booksellers,
Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, Pakistan

(Courtesy: *The Universal Message*, Karachi)^[1]

Prof. Dr. Ismail A.B. Balogun
Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

[1] *Yaqeen International*. August 7, 1992, Vol.31, No.7

According to a decision of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Ahmadis have been declared non-Muslims — *Editor*.

Why Islam appeals to Me?

Before giving the details of 'Why Islam appeals to me?', we would like to reproduce the 'Declaration of Faith' of Mr. John Fisher:

DECLARATION

I, John Fisher, son of Charles Fisher, of 3, Cambridge St., Newcastle, hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion; that I worship One and only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His messenger and servant; that I respect equally all prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah

(Sd) John Fisher

To the western mind, the chief appeal of Islam must be its simplicity. Admittedly, there are one or two other faiths which are as easy of approach but they sadly lack the vitality of the Faith of the Prophet (may Allah Bless Him), and the spiritual and moral elevation which it offers.

The simple austerity of Islam cannot appeal to emotional men or hysterical women, or to any other lovers of the theatrical in Religion.

Province for them is found within certain sects, wherein the eye is pleased with a riot of gorgeous colour, the ear charmed with classical music and the heart moved by profusely flowered altars and pathetic tableaux. There is no appeal whatever to the brain. Moreover, in certain sects, no man is permitted to think for himself in religious matters. His brain must be primarily a receptacle for anything the priest chooses to plant there.

What a contrast we find in the Holy Prophet's injunction to his followers — "Seek after knowledge, though it be available in China!"

Verily, Muhammed was aware of the enormity of the sin of attempting to apply the brake to man's intelligence.

Islam must also appeal by virtue of its tolerance. We are taught to venerate the other prophets of the earth, including Jesus Christ. What a lesson to the Christians themselves who, whilst busily slinging mud at each other now and then contrive to send us an installment between them. Strangely Christian intolerance awakened my first interest in Islam. When a boy, I attended a Missionary lecture and was greatly impressed by some of the speakers who had lived among the "Bloodthirsty Mohammedans." When, a few years later I had the good fortune to listen to a Muslim Missionary I was greatly impressed by his wonderful forbearance in dealing with a crowd who had left their own (Christian) meetings to heckle the "Heathen." His words greatly impressed me and shattered completely my staunch Christian beliefs.

On several occasions having asked a Christian priest a certain question, I have been answered thus, "I cannot tell you, but you *must* believe it, that is where 'Faith' comes in!"

How different is Islam, wherein no question is beyond, or beneath, answering.

That great German, Goethe, himself remarked after reading the Holy Qur'an, "If this is Islam, then every thinking man among us is, in fact, a Muslim."

The Churches are utterly incapable of grappling with present-day problems. Islam, alone, offers the solution.

The mind of the Western world has been for too long darkened against Islam.

Now and then, a shaft of light comes through from unexpected sources, as when General Smuts stated a few years back that for each convert of the combined Christian churches, in Africa, *Islam gets Ten.*

To quote a Christian axiom — “Truth will Prevail.”^[1]

John Fisher

My adoption of Islam from the psychological standpoint

Psychology teaches us that there is a reason, however abstruse the meaning may be to us at the time, for everything we do, say, or think; which being the case, and seeing that psychology plays so important a part in our everyday life, it is justifiable to maintain that when an individual takes a step which is going to change his general mode of living and his outlook on life there must be some definite reason to account for it: and it behooves him to discover that reason, and the causes, direct or indirect, which brought it into operation. Hence the title of this lecture. Since adopting Islam as my Faith I feel that I have come to a turning point in my life, and to account for this, to give you some idea as to why I have become a Muslim, I have subjected myself to what I might call a self-psychological analysis.

For many years I had felt that there was something lacking in my life, something that was not quite definite or tangible at the time—there was a yearning of my inner self after a desire and its gratification. This yearning carried with it a feeling of profound dissatisfaction. The knowledge that there was something I needed but could not fathom at the time was an all-pervading

^[1] *Islamic Review*. March 1934, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 181 and June 1934, Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 61-63.

factor in my mind. As remarked, I became dissatisfied; I could find no solace in my religion; I was constantly hankering after one thing and another; I was, so to say, groping in darkness. I did not find any enlightenment, still less peace of mind. It was obvious that I could not allow this disturbed, dissatisfied state of mind to go on indefinitely. I settled myself down to reason things out.

There are times when we can get outside ourselves and review ourselves from a different angle, the spiritual angle, when this body—which is not man, but a composition graduating from the lower animal forms and beautified and refined only by the spirit that is indeed man—can be set aside and looked upon as an object, a thing which the subjective mind can dissect and pull to pieces; and it is by this sudden assertion of will in this momentary association of subjugating power that we can understand, God and what He desires of us — more than by all the arguments of all the sublimest theologians and metaphysicians.

It was during such a phase as this that I came to realize what was lacking in my life—it was Spiritual Diet. I was being starved, and my soul cried out for nourishment. To my way of thinking the soul is always struggling to burst its bonds, striving to reach the pinnacle of perfection. There is during life a constant war of the soul against matter, until it gains the ascendancy, and then—perfect in itself and incapable of intrinsic defilement, purged of its terrestrial associations and free of all its debts to the earth—reunites itself to its Essence, God—enfranchised from all hamperings of mortality. So I came to grasp the fact that my spiritual self required a general rebuilding and turning up.

I asked myself: Why was this necessary? How was I to begin? Why had not my religion given the required stimulus to my spirit? I found that there was an element of doubt undermining

the Faith I professed — certain dogmas and ritual my reason would not accept. I questioned myself: Did I honestly believe that? Could I accept this as being the inspired Word of God? So many of the dogmas of Christianity I could not believe, my inborn logic would not countenance their acceptance—not even in a modified form; try as I might, I could not put any other construction on their meaning to alter the fact that unless I accepted them unreservedly I was a heretic and doomed to everlasting damnation.

I should mention here that formerly, I belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and according to the teaching of the Church all her decrees are infallible: man-made laws that must be followed blindly without any question of Yea! or Nay!—a sheer domination of the priesthood.

Since I could not faithfully accept the teachings of the Church and be bound by the laws and dogmas those teachings enforced, it necessarily followed that if I continued outwardly to profess to be a member of the Church, I was wrapping myself in a cloak of hypocrisy which was detrimental to my soul, and that the only alternative left to me was to break away and live my life as best I could, according to my beliefs and ideals.

This was well enough, but I soon discovered that I must have some foundation whereon to build my faith. I asked myself: *What were my beliefs and ideals? What did I actually and faithfully believe?*

I believed in the Unity of God—a God Who is Master of all and Whose Love and Power are manifested to us in creation—in the seen and unseen. The doctrine of the plurality of God has always perplexed me, because in my opinion it destroys His Sublimity and Power.

I believed in direct Prayer to God—the need of a mediator or of intercession on my behalf I condemned as unnecessary. God was All-Powerful and knew whether or not the prayer came

from a contrite heart; and would answer according to the need, without having the prayer directed through another channel. The salvation of my soul is incumbent on myself and can only be brought about by my own efforts. Whatever my life has been, whether good or bad, I alone shall have to account for it on the Day of Judgment.

I believe in a Life after Death—for a question I have often asked myself is this: If there is no hereafter, why are we existing at the present time and to what end? The conclusion I came to was, that death was but a discontinuation of a material existence and the ascension to a spiritual existence—a time when that which is hidden from us now will be revealed, when the soul will undergo a process of final purification.

I believed in the Brotherhood of Man—the fraternity of the whole human race. We are all God's children, and in His eyes we are all equal—rank, colour, race, or creed take no precedence. We are on earth to run an allotted space according to the Divine Plan, and if we believe that God loves us all, we too must love one another—that is, if we take Him as our prototype.

I believed in the Prophets—that throughout the ages God had revealed His Divine Will to certain members of the human race whom He had singled out to bear His Divine Message to mankind.

This is but a rough outline, but it embodies the principal points of my belief. It will no doubt be clear to you that what I needed was a rational and practical religion, free and unfettered, not bound by ceremonial, dogmatic, or canonical law, which I could not accept without being unjust to myself. This I found in Islam!

During my travels in the East, Islam had always attracted me both by its simplicity and by the devotion of its followers. Having been brought up in a religious atmosphere—my father was a disciplinarian, at times almost puritanical in his severity

so far as religion was concerned—I was taught to regard all religions other than Christianity as blasphemous and their adherents as heathens. Reflect, then, what an impression must have been made upon my mind when the time came for me to see for myself, and come in contact with these very people whom I had been taught to regard as heathens and idolaters. Chief amongst them, on comparison, I found the Faith of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad—a religion that was not taken out of the cupboard and carefully dusted on Sunday morning and put back again with due reverence on Sunday night, but one that was put into practice every day with devotion and sincerity, part and parcel of their very existence. This left an indelible impression on my mind which has changed the whole aspect of my life. In Islam I find all that I need for my social, moral, and spiritual guidance—it has taught me to look at life from a new angle, to be more tolerant. It has developed in me a keener feeling of sympathy for my fellow creatures. It has brought me into closer communication with God, and has given me a greater incentive for the developing of my spirit towards the gradual effacement of self. I have reasoned in this manner, that if a certain religion gives me peace of mind, gives me an ideal, an aim in life, and imbues me with a desire to serve God in a manner nobler, more direct, and better than that afforded by another Faith, then that is the religion for me to practice, and that religion I have found to be Islam.

I think that in this age we are bound down by the material and actual; it permeates every phase of our life and thought—we seem to be only trading for the present, and consequently we are hedged about by the present. But if we have an ideal, it keeps us in trim and ever aspiring to reach upwards to attain a greater purity of thought and action.

Islam has given me a very practical method of breaking down the barrier of materialism in one of the Five Pillars of Faith, namely Prayer. The Muslim Prayer keeps me constantly aware

of my duty to God, to my soul, and to my fellow creatures. Since becoming a Muslim I have done my best to observe the obligatory times of prayer, if only to offer up a prayer mentally during the humdrum of the business day, and I have found how infinitely nearer God is to me than I have felt heretofore.

As I have mentioned before, this is but a brief outline of my belief; and the psychological importance of what I believe is this: that the principles I believe in are those upon which I must base my thought and actions, my belief is the attitude of my mind toward religion which makes it acceptable as a basis for my spiritual and general guidance. The fundamental key to my creed, then, is: **“There is no god, but God, and there is nothing but God.”**

I may not have generalized sufficiently upon these principles of what I believe; it is no easy task for me to summarize my thoughts, and I am perfectly aware of the case with which I can mystify myself on matters religious. From my own reasoning I feel that by adopting Islam as my Faith I am not hoodwinking myself, but rather have raised myself a step nearer to Truth and the Divine Wisdom of God.

God moves in a mysterious way within us, and I am sure He would not have let me unwittingly blind myself upon a matter that is so important to my soul^[1].

Khalid D'Larnger Remraf

[1] *Islamic Review*. March-April 1930, Vol. 18, No. 3-4, pp. 120-34. This is the text of a lecture delivered before the British Muslim Society, London, on August 12, 1929.

How I came to Islam?

There are so many reasons why Islam has come to mean so much to me that I would find it difficult to discuss them in detail in the space at my command.

I will attempt, however, to set down a few of the reasons which made me realise that Islam is the only religion that will ever be acceptable to modern civilisation and myself, and my own generation in particular.

I was brought up in the Protestant faith, and, at a very early age, I began to find the teachings of Christianity unsatisfactory.

As a child I had won several prizes for proficiency in the Scriptures, but the more I learnt of my religion the more sceptical I became of it. At fourteen years of age I went through the rites of "Confirmation" in my church. By going through this ceremony I expected to banish all my doubts and fears, and to be able to face my troubles aided by the Spirit of God (which, I was informed, would enter my body through the fingers of the Bishop who laid his hands on my head). Instead of strengthening my belief, however, this ceremony only added to my growing conviction that my religion was a mass of foolish superstitions and ridiculous rites.

By the time I had left school and gone to a University, this suspicion had become a certainty; the Christian Church, as I had been shown it, meant little or nothing to me.

Jesus I could admire as a noble saint and martyr, to make a God of him seemed to me to be decidedly unreasonable, and certainly not in keeping with his own teachings. Although I found it a simple matter to discover fallacies in the creed I had discarded, it was more difficult for me to discover a more logical one to take its place. Christianity was a mass of contradictions and superstitions. Rationalism offered at best a very unsatisfactory belief: and there appeared to be no reasonable religion to

combine the best elements of all the different faiths I had read and heard about!

I almost despaired of finding an established creed which would include all the ideas I had formulated; and for a long time I tried to satisfy myself with vague beliefs of my own.

One day I chanced on a copy of "*Islam and Civilisation*" by Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din.

As I read it, I realised that nearly all my own beliefs were included in the doctrine the little volume expounded.

The broad outlook of Islam, as opposed to the intolerance of the Christian sects, the learning and culture in the Islamic countries of the Middle Ages, compared with the ignorance and superstition of other lands at that time, the logical theory of compensation as against the Christian idea of Atonement, were a few of the points that first struck me. Later I came to realise that here was a faith as wide as humanity itself, ready for the guidance of rich and poor alike, and able to break down all barriers of creed and colour. Through the Muslim Mission I obtained some more detailed information of the teachings of the Holy Prophet. The Imam of the Mosque at Woking was always ready to answer any of my criticisms, and his friendly and interesting letters did much to encourage me to inquire further about this faith that was being revealed to me. I was so confident in Islam and its ability to fulfill all spiritual needs, that after a month or two I almost regarded myself as a Muslim.

I wisely decided, however, not to rush matters, but to consider this new religion of mine from all angles before I finally adopted it for my guide in life.

It has always been a theory of mine that things easily come by are easily lost, and likewise beliefs lightly adopted are often just as lightly discarded. Therefore, I read as many criticisms of Islam as I could, specialising in books written about the Holy

Prophet and his message by Western writers. Some of what I read was not always favourable to Islam, but the better and more unprejudiced writers were generally forced to admit the value of Islam and its doctrine to civilization, and in some cases even to testify to the truth of its message.

I put my beliefs to a further test by discussing them with a learned friend of mine whose opinions I have always valued very highly. I discovered to my surprise that he shared most of my views,—in fact he was a Muslim without realizing it himself! There must be thousands of people like him; people who have discovered Islam for themselves not realizing that their own ideas were taught by Muhammad hundreds of years ago. During the past few months my faith in Islam has grown, and I am now supremely confident that I have found the truth at last. Now that I have a religion, I can really understand and follow, I feel that I can face life with renewed vigour. Incidentally, since I found my real faith, I have had more good fortune and happiness in my daily life than I have had at any time previously. It is one of my ambitions to bring the light of Islam to some of those who are as dissatisfied with their own beliefs as I was, and to give them that peace of mind which is the keynote of our great and glorious creed. ^[1]

T.H. McC. Barklie

What is for me the beauty of Islam?

I began with my study of Eastern languages at the University of Leiden in 1919 and attended the lectures of Prof. C. Snouck Hurgronje, well-known Arabist. I learned Arabic, read and translated Al-Baidawi's commentary on the Qur'an and

^[1] *Islamic Review*. August 1933, Vol. 21, No. 8, pp. 245-248.

Al-Ghazali's reflexions on the Law. I studied the history and institutions of Islam from European handbooks as was usual at that time. In 1921, I stayed in Cairo for one month and visited the Al-Azhar. Besides Arabic, I studied other languages such as Sanskrit, Malay and Japanese. In 1927, I left for then Netherlands Indies to teach Japanese language and Indian cultural history at a special Secondary School for advanced studies in Jigjakarta. For 15 years, I specialised myself in Japanese languages and culture (modern and old) and had little contact with Islam and no contact at all with Arabic. After a difficult period which I spent as a Japanese prisoner of war, I went back to the Netherlands in 1946 and found a new task at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Here I had the opportunity to take up again my study of Islam, being instructed to write a short guide on Islam in Java.

I started to study the new Islamic State of Pakistan which was culminated in a journey to Pakistan in the winter of 1954/55. Having come to know Islam till now from European writers only, in Lahore, I was confronted with quite another aspect of Islam. I asked my Muslim friends to be allowed to take part with them in the Friday prayers in the Mosques and from now on I began to discover the great values of Islam.

I have felt myself a Muslim from the moment that I had to address the people in one of the Lahore Mosques and had to shake hands with innumerable new friends and brothers. I wrote about this event in an article, published in *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1955, in the following lines:

“We were now to visit a much smaller Mosque, where the sermon was delivered by a scholar^[1] who spoke English fluently and had a position of eminence at the University of the Punjab. He informed the congregation that he had

[1] Allama Alauddin Siddiqui, then Vice-Chancellor of the University.

deliberately interspersed more English words than usual in his sermon, as he thought that their brother who had come from a far country, the Netherlands, would then understand the Urdu discourse more easily. The sermon was followed by the usual recitation of two *Rak'ah* under the leadership of the *Imam*. This done, a few more *Rak'ah* were performed in silence by those who felt the need to do so.

I was about to leave when *Allamah Sahib*, turning to me, observed that the assembly expected me to say a few words. He himself would translate them into Urdu. I went and stood before the microphone and quietly started to speak. I said how I had come from a far away country where only a few Muslims live, whose greetings I conveyed to the brothers present in the Mosque, who for the last seven years were so fortunate as to have their own Muslim State. In these few years the new State had succeeded in consolidating its position. After a difficult beginning they could undoubtedly look forward to a prosperous future. I promised them that back in my country, I should bear witness to the great kindness and hospitality it had been my privilege to receive from all sections of the Muslim population in Pakistan. These words having been translated into Urdu, had a wonderful effect, for, to my intense surprise without even realizing at first what was happening, I saw hundreds of worshippers hasten forward to press my hands and to congratulate me. Old hands and young hands clasped mine with the most affectionate cordiality. But what struck and touched me most, was the great warmth all these eyes radiated. At that moment, I felt myself taken up in the great Brotherhood of Islam which extends throughout the world, and I was indescribably happy.”

So the people of Pakistan made me understand that Islam was more than just acquaintance with many details of the Law, that belief in the moral values of Islam had to come first and that knowledge should be conditional to reaching faith.

What is now for me the beauty of Islam and what in particular has attracted me to this faith?

I will try to give a short answer on these questions in 6 points:

1. The acknowledgement of One Supreme Being, uncomplicated and easy to accept by every reasonable thinking creature: Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten and none is like Him. He represents the highest wisdom, the highest strength and the highest beauty. His Charity and Mercy are unbounded.
2. The relation between the Creator of the Universe and His creatures, of which man has been entrusted with the supreme direction, is a direct one. The believer does not need any mediation; Islam does not need priesthood. In Islam contact with God depends on man himself. Man has to prepare himself in this life for the next. He is responsible for his deeds, which cannot be compensated by a substituting sacrifice of an innocent person. No soul shall be burdened beyond its capacity.
3. The doctrine of tolerance of Islam is so clearly manifested in the well-known words: "*There is no compulsion in religion.*"^[1] A Muslim is recommended to search for the truth where he may find it; also he is enjoined to estimate the good properties of other religions.
4. The doctrine of brotherhood of Islam extends to all human beings, no matter what colour, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realise this doctrine in

^[1] Al-Qur'ân: *Surah Baqarah*, 2:256 — Editor.

practice. Muslims wherever on the world they are, will recognise each other as brothers. The equality of the whole of mankind before God is symbolised significantly in the *Ihram* dress during the *Hajj*.

5. The fact that Islam accepts matter and mind both as existing values. The mental growth of man is connected inseparably with the needs of the body, whereas man has to behave in such a way that mind prevails over matter and matter is controlled by mind.
6. The prohibition of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs. This in particular is a point in respect of which it may be said that Islam is far ahead of its time.^[1]

R.L. Mellema^[2]

Anthropologist, Writer and Scholar
Holland

Why I accepted Islam?

In my attempt to write an explanation of the reasons which caused me to accept the faith of Islam, for the benefit of readers of the *Islamic Review*, I find myself beset with many difficulties, inasmuch as my reasons were so many and varied. However, I will try to make my position clear, trusting to your charity to make allowances for any deficiencies in writing technique.

As a youth I was appalled and sickened by the history of the horrible atrocities committed against their "Brothers" by the

[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*, pp. 129-32.

[2] Dr. R.L. Mellema is the Head of the Islamic Section of the Tropical Museum, Amsterdam, and is the author of "*Wayang Puppets*", "*Grondwet van Pakistan*", "*Ein Interpretatie van de Islam*", etc.

Early and Middle Age Christians. Especially was this the case when I learned of the beastliness of the Holy Office and Inquisition, under whose direction the "Image of God" was torn asunder, burned alive, flogged and mutilated unspeakably. The story of such vile crimes as these, committed by Christians in the name of Christ, shall never die; it will remain forever as evidence of the terrible contradiction between the commands of Christ and the acts of his followers, and it will be an ever-present reminder of what mankind would receive at the hands of these followers of him who said "Blessed are the merciful," should they ever regain the power that they have lost.

The years passed, and I took opportunity as it arose to study more closely the Christians and their works. I could not, of course, accept the main dogmas of the Christian Church as they are so obviously mere survivals of Pagan idolatrous belief. But I held to a belief in the Divinity of Christ and the Atonement; the latter was a very comforting belief to such a morally lazy man as myself. I also comforted myself with the theory that the barbarities practised by the Christians in the Middle Ages were merely the result of an inhuman environment and a lack of kindly thought which was common to those ages, until I discovered that not so very long ago the churches were opposing the abolition of slavery with all the means at their command, whilst at the same time they supported the exploitation of child labour.

What a scene it is that history presents to us in glorious England after nineteen hundred years of Christianity ... Mere babies driven off to factories in the early hours of the morning, their timid eyes hardly open in their wan, pinched faces, some even with the marks of the overseer's lash of the previous day still to be seen upon their tender limbs, where the skin shows through the rags that clothe them, and the fear of Christ in the person of their Christian masters, deep hidden, like a loathsome monster, in their fear-deadened souls.

Retrospectively, we can see that, from the very beginning, Christianity has exerted a retrograde influence upon the march of human intellectual development. The first Christian Roman Emperor destroyed all the reforms that had been introduced into the slave system of the Roman Empire by the humane teachings of the great Seneca and, from that time onwards up to the year 1860, the story of slavery within the Christian sphere of dominion is one of abject horror and frightfulness.

If we are to suppose that his followers are obeying the commands of Christ, we are amply justified in regarding Christ as the archenemy of God, for, whilst we know that God is good, and we are certain of his kindness to mankind, we are equally certain of the evil that Christianity has done to man in the past, and we have no reason to suppose that it will not do evil in the future.

I will not maintain that all Christians are bad; on the contrary, I think that most of them are good and have the welfare of mankind at heart, but I do believe that the system of Christian thought is too vague and elastic to be of any lasting good to man; it allows of too loose an interpretation of the meanings of the terms "right" and "wrong", and throughout the Christian era unscrupulous individuals have seized upon this fact and used it to gain their own ends, with the result that the dominating section of Christian Society, the Priesthood, is filled with these doubtful characters and has become rotten and degenerate. The very real danger to society arising out of this state of affairs can only be realised fully when we understand that, through long ages of suppression, the Christians have developed a servility towards their priests that forbid criticism whilst it supports authority.

After long and careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the days of Christianity are numbered, more and more people each day are realizing that the faith of Christ is a

mocking absurdity and, daily, Christian congregations are becoming less in number. There are a few, it is true, who remain loyal to their faith, but their loyalty is an unthinking one whose chief supports are prejudice and habit; it definitely is not one of a considered scientific basis. Intellectual activity has no part in the emotional conviction.

We cannot expect the thousands of priests, and the churches with their vested interests, to give up their good, fat incomes without a struggle, and for many years the battle has been on, but it is a battle of ignorant sentimentality against enlightened intellect and humanity, and the latter must win. Even the leaders of the Christian churches are now admitting the falsity in the fundamentals of Christianity. The Dean of St. Paul's said recently:

“It becomes more and more evident that the Christian Church, as it now exists, cannot fulfill its mission.”

Dr. Major, Editor of the *Modern Churchman*, said:

“Problems of belief are very simple for traditionalist Christians who believe in the infallibility of the Bible or in the infallibility of the Church or perhaps in the infallibility of both. All that is needful for them is to find out what the Bible teaches and to believe it, or what the Church teaches and to believe it. But a more complete and exacting knowledge of what the Bible teaches and of what the Church teaches has created insuperable difficulties in the way of belief of this kind of the mentally alert and open-minded. Literary criticism and historical research have shown convincingly that in a number of cases the Bible narratives are self-contradictory and that the statements of the Church's Doctors, Fathers and Councils are also self-contradictory.

“Moreover, the advances in scientific knowledge prove that in a number of cases where these authorities do not

contradict each other, they are, nevertheless, in error. In short, for the modern man, belief in the infallibility of Bible and Church has become an impossibility.”

Within Islam I have found the very reverse of the above picture. Here there is no uncertainty or looseness of doctrine, no scientific inaccuracy, no terrible contradiction between command and practice, no warring dogmas or creeds, and no selfish priesthood to lead the people astray from the clear glory of the worship of the one God. Islam stands as strong today as it has for centuries past, a mighty rock of simple faith set amid the thundering seas of life, a God-given sanctuary and haven for tormented human souls, a guide and comforter for the wandering and distressed ones, a giver of hope to the hopeless persons and a light to guide the feet of those who live in darkness.^[1]

Muhammad Abdullah Warren

How do they turn Muslim?

[Brother Muhammad Aman Hobohum is a German national. He was once working in the Diplomatic Corps. He joined missionary work, because he was a social reformer. After Allah showed him the way to Islam, his feelings and sense of contentment came in line with Islam, the great religion. He undertook a comparative study of Islam along with the other religions and social ideologies. The gist of his special experiments helped him in answering many of the questions which his mind faced about his decision for embracing Islam and about the advantages of this religion of salvation. The emotions of

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1939, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 14-18.

sincere faith pouring forth from within the deep recesses of his heart to record the shining truth are briefly set forth here — *Editor*].

Why do the Westerners embrace Islam? There are many reasons for that, the more important of which are:

The truth has always the dominating force. The principles of Islam in their reality are so humane, natural and attractive that they produce a deep impact on the person searching for the truth. Let us take, for example, the principle of *Tauhid* (Divine Oneness). The belief in *Tauhid* elevates man's dignity and liberates him from the captivity of superstitions. It also establishes the principle of equality between mankind on the basis that they have all been created by Allah and they are therefore the slaves of One and the same Allah and believe but only in One and only Allah. *Iman* (Belief), in particular, is the source of inspiration and of a courage that knows no fear and of security after which there is no security.

Belief in the Hereafter exerts a strong influence on process of our determining the norm or standard of human life. The life of this world is not an end in itself. On human activities must depend the betterment of man's affairs in the Hereafter. Moreover, belief in the Day of Reckoning (in the Hereafter) urges man to remain away from vices, and encourages him to perform virtuous deeds, which is the only guarantee of protection from Hell-fire on the Day of Judgement. The firm belief that every man must be called to account before a just and impartial God with Power to do all things, makes us think twice before committing any sin. This perhaps is the greatest and the most effective deterrent force in the world.

Another thing that attracts the Westerners to Islam is its emphasis on the principle of tolerance in addition to the fact that daily prayers accustom man to punctuality. Again the month of fasting teaches man self-control and gives him supremacy over

his senses and emotions. Punctuality and self-control are among the most prominent qualities of a learned and great man.

The greatest success of Islam consists in its being able to create in its followers the spirit of observing the prescribed limits of morality and decency without the exercise of any compulsions or external pressure.

The Muslim, whoever and whatever else he may be, believes with full conviction that he is liable before Almighty Allah to account for his words and actions. A feeling like this always works to keep him away from sins.

Inclined to goodness as man by his very nature is, Islam offers to its followers peace of mind and peace of heart; this is what the contemporary western society lacks most. I have gone through different styles of life, according as opportunities came to me, so that I have been able to study different religions. The final decision at which I arrived, as the result of these comparative studies, was that Islam is undoubtedly the perfect religion. Communism has its deceptive sides whereby it attracts to itself the simple folks just as the western Democracy has its own lovers. There is no religion that looks at life as something noble and as a complete whole as Islam does. Hence men who think and reflect are drawn to it spontaneously.

Islam is not a mere theoretical religion; it has in its roots the form of practical religion. Islam is not regimented into groups and classes. It is total submission to the Will of Allah.^[1]

Muhammad Aman Hobohum

^[1] *Yaqeen International*. August 22, 1983, Vol. 34, No. 7, p. 87
(Courtesy: *Al-Kifah*) Translated from Arabic by Iqbal Husain Ansari.

Why I embraced Islam?

“Quest for truth left Christian faith moribund”

In a thought-provoking lecture which he delivered at the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies on 27 October 1993, Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, quoted the 17th century poet and hymn writer George Herbert:

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eyes;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

Prince Charles was quoting George Herbert to drive home the point that one should not base one's conclusion on a superficial view of things, but go deep into them to find out the truth lying underneath. He was speaking in the context of the anti-Islamic bias projected in the western media with no attempt to discover the real face of Islam.

Early upbringing

Since my student days, I had always been interested in knowing the truth. I suffered a lot but bore it patiently. I knew that hardship does not stay long and I would soon be able to realize my cherished goal. Before embracing Islam, I found myself vulnerable to all kinds of evils. The moment I embraced Islam, I was convinced that I found the Truth I have been searching for. I thanked Allah for showing me the right path. Islam teaches: "He whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves in error shall find no protector."

I was born in a poor Christian family in the Philippines. Although my father was a Protestant and my mother a Roman Catholic, I was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. I was, not at all surprised, knowing fully that my father had been very considerate to my mother. Since my father was the head of the

family, we were brought up in a Protestant life. We were a religious family attending regular Sunday prayers in the town's chapel (church), where I used to attend Sunday Bible School.

Like the Roman Catholics, we Protestants believe in the Trinity. They cannot be three gods but one. When questions are asked about this mysterious combination of God, the priest would conveniently tell us to believe in the doctrine without questioning. We were also taught that Jesus (عليه السلام) was the son of God and the reincarnation of God. In short, he was god and man at the same time through whom we could communicate to God.

Family conversion to Jehovah's Witness

After my high school, the Jehovah's Witnesses came to our place and there had been a series of dialogues between them and the elders of different sects (i.e., Roman Catholics, Protestants, Sabbath and others) for more than a year. Finally, my whole family converted to the faith of the Jehovah's Witness. Some of our questions about the mystery of the Trinity seemed to have been answered because our new faith teaches us that there is only one God whose name is Jehovah. The Holy Ghost is not a separate God but only an active power of God which He bestowed on some people, and that Jesus is not a god, but one described as below divine and above human. He is, in fact, a mediator between God and man.³

However, all the present doctrines of Christianity, with the exception of Trinity for the Jehovah's Witness, are essentially the doctrines of all Christians denominations. My quest for the Truth had not ceased for there still remained major religious issues which made my Christian faith something moribund.

I believe that God is the epitome of justice, so, must have revealed Himself in the most intelligent manner. All men are equal in the eyes of God. Hence His justice requires everyone to have the same duties and responsibilities toward Him according to their intellectual calibre and circumstances in life. If, what

God revealed to men, is incomprehensible and need interpretation by men, then He is not worthy of our admiration, as men are prone to error. Therefore, one must not change the literal meaning of Scripture to suit one's fancy unless it is done by God Himself. It must be settled once and for all that God's revelation does not contradict itself because God is not an author of confusion.

Contact with Islam

In 1984, I was hired by Tihama Contracting Co. Ltd., Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, a construction company, as an administrative manager. After few months, Islam was introduced to me by some of my colleagues. I remember a Sudanese, Awad Hassan Ibrahim, who told me: *"Mr. Cave, I think you are a good man, why don't you embrace Islam, you will surely benefit from it?"* Together with other Muslims, they taught me about Islam. Some of them brought Islamic literature from the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Riyadh, where I am presently employed. Besides these Islamic reading materials as my reference, I used to watch Television program of "Islam in Focus" featuring Dr. Jamal Badawi. In this program, Dr. Badawi discussed the absurdity of the different doctrines of Christianity of which I had some knowledge.

I learned that Judaism, Christianity and Islam share similar background. All claim that there is one God, that He is Omnipotent and Omnipresent. All believe God communicated through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob and all his Messengers and Prophets (peace be upon them). Further, all the three religions believe that God created the heavens and the earth, that there exist Angels and Satan, that there will be a Day of Judgement, that there is reward and punishment for good and bad deeds.

Christianity and Islam believe that Jesus (عليه السلام) was a prophet born of a virgin. That he was given the Gospel and that he

performed many miracles. However, there exists a difference between Christianity and Islam which is a bone of contention. Christians believe Jesus (عليه السلام) was a God and Muslims believe that he was only a Prophet. For Muslims, it is an utter blasphemy and degrading the majesty and glory of God by saying that Jesus (عليه السلام) was the son of God and that Jesus was God. Jesus himself said in the Gospel of Matthew (17:3): "*And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent.*" Jesus (عليه السلام) has clearly separated himself from divine nature by saying that he was sent by God. This verse corresponds to the verse in the Qur'ân:

"And in their footsteps We sent I'esa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), confirming the Taurat (Torah) that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel), in which was guidance and light..." (Surah Al-Mâidah,5:46)

Conversion to Islam

In my studies about Islam, I found out that Islam teaches the purest form of monotheism in the fullest sense of the word. God has no sharer and partner. He is the Creator, Cherisher, Sustainer and Sovereign of the entire universe. All our sincere worship and reverence belong to Him alone and that all the beautiful names of God are His exclusive perfect attributes which nobody of His creation has the right to arrogate them to himself. To associate partners or take other gods besides Him contradicts the Oneness of God.

Indeed, Islam has shown me the Truth, the right kind of Belief and the correct path that leads man to his Creator. So, after nine months of exposure to Islam, I was fully convinced of the truth without any reservation, I embraced Islam on June 3, 1985. In fact, I had no difficulty in embracing Islam. As you know, man, being a rational creature, must not only uphold the truth but is duty bound to declare and defend truth under all circumstances.

It would be an act of obstinacy, whimsy, shame and irreligious to ignore the truth which is tantamount to betrayal of the Creator to Whom we owe our very existence. Had God willed to wipe us, He could have done it anytime, but He has specific divine purpose for each of us. God has manifested what He requires from us when He said:

“And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).” (*Surah Az-Zâriyât*, 51:56)

I cannot render better explanation of the meaning of creation more than the learned English translator and commentator of the Qur'an, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, whom I quote: *Quoting the Qur'ân "Creation is not for idle sport or play."* Allah has a serious purpose behind it, which, in our imperfect state, we can only express by saying that each creature is given the chance of development and progress toward the Goal which is Allah. He is the source of all power and goodness. Our progress depends upon our putting ourselves into accord with His Will. This is His service (worship). It is not of any benefit to Him; it is for our own benefit.

Lastly, I quote Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم), who said: “There is nothing better gift given by God to man than the gift of reason.”

[*The following are his answers of the questions put to him in an interview*].

1. What were your feelings (impressions) before and after embracing Islam?

Before I venture to answer, I would like to state that being a devote Protestant Christian, I always had the feeling to look for the Truth through consistent study and research. As my research progressed, I found many contradictions in my Belief that made me accept the Jehovah's Witness faith. However, there still remained some important issues that belied the Christian's faith. The justifications of the Christian doctrines were too narrow and

short-sighted that questioned their validity. I couldn't accept the role of Jesus (عليه السلام) as a mediator between God and man or the need of it since it contradicts the essence of God, being the All-Mighty and All-Knowing. So, my Christian belief gradually became moribund.

After reversion to Islam, I found the key to all the problems that bothered me. The belief in *Tauhid* (Oneness of God) cleared all my misgivings about the essence of God. *Alhamdulillah*, I found the Ultimate Truth – there is no deity worthy of sincere worship, except Allah, the Creator, the Cherisher and the Sustainer of all the worlds without sharer or partner.

2. What is the best way of calling people to Islam?

As vicegerent, man is not left without proper guidance from Allah in order to fulfill his duty toward Him. Hence Islam is a complete and comprehensive Code of Life that covers all human endeavours. With respect to calling people to Islam, the Qur'ân gives us the right guidance in the following verse:

"Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e., Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'ân) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." (*Surah An-Nahl*, 16:125)

Man is a complex being not only endowed with many faculties but also with inner feelings with varying sensitivities that are very sophisticated.

In calling people to Islam, Abul Ala Maududi said that one has to bear in mind two things—wisdom and good counsel. By wisdom, he meant the knowledge of prejudices prevailing among the people against Islam, their mental capacities and circumstances to whom the message is addressed. In short, *Da'wah* depends on how well we understand the people among

whom we are working, their cultures, opinions, problems, hopes and aspirations. One has to admit that cultural variations exist and that there is a need of thorough knowledge of cross-cultural-outlook of the people.

By good counsel, he meant that one should not only be content with merely trying to convince people through rational arguments but instead try to appeal to the nobler human emotions. One does not merely shows erroneous doctrines (beliefs) but also the tragic implications in advocating them. He has to awaken the people of their mistakes and give the right solutions to their present state of affairs. In addition, one should be cautious so as to avoid unnecessary arguments. Discourse should be refined and gracious, and dispositions should always be courteous. Answers to questions should be straight forward and in elegant manner without offending anyone.

Another good strategy for propagators of Islam is to learn the indigenous languages and local dialects of those people whom they address. Propagators will have better control of the situation and the impact of their message on the audience will be greater.

Further, thorough knowledge of the religion is a must for all *Da'ees*. It should be understood that one cannot propagate something which he does not know. Other aspects are sincerity of purpose and persistence on the part of *Da'ees*. They should set good examples because as the saying goes "action speaks louder than words."

Furthermore, one should exert more efforts and be a responsible Muslim. We need to learn from the progressive Christian missionaries by doing our best to negate their activities. Besides, constructing mosques, we should concentrate on the youth by establishing Islamic schools at all levels. We should also provide social services like establishing clinics, hospitals,

orphanages, relief agencies, etc., so as to ensure strong presence of Islam and maintaining Islamic environment in the society.

Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as the leader of the Muslim *Ummah* gave us good example of *Da'wah*, particularly, when he sent delegation to Yemen calling people to Islam. The teachings of Islam were introduced gradually and the belief in Allah was given precedence. Similarly, the prohibition of wine was gradually enjoined until the Qur'anic injunction was revealed prohibiting its intake totally. The truth is that there is no God but Allah and there is no better way than that of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

3. State your opinion about the way Ahmed Deedat calls people to Islam?

There is no doubt that the way Sheikh Ahmed Deedat calls people to Islam is to some extent effective. It has awakened the Christians especially about the true nature of their present Scriptures and the senselessness of their doctrines. However, in the process, it has also created enemies who veer further away from the truth and become more determined and relentless in their efforts to discredit Islam.

It is of human experience that by defeating your opponents in a debate (in public) does not bring him anything good, except sowing enmity and fire in their hearts. Most often the victor and the vanquished separate after the debate with more antagonism and hostility.

To my opinion, calling people to Islam is more effective when one presents Islam in the way of Prophet Muhammad, through the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. *Tauhid* or the belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Fountainhead of all teachings should be the basis of *Da'wah* activity. This does not necessarily mean to discard the use of the Bible when the need arises. In referring to the Bible, care should be taken to see that we need the support from the Bible to drive home our point. By using the Bible, we might

unwittingly prove its authenticity and validity as the revealed Scripture which is not true. In a nutshell, the Bible should be used only as a reference by saying "Even your Bible says so" or referring only as a reference confirming our arguments, but in no way using it as support to prove our Islamic point of view.

What I am saying is that Islam is a complete religion which does not admit any addition or renovation. It is absolutely perfect as Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم declared it in his Farewell *khutbah* (sermon) when he recited the verse of the Qur'an:

"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you, Islam as your religion." (*Surah Al-Maidah: 5:3*)

4. What are some of the methods applied by Christian Missionaries to convert people in Africa?

Christian missionaries in Africa enjoy the support of the colonial governments who wish to see Africa converted to Christianity for political and economic expediency. Thus, missionaries are able to get most of the favoured concessions and best facilities in fulfilling their mission.

Aside their vast resources, the mission devised many effective approaches to strengthen their hold on the inhabitants. Missionaries study the social life and languages of the tribes to enable them to communicate freely. In fact, they translated the Bible into the local languages and dialects. They opened schools at all levels in their mission centers where they teach the people to read and write their vernaculars, and English, French or Italian as their second language. Churches are attached to these schools where they preach Christianity with enthusiasm and zeal. They teach pupils to become teachers, catechists and priests in their own areas after graduation.

Some advanced groups of missionaries also started industrial schools where young Africans are taught practical skills in

agriculture, carpentry, iron works, handling industrial machines, mechanics, dress making, office works, etc. Many also are able to open clinics and hospitals where they treat common diseases prevalent in Africa. Through these kinds of strategies, the African Christians were able to lead in the fields of economic, political and cultural life. They always toe the line of their Christian sponsors.

So far, what has been mentioned, were those of common strategies. The Christian mission has gone further by enlisting priests in the field by training them in comprehensive study of Islam. They also conduct interfaith dialogues between Muslims and Christians sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva and in Vatican like the University of Rome through its Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The third method which has been very successful in Africa, is the establishment of international and regional Christian relief agencies. The aid has always carried the string of the Gospel and the Christian doctrines.

5. What are the results of calling people to Islam in Asia, Europe, U.S.A. and other places?

The results of Islamic *Da'wah* in Asia, Europe and U.S.A. are very much encouraging. Many non-Muslims, particularly Christians are embracing Islam by hundreds of thousands throughout the world. This is mainly due to the presence of Islamic institutions like the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) in strategic places all over the world spearheading and supporting vigorous *Da'wah* programs.

By the turn of century, it is hoped that the present rate of Muslims will go up considerably. Islam has now become the second largest religion in the whole of Europe where there are over eighteen million Muslims.

In Southeast Asia, like in the Philippines, the trend of reversion to Islam is very encouraging. Many village inhabitants are charmed with the beauty of Islam which has long been veiled by the dominance of Christianity. The same is true with other Asian regions like in Thailand and Vietnam. So, also as far as in the South like in Australia and New Zealand, reversion to Islam is taking place at an unusual pace.

While in China and North Asian Republics, during the peak of Communism, Islam was completely subdued, its revival has been going on in full swing after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Mosques are being built at rapid pace including mainland Russia. Even in Japan as well as in Korea, Islamic *Da'wah* has been active and new Muslims are recorded in big numbers.

In North America, the United States and Canada, thousands of Afro-Americans embraced Islam. It has captured their imaginations because Islam advocates equality of races. Reversion includes other ethnic tribes due to strong racial discrimination. For them, Islam provides emancipation of their human dignity as a people and elevates them from a second class citizens. Similar trend has also been going on for sometime in South America where new offices of the World Assembly of Muslims Youth (WAMY) are established.

With this present trend of world Islamic revival, it would not be long, God's willing, Islam will regain its past glory in establishing the religion of God on earth.^[1]

Muhammad Ameen C. Cave

[1] This interview was meant for *Al-Muslimoon* Magazine, but on our special request, Brother Muhammad Ameen C. Cave has very kindly favoured us with it. We feel proud in reproducing it in our book — *Editor*.

Why I embraced Islam?

[Muhammad Asad, formerly Leopold Weiss, was born in Livow, Austria (later Poland) in 1900 and at the age of 22 made his visit to the Middle East. He later became an outstanding correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, a well-known German journal.

After his conversion to Islam Professor Muhammad Asad travelled and worked throughout the Muslim world from North Africa to as far east as Afghanistan. After long years of devoted study, he became one of the leading Muslim scholars of our age. After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, he was appointed Director of Islamic Reconstruction, West Punjab, and was member of the committee undertaking the task of an Islamic Constitution for Pakistan, and later on he became Pakistan's Alternate Representative at the United Nations.

He was an author of a number of books of which the most important are: 'Islam at the Crossroads' and 'Road to Mecca'. He was responsible for the production of an Islamic monthly called "*Islamic Culture*", for a number of years after the death of famous Muslim scholar Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. Later on, he published a new English translation of the meaning of the Noble Qur'ân — *Editor*.^[1]

In 1922, I left my home country on a trip to Africa and Asia as a special correspondent for some of the biggest European newspapers. Since then, I have passed all my time in the Islamic world.

In the beginning, my interest in the countries that I had visited was superficial. In this matter I fared just as the foreign visitor.

[1] *Why We Embraced Islam*, by Arafat K. El-Ashi, Vol. 1, p. 103 and *Islam, the First and Final Religion*, p. 111.

In front of me I saw a social system and a *Weltanschauung* that are basically different from the European situation.

At first sight, I developed an attachment to this quiet human concept for life that is the complete opposite of the mechanical and bolsterous system of life that dominates European society. I was led by this inclination and sympathy to investigate very slowly the causes for the prevailing differences between Islamic and European societies.

With the passage of time, my interest in the teachings of Islam became greater. At that time, my desire for research and investigation was not strong enough as to lead me to the paradise of Islam. However, this desire opened new vistas for me to get acquainted with a human society that is adopting itself to the realms of progress. It is a society based on the least imaginable forms of internal strife and on the greatest imaginable measure of brotherly relations.

The reality of Muslims today does not reflect the high ideal that can be achieved by the teachings of Islam. All the dynamism, driving force and progress that is an integral part of Islam, have been transformed on the hands of contemporary Muslims to neglect, sham and inactivity. All that we find in Islam of the qualities of magnanimity, preparedness, sacrifice and devotion have been diminished on the hands of contemporary Muslims to narrowness of scope and habituation to the life of meekness and humiliation.

The discovery I made of the obvious disparity between the way Islam fared in the past and how it has become now, caused me anxiety and astonishment. That in turn led me to deal with the problem from an angle that is more profound and closer to Islam. I mean by this that I have attempted to imagine myself with the framework of Islam and not outside it. Although this attempt was an intellectual experience, it, nevertheless, quickly led me to the sound solution of the problem that was facing me. I became certain that the first and last cause for the cultural and

social destruction of Muslims was due to the fact that they gradually have stopped to follow the teachings of Islam in their original spirit. Islam, as a religion, is still alive and dynamic, and is still a fact of life and very real. But Islam, without followers applying its teachings, is a dead body. The Muslim religion was the essential factor in the power and strength of the Islamic world, culturally and civilizationally. This same Islamic world might be lost and obliterated if it does not return to the fold of Islamic teachings and values.

The more my knowledge became greater about the strength of the teachings of Islam and the ease for their application, there developed in me a strong desire to know the reasons that drove the Muslims to abandon this religion and its role in building and creating a sound life. I have discussed this problem with a number of Muslim thinkers from the Libyan desert to the frontiers of China, and from the shores of the Bosphorous to the Arabian Sea. This problem became my main preoccupation; it dominated my concern and feelings to the extent that it concealed all other intellectual concerns that I had in the Islamic world. With the passage of time, my queries increased and my discussion became more pervasive for the sake of finding out the cause of this lethargy to the extent that — although I have not embraced Islam yet — I appeared as a defender of Islam in the face of Muslim indifference and negligence.

My success and progress to reach a satisfactory answer to my queries were imperceptible and intangible until the following incident took place:

I was told by a young governor of one of the Afghani mountain districts in one of the autumn days of 1925 that I was Muslim, though unconscious of this fact. His words hit the very latent and hidden resources of my soul.

After this incident, I kept quiet until I had returned to Europe in 1926. Consequently, it appeared to me that the logical conclusion for my position was to embrace Islam.

It suffices to limit my story of my embracing Islam to this short summary. Since 1926, I have been asking myself the question: Why did I embrace Islam? What, in particular, attracted me to Islam? Truly, I cannot give an unequivocal answer to these questions. Nor was it a particular dogma or any other kind of belief from the teachings of Islam that drove me to become a Muslim. It was, however, the totality of the system that embraced all the moral and practical teachings as presented in a picture that is far-reaching in its magnificence, perfection and harmony which the thinker cannot thoroughly explain. It is impossible for me to assume that there was a particular side of Islam that attracted me more than another despite the numerous sides of Islam. Islam appears to be an engineering work that is highly perfect and efficient. Each and every side of this magnificent engineering work is the result of a harmonious and integral imagination that adds to the charm of this structure and the beauty of the interdependent whole. In its structure, there are no shortcomings or excesses; the expected result for this magnificent engineering work is absolute balance and complete harmony. It is probable that my feeling that everything in Islam—teachings and postulates—fit in the right place had the greatest impressions on me. Perhaps there are other impressions that I find hard to analyze. I embraced Islam as a result of my enchantment with it. Enchantment or love is a feeling that comprises many factors; that includes our desires and feelings of loneliness; it also comprises our high ideals, inferiority complex as well as our weaknesses and strengths. This is my story of embracing of Islam. Islam crept into my heart with my awareness of it. It crept, however, unlike the sneaking thieves who steal houses at night and then run away; Islam crept into my heart to stay for ever.

Since the time of my embracing Islam, I have tried to study Islam and learn its teachings as much as I could. I have studied the Qur'an and *Hadith* (narrative relating deeds and utterances of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)). Moreover, I have studied the language of the Qur'an, its history and what was said for it and against it. I have passed five years in Hejaz and Najd in an attempt to be inspired by the rise of Islam and its teachings on original places that witnessed the hands of the Arab Messenger. Since Hejaz is the meeting place of Muslims from various lands, I was able to compare between the various religious and social points of view that are current in modern times. These comparative studies gave birth to an invincible belief and firm certitude and that Islam, as a religious and social phenomenon, is still the greatest driving force that mankind has known until the present, despite what Muslims suffer from in the way of backwardness and inactivity. Since then my greatest concern has been the question of reviving it.^[1]

Muhammad Asad
(Formerly *Leopold Weiss*)

Why I decided to become a Muslim after having been a Hindu for all my life

The present-day Hindus in India are plunged into spiritual darkness because of idol worship and polytheism. Like any human being, every Hindu has spiritual thirst to know about God and his relation to him. But the Hindu society does not provide a congenial environment for worship of one God because of the age-old traditions of idol worship of "gods" and "goddesses."

[1] Courtesy: *Islamic Herald*. Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*, April 22, 1984, Vol. 32, No. 24, pp. 255, 256.

The religious customs and rituals of idol worship have influenced the way of life and thinking of all Hindus to the extent that even an educated Hindu in India has drifted away from the straight path of worshipping the one and only God, "Allah."

A religious festival in India has become only an occasion to eat and drink and for merrymaking without any real worship. In India, every major Hindu festival is almost always attended by fighting and communal riots. The religious aspect is replaced by power politics in all Hindu festivals. There is enormous waste of money and time. At present, the important Hindu festivals are monitored more by politicians than by temple priests. The spiritual aspect in these festivals is zero and there is no place for God and His worship.

The author belonged to such a Hindu society where there are many "gods" and "goddesses", one for wealth (*Laxmi*), one for education (*Ganesh*), one for physical culture and body building (*Hanuman*) and so forth. One can choose any "god" (idol) depending upon one's needs and interests. It looks as if one God is not sufficient to cater to the needs of all Hindus in India. That is the reason for many "gods" and many temples leading every man to religious chaos directing him for one God to another "god" and one temple to another. The temples' priests make their living comfortable by exploiting and misleading the ordinary folk.

The straight path to Allah has been twisted and made crooked by the Hindus due to the age-old false concepts and traditions. These traditions have been established by a group of temple priests and others who are called Brahmins. They have successfully infused the scourge of the caste system in Indian society. They have discriminated and divided the people into forward castes of Brahmans and backward castes and the untouchables. People belonging to the Untouchable caste, who

do menial jobs, are not supposed to enter any temple. They should stay away from temples and the places of worship.

We can imagine how much degraded is the Hindu society and religion which has discriminated against the human beings. Perhaps, there is no religion in the world which has adopted such an ignominious method of discrimination of God's creation.

The ulterior motive of Brahmins was to rule the Hindu society and to always be on top and at the helm of affairs by exploiting the common man.

Due to illiteracy and the discriminating caste system introduced by Brahmins, idol worship might have evolved. And in order to satisfy the spiritual thirst in knowing and worshipping the unseen God, the Hindus have fallen into the trap of idol worship and polytheism.

One of the stumbling blocks in understanding the Hindu religion, is the language of "*Sanskrit*" in which most of the scriptures have been written. The language of *Sanskrit* has been monopolised by Brahmins. It has not been within the common man's reach to learn due to which the Hindus have been kept away from knowing their own religion except handful of Brahmins.

The scripture written in *Sanskrit* has not found any place in Hindu homes. Besides India being a secular state, it does not pay any heed in promoting the religious needs of the people.

The people who know *Sanskrit* and the Hindu religion, seem to indulge in idol worship, although they all say very enthusiastically that they believe in one God, but in practice, they worship various stone idols in their daily life. What is the use of such theoretical knowledge of religion which has not taught them to worship one God and to adopt a straight path to Him?

The Holy Book of Hindus is the "*Gita*." There is no clear evidence that it has come down from God but all Hindus agree that it was written by a great sage by the name of Vyasa. Hence it was written by a man, however great he may be. It cannot be compared with the Holy Quran.

The contents of the *Gita* are more on abstract topics— like the human soul and the way of meditation and to certain extent, deals with human character and daily life. But it is no match to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the *Hadith* which deals with every aspect of human life.

The *Gita* has become more a show piece on the bookshelves of a few Hindu homes. Nobody studies it because of its language and abstract contents, although there is a wave of its propagation to the common masses in India by certain dedicated individuals. The Hindu religion as such, has not reached the doors of every Hindu home, so how can we expect the people to know their religion and its merits? We have only the knowledge of the Hindu religion which is seen and practised by Hindus in their daily life i.e. idol worship.

One of the major and important concepts in Hindu religion is that God comes down to earth in human form whenever there is a necessity and that a particular human being is known as an incarnation of God.

In the light of the above concept, any man with certain divine qualities or those Prophets whom God has sent to convey a message to his people, are considered as God himself,^[1] or at least incarnation of God. Such persons are held in great esteem and are treated and worshipped as God. Right now there is one such person in India by the name "Sataya Saibaba" whom the Hindus are worshipping as God because he performs some "miracles".

[1] This is a Christian notion and an un-Islamic one, which is *Shirk* – Editor.

The thinking of Hindus have become corrupt and unknowingly they are committing a great sin of *Shirk* by associating human with God.

Because the author does not believe in the corrupt sinful practice of *Shirk*, he has severed his spiritual leaning from Hindu religion.

The present-day Indian society lives in utter religious confusion of worshipping stone idols and has lost the straight path to God. Many educated Hindus have no faith in their own religion. They have no time to know about God. They are too busy with their worldly life, which they think is the end of everything. They do not have any concept of life after death or the Day of Judgement. They eat, drink and sleep and are satisfied, if they have enough money and comfortable life to lead. Their education is purely job oriented without any grain of spiritual content.

It has become a fashion to live more like animals among the rich Hindus. They have rejected God in their life.

Many Hindus with some understanding and wisdom know that Islam is the only true religion of the mankind, but they are not bold enough to accept it openly since they are caught up in the age-old tradition of worshipping idols and they do not want to come out of their irreligious environment because of the fear of the society.

They are not afraid of God and the Day of Judgement. They are more afraid of their friends and relatives and the society at large.

The crime rate and sinful ways of living have increased in Hindu society in India because of the lack of true religion. They are groping in dark and wandering from one temple to another in search of God who is with them more near to their blood vein but they have been missing Him all along their life.

Having gone through the mess of sinful life and idol worship or no worship, at all in his life, the author has accepted Islam at the age of 56.

Praise to Allah Who has been kind to bring me to the correct and straight path. All this has happened because of the Holy book—*Qur'an*— which answered all my doubts and strengthened my faith in Islam.

Many Hindu friends might argue that the author has done wrong which will be decided only by Allah on the Day of Judgement, who was wrong and who was right? And Allah will decide the fate of all those Hindus who did not pay any heed to His Message through the Holy Quran and His Messenger Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).^[1]

Dr. Mohammad Mustafa
(Former *Dr. Mahendar Singh*)

Why I accepted Islam?

If the place of one's christening is any indication as to what religion one should follow, I should have been a member of the Church of England; but as soon as I was old enough to attend religious assemblies of any kind, my thoughts turned to the Congregational Church, and to this Church I adhered until I reached the age of 27. I followed this form of religion while I was in India, where it went under the name of the United Board Church, which included, besides, various other denominations, such as Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Wesleyans and others too numerous to mention. During my stay in India, I also visited the Burning Bush Mission, and that of the Seventh Day Adventists, and in all these there seemed to be something

^[1] Courtesy *Saudi Gazette*. 16th December, 1991, p. 7.

missing, a certain lack of sincerity was noticeable about them, which made me do a lot of thinking, and got me at times quite out of my depth.

Then, in 1929, I was invited by some friends to visit the Roman Catholic Church with them. This I did, and attended that Church in Naini Tal for some time, until at length, I drifted away from it. There is, of course, a great deal of devoutness among Roman Catholics, but the thing that caused my severance from the fold, was its unseemly pomp and ceremony.

Shortly after this I met a European, Mr. Mathews, who had embraced Islam years before. He told me a lot about the Faith of Islam, and the simplicity and truthfulness of it, made a very deep impression on me. Just before I came home, I had the very great pleasure of reading the Holy Qur'an, which influenced me profoundly, and it was then that I decided to embrace Islam. I had already asked Mr. Mathews about the procedure to be followed, and so on my arrival in England, I wrote to Lord Headley, who was kind enough to give me the information I required.

On the whole, I think the main cause of my embracing Islam was the fact that I found it to be the only religion where faith and truth are truly predominant.

I may add that I do not like the pomp of other religions, because it always reminds me of the Lord Mayor's Show.^[1]

H.G. Newitt

Why I embraced Islam?

For ten long years I have been in a wilderness of doubt and despair, and I am happy at last that I have found real peace and light in Islam. I am, indeed, really happy to be a member of that

[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1934, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 8,9.

great Islamic Brotherhood the universality of which has never been challenged, and which has practised its ideals of Fraternity and Equality for the last 1,400 years or more, while the followers of other creeds have done only lip service to the precept and conveniently ignored the practice thereof. Apart from this, the simple faith of Islam in One God, Allah, and His last Prophet Muhammad, whose teachings comprise of all that is necessary for the moral, material and spiritual needs of humanity, is surpassing the teachings of all the other founders of religions.

I was born in the West Indian Island of Barbados, and was brought up in a very religious family. I became a keen student of the Bible and was a really "great lad" at Sunday School. In keeping with the wishes of my parents I studied in order to become a local preacher, and frequently had to give discourses on the Scriptures. But by the time my school career was coming to an end, I had become quite an infidel, being thoroughly disgusted with the practice of Christianity, though the ideals propounded by Jesus Christ were undoubtedly noble and appealed to me. What, however, upset me most, was the very degrading treatment meted out to the coloured races. It made me wonder whether Jesus had died on the Cross only for the sake of the white races of the world, or whether it was really true that all human beings were God's creatures. Racked as I was with doubt and despair, I left school and joined one of Lord Kelvin's steamers and began to roam about the world. Thus I became quite interested in the study of the different peoples, I came across during my travels and in their beliefs.

I also had the opportunity of meeting all sorts and types of peoples, and no one had a greater influence over me than a Swede I met in Buenos Aires. He was a handsome young fellow of about 26 years of age. One day, a batch of our ship's crew consisting of three West Indians, including myself, one Russian Finn, an Irishman from Liverpool and a Welshman were out for

a walk on the quay when we were greeted with a charming "And how are the boys!" by this very pleasant Swede, who I then learnt, was the Chief Officer of a boat lying in the harbour. We were so attracted by the man's personality and his hearty greeting that we stopped, and, after mutual introduction, became engrossed in conversation with him. He invited us to his ship, and as we approached his cabin, he opened its door welcoming us with the words "Walk in Brothers!"

All of us were rather taken aback by this fraternal greeting, and being the youngest of the lot, I waited for my seniors to give the start. As the others were apparently too shy or too conservative, I dared to break the ice and remarked to our host: "You are so different from the other white men that I have met." "Yes, lad," was his genial reply, "It's because I belong to the greatest Brotherhood in the world." "Which Brotherhood is that?" I asked. "It is the one and only Brotherhood that recognises all God's creatures as belonging to one great universal family, irrespective of caste or colour; a brotherhood which is endeavouring to uplift another and spread the true teachings of the Prophet." "Oh! you believe in a Prophet?" I said. "Yes," he replied, "And some day so will you." "What makes you say that?" I demanded. "You are made of that stuff and after many years you will think of me," was the reply I got.

Then turning to my companions as well he said, "Come lads, let us have some black pan." We enjoyed the coffee and cakes, and bid him a hearty "Good-bye." His ship left early next morning for New York, and I have since lost sight of him. But I can never forget the charming impression I have of him and the subtle influence of his conversation. Now I realise that he was a true Muslim. All throughout my ramblings in different lands, I continued my study of peoples and religions. When I came out of East, many years ago, I had an opportunity of making a comparative study of the great religions at first hand, and one of the first things that struck me was the stand-offishness, the

pinchbeck dignity and the pseudo-aristocracy of the members of the congregations of the so-called Christian churches. It is an undoubted fact that there are a comparatively few dignitaries in the various churches who not only preach but really practise the teachings of Christ. But as against these there are thousand who have made it only a profession and are lacking in that brotherly love, humility and understanding which are the genuine attributes of all nobility. Such indifference and lack of sympathy has driven millions from the Christian churches because they have been but given stones when they asked for bread. But in illustrious contrast to this stands out the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Here you find kings and peasants seated side by side, united in prayer in Allah's Holy Presence. No distinction is here of caste or colour, and those who have experienced or read of the pilgrimage to Mecca would, no doubt, appreciate the fact that here, at least, is to be found, in practice, the cult of Universal Brotherhood. Shoulder to shoulder one may see people of all races, white, black and yellow, all united together by that one bond of Faith—that great belief in Islam. The solidarity of Islam is unquestioned. Instead of an atmosphere vitiated by prejudices of the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the white and the coloured, one breathes here God's pure air full of the loving kindness and invigorating spiritual Love of Brotherhood. Man was born noble and equal. I cannot, therefore, see why there should be any chosen people of God while—the rest of the world should be drawers of water and hewers of wood for them. Being rich or poor, high or low, white or black, is purely accidental, for, in the eyes of Almighty, all men are equal. But in spite of the gradual and progressive evolution of mankind, it is surprising to find what moral blindness and spiritual antipathy there is among men against those whom they cannot understand or appreciate.

But now that I have shaken off the shackles that held me fast to an iron-bound tradition built on prejudice and misunderstanding;

and now that I have become a member of the noble Brotherhood of Islam, I feel that, as a true Muslim, it is my duty to broadcast the glories of the teachings of the Prophet of Islam. To those who are in doubt and despair, as I was at one time, I say, take this opportunity and devote some time and attention to the study of Islam. It will reveal to you the world in a light that was never before understood by you, and guided by your Faith in the Oneness of God and the equality of all mankind you cannot but feel and experience that Peace which is Islam.

I think it will not be inopportune to mention my debt of gratitude to my Muslim brethren in Ceylon, and specially to Mr. A.J.A. Cader who made it possible for me to declare my Faith in Islam. Immediately I came here I got in touch with him. I doubt not that the conversations he had with me helped to convince him that mine was a conversion of faith consequent on deep and careful study and not a mere plunge in the dark. He attended to everything necessary and I was glad to accept Islam at his hands.

To my Christian brethren I would say that derision need not be theirs. A little careful study, a more tolerant attitude and a change of mind and heart will convince them that as against the preaching of Christianity there is both precept and practice of Islam which alone redounds to its greater glory.^[1]

Omar Proutt

Why I embraced Islam?

I am a 'new' Muslim, an Australian, christened Daryl Champion. I embraced Islam on 1-6-84 (3-4-1404) at a Sydney Mosque. Since embracing Islam I moved throughout all the

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1934, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 10-14.

Sydney Mosques, trying to experience all the flavour of Islam available to me in Sydney. My name is Qamar Al-Qalb, or Daryl Champion as my parents would know me.

I am not Yusuf Islam (former “rock star” Cat Stevens), but the message I have is similar. I too know the music industry—I spent three years playing in and co-managing a band, in fact, that is what brought me to Sydney from Adelaide (my place of birth—the capital of South Australia) at the beginning of 1983. I have experienced four years in the media industry—two of them as a journalist on a newspaper. And I have worked for what would amount to about three years as a storeman in a warehouse. I am now studying Islam, history and many other subjects—privately, officially I am unemployed.

So, you are interested in why I embraced Islam! Well, I *didn't* ‘embrace’ Islam. I *re-discovered* Islam in myself — it was only a matter of time, and by the mercy of Allah it was sooner, not later. It was bound to happen, and I am a Muslim, And if there are to be more like me — many more, and *In sha Allah* there will be. Muslims must show by their example that a better life with true Islam, as guided by the wonderous verses of the Qur’an can be theirs. And to do this, Muslims must first unite and organise. No different sects — only Muslims. The old “hatchet” must be buried in the dust of history and all sights set as one toward the building of a golden future. Allah planned it this way.

I remember when, as a child, I used to gaze at the blue, star-spangled dome and minarets of the Mosques in Adelaide while sitting in the back seat of my parents car as we drove past. Even then I had an urge to see what it was like on the inside. I also remember actually visiting a Mosque at the age of 12 as part of a Primary School tour of the desert mining town of Broken Hill. This tiny but beautiful Mosque was built by Afghan camel drivers about a century ago, and in it I felt a peace and

tranquillity which I had never experienced in any church. And I remember having a desire to read the Qur'an when I was in High School. This seemed strange to me because I had been brought up as a Christian and I had not even read the Bible, I was never a committed Christian.

Then, going on 12 months ago I had a dream. And it was as if it were real I assure you. I dreamt my death, murdered by an unknown soldier. But it was as if a great weight had been lifted from my back. I was still alive and I saw my body below me. This had a great effect on me. I was convinced of life after physical death and I lost all apprehension of death. I believe it was another step in my journey to truth.

Soon after this dream, I perceived a great darkness descending on the world, including Australia. The darkness in fact, is already here but it will get blacker, it is like dusk before a stormy night at this point of time, I made a pledge to myself to do something — this was at the end of October last year (1983). By the grace of Allah I attended a Scientific Anti-Nuclear Lecture two days after I made this pledge — the first such meeting I had ever gone to. Facts revealed at this lecture inspired reference to the Bible, the book of Revelations specifically. This in turn rekindled my old desire to read the Qur'an. I remembered Muslims had ideas on "the end of the world" too. A week later, almost by chance, seemingly, I met my first Muslim. Every day I was learning more about Islam. The more I found out, the more I wanted to know and the more there seemed to be to know.

So, on the 3rd Rabi-uth-Thani 1404 after Hijra, I 'officially' became a Muslim. What you have heard is not a tale of conversion, but a story of the rediscovery of my natural self embodied in Islam. And praise be to Allah for me being able to be talking as a Muslim, as I am. ;

The Muslim population in Australia is about 250,000, only 200, I believe of those being converted Australians.

There appears to be growing interest in Islam here in Australia and *In sha Allah* Australia has something to offer the world in the form of a dream that has yet to be realised. ^[1]

Qamar Al-Qalb
(Former *Daryl Champion*)

[1] Courtesy: *Payam-e-Aman*, Bloomfield. Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*. April 7, 1985, Vol. 33, No. 23, pp. 270,271.

How I was committed to Islam?

I was born in a German Christian family during the most ferocious part of World War II, in Berlin, in 1943. My family moved first to Spain, during the same year, and later, in 1948, to Argentina. There I stayed for 15 years. I attended my grade and high school at the Roman Catholic "La Salle" school, in Cordoba, Argentine. As was to be expected, I became very soon a fervent Catholic. I was lectured over an hour daily on Catholic religion and I often attended religious services. At twelve, my dream was to become a Roman Catholic priest. I was completely committed to the Christian faith.

Allah observed my folly, and one memorable day, nearly seven years ago, He permitted that a copy of Spanish translation of the Holy Qur'an should reach my hands. My father did not object my reading it, as he supposed that it would only contribute to give me a broader background, and nothing else. He was far from guessing the effect the Words of Allah were going to exert on my mind ... As I opened the Holy Book, I was a fanatic Roman Catholic; as I closed it, I was completely committed to Islam...

Obviously, my opinion of Islam was not favourable one before I read the Holy Qur'an. I took the Holy Book with curiosity, and opened it with scorn, expecting to find in it horrible errors, blasphemies, superstitions and contradictions, I was biased, but I was also very young and my heart had no time to harden completely yet. I went through the *Surah* reluctantly at the beginning, eagerly then, and finally with a desperate thirst for Truth. Then, in the greatest moment of my life, Allah gave me His guidance and led me from superstition to Truth, from darkness to Light, from Christianity to Islam... in the blessed pages of the Holy Qur'an, I found solution to all my problems, satisfaction to all my needs, explication for all my doubts. Allah attracted me to His Light with irresistible strength, and I gladly yielded to Him. Everything seemed clear now, everything made

sense to me, and I began to understand myself, the Universe and Allah. I was bitterly aware that I had been deceived by my dearest teachers, and that their words were only cruel lies, whether they were aware of it or not. My whole world was shattered in one instant; all concepts had to be revised. But the bitterness in my heart was amply superseded by the ineffable joy of having found my Lord at last, and I was filled with life and gratitude to Him. I still humbly praise and bless Him for His Mercy with me; without His help, I would have remained in darkness and stupidity forever.

Swelled with joy and enthusiasm, I hurried to communicate my findings to other people, to my parents, to my schoolmates, to my instructors... I wanted everybody to know the Truth, to be free of ignorance and prejudice, to feel the joy I felt. I met a fortress surrounding them, a thick wall separating them from the Truth... And I was not able to remove that rampart, because it was in their hearts, harder than stone. I was received with scorn and persecution, unable to understand the blindness of my persecutors. I learned that only Allah can give Light.

The more I learned, the more I felt compelled to express my gratitude to Allah for having led me to Islam, the Ideal Religion.

I have read sacred Scriptures of every religion; nowhere have I found what I encountered in Islam: perfection. The Holy Qur'an, compared to any other Scripture I have read, is like the light of the Sun compared to that of a match. I firmly believe that anybody who reads the Word of Allah with a mind that is not completely closed to Truth, will become a Muslim, if Allah pleases. He will also travel from darkness to Light...

May Allah grant His Guidance to all the sincere seekers of Truth. The arms of Islam are open to receive them in the heart of a community called by Allah Himself "the best people that were ever raised for the benefit of mankind."

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe!^[1]

Saifuddin Dirk Walter Mosig

U.S.A.

Why I confess Islam?

To Africa, that land of sunshine, of the whispering palm and the tropic moon, where the pad-pad of naked feet on sandy soil and the full-throated laughter of happy people is ever in one's ears, I give my thanks.

When I first landed on its hospitable shores, I was an ordinary callow English youth, content with the pleasures of the moment and with no thought of the life to come, but when, five years later, I returned to England for the third time, it and its people had given me the clue to happiness. And happiness, to me, is spelt as Islam — Islam, the only true faith. The only faith which can be accepted by any thinking individual, and the faith which alone can lead the suffering world towards the Light.

During my first tour in Africa I was ashamed to notice the way in which the coloured population was treated by the Europeans, and to find that the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of man was so completely ignored. I could not help reflecting on the unpleasant shock which awaited the native Christian converts when they left the shelter of the mission to take their place among their fellow Christians. Instead of the respect, sympathy and understanding which is always due to another soul and which, according to the teaching they had received, they had every right to expect, they would find, if such a thing were possible, that they had increased the antagonism of their co-

[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*, pp. 133-135.

religionists, and that they stood indeed further without the Christian fold than their pagan brothers.

In direct contrast was the very evident family spirit of the African Muslims, and the term "Muslim nation" took on a new significance for me. What could it be, I wondered, that bound them so closely together, when we Christians, in spite of our wonderful ideals, were as strangers to one another and ever ready to fly at one another's throats? Alas! At that time I had not read the Glorious Qur'an; that wonderful Divine Revelation that could move the strongest man to tears. I did not know that the magnificent example of Muhammad (may the blessings of Allah be upon him) shone like a beacon through the Muslim world, guiding his followers on the right path.

I had been brought up in the Christian faith; I had been confirmed, and attended Communion; I had blindly accepted the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement and the Divinity of Christ. But when I gave the matter a little thought I found that I could not believe in these dogmas. I was unable to accept them as the Word of God. And when I saw that Christianity was accorded lip service only by its followers; that when ethical and moral principles came into conflict with economics, the latter invariably prevailed; that when, in short, one's religion was apt to interfere with dividends, religion went by the board, then I cast around to find a faith that I could sincerely accept.

Imagine, if you can, my delight when I discovered that everything I read about Islam coincided with my own views, and that the teachings of Our Holy Prophet (Allah bless and keep him), answered all my questions. *Surah* after *Surah* of the Holy Qur'an revealed to me the Truth, and I gave thanks to Allah that He had, in His mercy, accepted my surrender.^[1]

Salim R. De Grey Firth

^[1] *Islamic Review*. September 1933, Vol. 21, No. 9, pp. 285-287

How I came to Islam

My conversion to Islam has not been based on any extensive study of the Qur'an nor of Islamic literature, nor from any personal experience of Islamic countries, nor even from any such experience, mediated to me by relations or close friends of mine. As a child, I believed that Muhammad was a Prophet of God in the Old Testament tradition. Under what circumstances I first heard of Muhammad I do not remember. The Prophets and peoples of the Old Testament had built up a tradition of the true religion, and this was eventually given to the world by Jesus and Muhammad. But the history of Protestant Christianity since the time of Reformation is a history of division and of contempt for traditions not its own. As for example, it seems always to have been extremely antagonistic to Islam and has never admitted Muhammad to have been genuine; in spite of the fact that Luther, the Keyman of the Reformation, the first to make Protestantism politically effective, almost certainly owed much to his studies of and contacts with Islam.

I had the feeling that not only Islamic religion but Islamic culture and civilization have been preferable to European Christian, and that many European public figures have looked on Islamic organisation as something superior, and have secretly sought to copy it. As for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, defender of the faith of the Catholic Church of Rome, who owed so much to the Arab philosophers Ibni Rushd and Al-Ghazali. Also, our own Charles II who with his (17th century Englishmen) revolutionary policies of experimental science and religious toleration was certainly an Arabist and an admirer of the Empire of the Moguls as well as of that of the Bourbons. Since his time, Europe (and in that term I included both European America and European Russia) has developed the industrial revolution, the perfections of bourgeois civilization, and an unbroken tradition of metaphysical atheism, and in so

doing has become the thing for the rest of the world to copy, rather than itself the copier. What a pity! Most of it is better left uncopied. European Empires have sprawled themselves all over the globe, and have been almost invariably contemptuous and even brutal towards the cultures and traditions of subjugated peoples. The first was the Roman Empire, and it ended disastrously. Later European Empires, stupidly, have wished to copy it. Woe unto England if the British Empire is modelled on the Roman Empire! Protestant missionary effort has been associated with some of these Empires, and in the process seems itself to have grown not less divided but more so, not more magnanimous but narrower, and less adapted to current problems in its homelands.

During the years 1936-40, I met casually a few Muslims and was impressed with their confidence in their religion and its ability to stand up to all problems, old and new, social, intellectual, and scientific. I began to study Islam a little in 1942. I found that it is as I had always suspected; though distinct and definite. Islam is at the same time broad and magnanimous, a mighty tradition within which other traditions can survive and flourish; and which has always accepted Jesus as a Prophet and even allows him to be called "*Kalimat Allah*" or "*Ruh Allah*"—"The Word of God" or "The Spirit of God."^[1] Also, though Islam suffers divisions, those divisions are not like the divisions of Protestant Christianity. There is a unity in fundamentals and real brotherhood. So much was evident even from the outside.

In October 1943, I had the opportunity of meeting the Imam of the Mosque at Woking; three conversations with him made it clear to both of us that I should accept Islam. I did so on the occasion of the *Eid-al-Adha* festival on 8th December, 1943. I

[1] The actual phrase in the Qur'ân is "*ruhum minhu*" meaning 'a spirit from Him'. (*Surah An-Nisa*, 4:171). See also *Surah Anbiya*, 21:91—"min ruhina"—Editor.

know that this is the most important step I have ever taken. I do not pretend to a scholarly knowledge of Islam. I have approached it by what might be called a study of comparative religion, in which I shall remain interested. But first I must learn to live as a good Muslim, and be able to recite at least a few *Surah* of the Qur'an by heart. And I believe that the chief problems of the British Empire remain quite insoluble without the religion of Islam.^[1]

Thomas S. Tufton

B.A. (Cantab.)

My acceptance of Islam!

[Dr. Umar, born as the only son of the late Baron Christian Ehrenfels, the founder of the modern structural (Gestalt) Psychology in Austria, Rolf Freiherr von Ehrenfels felt already as a child a deep attraction towards the East in general and towards the world of Islam in particular. His sister, the Austrian poetess Imma von Bodmershof, described this phase in her *Contribution to Islamic Literature*, Lahore (1953). As a young man Ehrenfels travelled in the Balkan countries and Turkey, where he used to join prayers in Mosques, (though a Christian) and was hospitably accepted by Turkish, Albanian, Greek and Yugoslav Muslims. His interest in Islam increased by and by and Ehrenfels accepted Islam in 1927 and took on Umar as his Muslim name. He visited Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent in 1932 and took particular interest in the cultural-historical problems connected with the status and position of women. After his return to Austria, Baron Umar specialised in the study of anthropological problems

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1944, Vol. 32, No. 6, pp 194-196.

of Matrilineal Civilizations in India. The Oxford University Press published his first anthropological book (Usmania University Series, Hyderabad Deccan, December, 1941) on this subject.

When Austria was overrun by the Nazis in 1938, Baron Umar again went to India and worked in Hyderabad^[1] —*Editor*].

The essential features of Islam which impressed me most and attracted me to this great religion are as follows:-

- (1) The Islamic teaching of successive revelation implies in my opinion the following: The source from which all the great world religions sprang is one. The founders of these great paths, prepared for peace-seeking mankind, gave witness to one and the same basic Divine teaching.
- (2) Islam, in essence, means peace in submission to the Eternal Law.
- (3) Islam is, historically speaking, the last founded among the great world religions on this planet.
- (4) Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Islam and is thus the last in the sequence of great religious world Prophets.
- (5) The acceptance of Islam and the path of the Muslims by a member of an older religion thus means as little rejection of his former religion, as for instance the acceptance of Buddha's teachings meant the rejection of Hinduism to the Indian co-nationals of Buddha. It was only later that schools of thought within Hinduism rejected the Buddhist way as heretical. These differences of religions are man-made. The unity is Divine. The teachings of the Holy Qur'an stress this basic unity. To witness it, means acceptance of a spiritual act which is common to all men and women.

[1] *Islam, the First and Final Religion*, pp. 123,124.

(6) The spirit of human brotherhood under the all encompassing divine fatherhood is much stressed in Islam and not hampered by concepts of racialism or sectarianism, be it of linguistic, historic, traditionalistic, or even dogmatic nature.

(7) This concept of divine fatherly love, however, includes also the motherly aspect of Divine love, as the two principal epithets of God indicate: *Ar-Rahman—Ar-Rahim*, both being derived from the Arabic root *Rahm*. The symbolic meaning of this root equals Goethe's *Das Ewing-Weibliche Zieht uns hinan*, whilst its primary meaning is womb.

In this spirit the Prophet gave these unforgettable words to his followers:

“Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother.”

Dr. Umar Rolf Caron Ehrenfels

Professor of Anthropology

Austria

Why I became a Muslim?

Deep down in the human soul there lurks the consciousness of the fact that there does exist the Almighty God. It is more or less dependent upon the circumstances of education and up-bringing under which one is born that our definite religious views are shaped. It was exactly so in my case. My parents were strict Catholics and they brought me up a staunch Catholic, marking me out for the priesthood. But fate would have it otherwise and my footsteps took me to the country of Java, in the Far East, to observe with my own eyes how dearly and faithfully Muslims held their faith. This was an eye-opener to me; for I learnt that the Muslims, as dinned by the Christian priestcraft, into our ears, are anything but heathens, and Islam which they misrepresented so much is not a religion with hateful practices.

Being a lover of truth, I took up the cudgels for Islam some six years ago, to secure for it its rightful place against untrue and unjust suspicions. I had with this aim in view to call in the help of some distinguished and good-hearted friends for the purpose of building a mosque in Holland in the same way as in London, Berlin, and Paris. Gradually it dawned upon me that it was imperative that the fight for Islam should be maintained. In the meantime, I had learned about Islam from some of my true Muslim friends, and after thoroughly studying the Holy Qur'an I came to the knowledge that Islam had always been my religion.

The only difference which the present declaration makes is that I am now openly going over to Islam and in this I feel very happy. Now I realize that my place is among my Muslim brothers to glorify Allah for bringing salvation to mankind.

It does me immense pain to realize why I had not accepted Islam as my faith earlier. I close with the promise that my life from now onwards will be dedicated to the service of the best religion of the world—*Al-Islam*.^[1]

J.L. Ch. Van Beetem
(*Mohammad Ali*)

(Born 1879, served in the Army and Navy and retired as first Lieutenant in 1919)

Why I accepted Islam?

I will endeavour in this short article to outline briefly the circumstances which led to my finally embracing Islam, trusting that same may prove of some interest both to my Muslim and non-Muslim readers.

^[1] *Islamic Review*, September 1931, Vol. 19, No. 9, p. 304

I was brought up from early childhood in an atmosphere of religion, as it was intended that I should ultimately enter the priesthood, but God willed it otherwise, and instead I entered my present profession; therefore, at least, I cannot be accused of taking my consequent step without full knowledge of the facts.

My work and studies having created fresh interests in my life, I naturally found less time at my disposal to devote to religion than hitherto, and, consequently, as time passed finding myself free of the religious influences of my younger days, I began to reason for myself, and eventually I found that I was questioning even the most fundamental principles of a religion which I had until then accepted verbatim; but nevertheless I still continued to fulfill my obligations to God.

About this time came the Great War, and I was drafted with my Regiment on service to the Near East. During this period (some four years) I had the extreme good fortune to make several good friends in Cairo, and it was the result of discussions I had with these good people, who explained to me certain passages of the Holy Qur'an, that sowed the seeds in my mind of the doctrines of a religion which I was destined some years later to adopt.

Upon resuming my civil occupation, there followed a period in my life in which, owing to the renewal of my studies and my work, I found little time to devote to the serious study of religious matters; and when I ultimately did, I found that I was no longer able to reconcile myself to the teachings of the Christian Faith, and, as a result, I discontinued my attendance at Church, as I was convinced that any other course under the circumstances was hypocritical.

It was some time later that I recalled to my mind the earlier discussions that I had with my old Egyptian friends, so, in the hope of gaining enlightenment, I devoted a considerable amount of my spare time to a thorough study of an English translation of the Holy Qur'an, and as I read over and over again certain of the

words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him!) I could not help but see that here at last in Islam I had found the true faith for which I had been seeking so long. And the knowledge gave me a totally different outlook on life, as if, after groping endlessly about dark and obscure byways, I had at last come upon a bright and illuminated thoroughfare.

It was not long after this that I visited the Mosque at Woking and consulted Maulvi Abdul-Majid, to whom I would like to record my appreciation of his kind advice and assistance, and thereupon joined the Holy Brotherhood of Islam. "All praise to Allah!" And from that day, needless to say, I have felt a different being, having a purpose in life.

I will not attempt to discuss here the fundamental principles of Islam which I am content to leave in more able hands. There is a point, however, which to my mind deserves mention, as one who has closely followed the religious observances of both Muslims and Christians. That whilst an average Christian having attended Church Service on a Sunday, which is invariably carried through by a Clergyman and in which the worshipper often takes a rather inactive part, he or she considers their obligation to God fulfilled until the following Sunday. Whereas by comparison the Muslim prays regularly each day individually, either in a Mosque or in the privacy of his home, and even when Friday prayers are said in congregation this individuality is still retained, each Muslim praying independently to Allah without the need of any intermediary or elaborate ritual.

I would like to say that I feel confident, that if only people in this and other Western countries can be brought to appreciate the full meaning of Islam, and what it stands for, the ranks of Islam will be daily swelled, only unfortunately there is a vast amount of misapprehension in the minds of many Free Thinkers and others who still cling to their old creed simply because they

require the moral courage to abandon a faith, with the principles of which they are at variance, and to embrace Islam.

Not one of the least of these is the idea that Islam is peculiar to the Oriental races and not adapted for everyday life in Western countries. This is, of course, a wrong notion, but it nevertheless exists in the minds of the majority and requires contradiction in a practical form, and that is to publish for the benefit of the uninitiated the fact that members like myself have joined and are still joining the ranks of Islam and thus give added confidence to our potential brethren of tomorrow.

This and other facts require publication through other mediums than this organ, if we are to effectively spread the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters in Islam, we must awake from that sense of security into which we have allowed ourselves to relapse, come out into the open and bear the torch of Islam among the unenlightened ones throughout the world, and what better place to concentrate our first efforts than here in London, the heart of the British Empire, from whence the faith of Islam will spread throughout the West.

It is therefore essential, to my mind, for this reason alone, if no other, that a building, worthy of Islam, should be acquired and maintained in Central London, where all Muslims could meet and, what is more, by publicity non-Muslims should be attracted in numbers to listen to worthy propounders of the Holy Faith and also see the Faithful ones at prayer, thus giving confidence to those who have a wrong conception of Muslim prayers.

Without such an effort as this, numbers will be lost to Islam, as how otherwise are we to get in touch with those who are wavering in their beliefs and are awaiting enlightenment. For surely I am only one example of hundreds of thousands.

What is more, the prestige of Islam is to be borne in mind. The capital of the British Empire and the centre of the world without an edifice worthy of Islam? Unbelievable!⁽¹⁾

Walker H. Williams

⁽¹⁾ *Islamic Review*. November 1933, Vol.21, No. 11, pp. 365-368

Chapter Three

b) Women at the Threshold of Islam

Why I embraced Islam?

I was brought up in the religion of the Church of England, and hardly remember any time when Sunday was not English Sunday, a thing that is—or has become—almost an institution in this country. Also, it was a day when one was being constantly told not to do this thing, and not to do the other. One was severely reprimanded for “being naughty on Sunday,” as if it was worse to do wrong on a Sunday than any other day. In the morning, church was the first order of the day; and when I began to argue on certain points connected with the Christian doctrine, or to question its accuracy, not only was nobody able to answer any of my question, but I was told it was wrong to make inquiries. I was told God had written the Bible; but when I asked, had He written it with a pen, where was the original document, and had anyone seen Him do so, such questions raised pious horror in the mind of my governess. It was not only dull, but extremely irksome for me to have to follow a religion which from its very root beliefs was so entirely illogical and impossible. Not only did I wish to love the God I worshipped, but I was extremely interested in Him, and eager to know more about Him as He really was. I could never reconcile the idea of an Almighty or All-Merciful God allowing His Son such an ignominious and shameful death as a means to save the world—for the very fact of the crucifixion proved to me that such a God who, could do such a thing could be neither “Almighty” nor “All-Merciful.” If He were Almighty, there was no need for Him to require the assistance from anyone else, human or divine, and if He were All-Merciful, He could not willingly

allow a perfectly innocent person to suffer for the sins committed by other people who were guilty. Not only that, but I had only to look around me at the sins and wrongs going on in the world, to see that it had in no way been saved by the death of an innocent man; and on discussing the matter with people I found that half the people who professed to be Christians did not really believe all they were supposed to, but held to it, because it was so much easier not to change or to bother to thing for themselves. The Sunday afternoons were spent in my being obliged to learn the catechism or a hymn by heart. How much better would it have been had I been told some real and ennobling truth about my Creator, than to be made to repeat in a parrot-like fashion the rules of a doctrine I did not believe in. I was relieved that at all events I was not confirmed, for that seemed to me to be the culminating point of the whole thing. I hated the words "Body and blood of Christ," even if in the Protestant faith they were only meant allegorically and theoretically, and not as the "real body and blood of Christ" as in the Catholic Church. The idea of the sacraments worried me greatly, but I secretly determined, come what may, I would never be confirmed. Sunday evening we finished up with hymns, and to refuse to come and join in, and sing them, was considered most disobedient, only to be accepted with the alternative of going to bed if I couldn't behave like the rest. Thus Sunday was a long day that dragged wearily through, and it was such a strain—what with Sunday expressions, Sunday behaviour, Sunday occupations, hymn-singing and church—that it often ended in my behaving worse than on an ordinary weekday. The Bible I always heartily disliked—it gave me neither comfort, consolation, nor the smallest help whatever. When I grew up I found it such a mass of contradictions, extraordinary fables and impossibilities, that one felt disgusted and saddened instead of being helped and comforted. Those who were supposed to be in a position to interpret it—clergymen, for instance—failed entirely when I questioned them

concerning it. What, therefore, could be the use of a book that was so wrapt up in fable and fancy that no one could explain it? The Bible is the result of a collaboration of dozens of different authors. Science and geology prove that the Beginning, as described in Genesis, is an utter impossibility. We have also proof that King David never wrote the Psalms, and that various other parts of the Bible attributed to different people were not written by them. Thus then, since so many people have had the task of inventing the Bible, who is to be believed? The Holy Book of Islam—the Qur'an—on the contrary, has come to us through only one man, namely, the holy Prophet Muhammad. It has never been altered, twisted, paraphrased and transcribed as the Bible, but has remained true to its original copy. The Qur'an appealed to me. The doctrine of Islam appealed to me. These, then, are some of the reasons why I have embraced Islam, a religion that is comforting, uplifting, and sustaining, and why I have discarded one that has never, from the first word I learnt of it, ever inspired, encouraged, or uplifted me at all.^[1]

Ameena Annie Spieget

An English Lady

^[1] *Islamic Review*. June 1991, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp. 204-206.

Why I embraced Islam?

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

I have been asked why I embraced Islam? Here are some of my reasons. The first is that I do not believe the Christians of today are following the true teachings of Jesus Christ who, I am convinced, taught the very same thing as was taught by Moses and by Abraham, and the other Messengers of God, and that is Islam, which means submission to the Will of God, and universal brotherhood, irrespective of colour or nationality. There I have always been doubtful and confused about the idea of God coming on Earth as Man for our salvation. Surely it will be more seemly for us to strive to uplift ourselves to Him by effort and prayer, and *this* for our salvation. Again, if Jesus were Almighty God, why did he always speak of my Father in Heaven and say: "Thy Will not mine be done?" Again and again Jesus told his followers that without the Will of the Father, he could do nothing. He prayed to God all night in the garden of Gethsemane for strength and courage, and later, he cried "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and then it is said that he "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." How could Jesus do these things and at the same time be God Almighty? It does not make sense. To my mind, God is Supreme, Universal, and very Loving. Jesus is one of His messengers. In Islam, Allah is the Universal God, Merciful and Compassionate, and Jesus is one of His Prophets sent to guide His creatures in the right way as Moses did, and to teach the same as Abraham taught (peace be on their names).

Muhammad (peace and blessings on him) was sent to teach the very same Laws of God for man's benefit, and I believe that all the prophets, including Jesus, came to teach Islam, which is submission to the Will of God; and that a man becomes a truer Christian or Jew by way of Islam, than by any way advocated by the Christian or Jewish people today. For *we* are in direct line

with the teachings of Abraham while *they* have gone astray through misunderstanding. My point of view now, as a Muslima, is that I can esteem all the Prophets and say "Peace be on them." For as Muhammad (peace be on him) did, so did they also teach submission to the Will of One Eternal Universal God, tolerance, peacefulness, as opposed to aggression, steadfastness in one's faith in Allah Who alone knows what is for our good, the love of children and endurance through suffering for the Truth. It is indifference to, and laxity in faith that have made discord between nation and nation. People have become intolerant one to the other merely because they do not follow closely the teachings of their prophets. In Islam there is tolerance and an acknowledgment of universal brotherhood. So, I may say, that I have accepted Islam because it fits in so well with my own ideas about Allah and His bountiful plan. It is the only Faith I really can understand. Indeed, such is its simplicity and beauty that even a little child can understand it.

Rabbana wa lakal-hamd.^[1]

Amina Le Fleming

Islam my choice

One day, in the year 1928, my son with tears in his eyes said: 'I do not want to remain a Christian any longer; I want to be a Muslim; and you, too, my mother, should join this new faith with me.' That was the first time I felt that I had to link myself with Islam. Years passed before I came in contact with the Imam of the Berlin Mosque, who introduced me to Islam. I came to recognize the Islam was the true religion for me. Belief in the Trinity of the Christian faith was impossible for me even at my young age of twenty. After studying Islam I also rejected

^[1] *Islamic Review*. October 1935, Vol. 23, No. 10, pp. 361, 362.

confession, the holiness and recognition of the supreme power of the Pope, baptism, etc., and thus I became a Muslim.

My ancestors were all sincere believers and pious persons. I was brought up in a convent and hence I inherited religious attitude towards life. This demanded that I should associate myself with one religious system or the other. I was indeed very fortunate and comforted as I decided to join the religion of Islam.

Today I am a very happy grandmother, because I can claim that even my grandchild is a born Muslim.

“God guides whom He pleases to the right path.”^[1]

Mrs. Amina Mosler
Germany

Why I embraced Islam?

Like many other American converts, I came to Islam from a Christian background, and in fact, there are many similarities between the two religions. Both religions trace their roots to Ibrahim, both are from the Middle East, and both met great strife in their infancy. And at the hearts of both Christianity and Islam are two men and the messages those men brought.

As a Christian, I was taught that Jesus was the son of God. The message that he brought, the teachings of Jesus, was overshadowed by this. In short, the messenger, became more important than the message.

This is not the case in Islam. The Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), received the Word of Allah, and became the instrument of God's revelations, but does not overshadow the message. The Prophet's life is exemplary and an example to

^[1] *The Muslim World League Journal*. March 1974, p. 48.

all of us as Muslims in the ways that the Prophet applied the message to his life. His way of living and his approach to specific situations provide Muslims with examples and with a model on which to base their actions. This is so that we can better serve Allah, not as an end in itself.

For example, I became Muslim for many reasons; chief among these is the fundamental truth of the Qur'an. When I first read the Qur'an in college, I was struck by its beauty and its completeness. Islam is a way of life. And the prime example of an Islamic life is the life of Prophet Muhammad. As I learned about Islam, so also I learned about Prophet Muhammad.

When I declared *Shahadah* almost four years ago, it was because I recognized that Islam is the religion of Allah and that there is no more perfect example of that religion than Prophet Muhammad. I knew that my lifestyle would change and that there would be difficulties among my friends and family. How greatly I underestimated what lay ahead!

The majority of the Muslims in this country are not American. Many have had the good fortune to live in societies which, if not totally Islamic, are at least familiar with the religion. As we are all too aware, this is not the case in America.

When I became Muslim, I did not expect to have to be an instant expert on my religion. But rarely a day passes that I am not pressed on some aspect of the religion by a non-Muslim. I did not expect to be harassed, but I am regularly accosted by Christian fanatics who, among other things, condemn me to hell. I did not expect to meet prejudice, yet I am often treated rudely and with bias by small-minded individuals who do not see past the *Hijab*.

In short, accepting Islam has much greater ramifications for the individual than changing church membership from Methodist to Presbyterian.

There are some days when it is easy to be Muslim. Those days when I come to the *Masjid* and I am surrounded by other Muslims remind me that I am not the only one facing these difficulties. In this environment, at the *Masjid*, it is easy to forget the tribulations of everyday life.

But some days it is not so easy, and I pray to Allah for strength and patience. I didn't expect to be drilled by non-Muslims about not only the pillars but the nuances of Islam. I get tired of explaining why I wear *Hijab*, why I don't drink, or why I don't choose to have the ham on rye lunch special. I remember the butterflies that rose in my stomach when my boss (a Mormon) asked me what church I attended. The two-hour conversation that followed covered the basics of Islam as well as issues that I wasn't prepared for.

At the end of days like this, I sometimes indulge in bouts of self-pity. And when I do, I invariably end up thinking about the Prophet and the tribulations which he and the *Sahaba* went through during the early years of Islam. The courage that he showed, the patience and the wisdom which Allah imparted to Prophet Muhammad give me solace.

While America is far from being an Islamic country, there is a growing number of Muslims here. And the battles which we as Muslims in America are called upon to fight are not the battles of war, but rather the battles of ignorance and misunderstanding. Prophet Muhammad had the task of bringing the Word of God to people who literally violently opposed it. And he did not have the benefit of tradition as we do. Above all else, he did not have anyone from whom he could draw examples. But we do.

When Allah gave the Qur'an to the world, he did so through a man whose life is above reproach. No matter what trials Muslims face today, whether in America or some other country, the trials which Prophet Muhammad faced were greater. No matter how hopeless we feel at times, how much more hopeless

the situation must have appeared to others during the Prophet Muhammad's time.

So Prophet Muhammad provides an example for us. But when I look at the life of Prophet Muhammad, I am reminded of the greatness of Allah for another reason. It is by His leave that we have the example of Prophet Muhammad. It is by His grace that this exemplary Muslim lived. We are faced with many difficulties, but we do not face them alone. We are all empowered by Allah to do His will. The example, the proof, if you will, of this is the life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) himself.^[1]

Aisha Dickerson

Why I became a Muslim?

I had previously studied and tried different religions and did not know where I stood. I felt like a piece of thistledown being blown, about in the air, not knowing whither I was going. How could all these religions be true? I felt that one of them must be right, but which one? None of them really seemed what I was looking for until I learned about Islam and then I know contentment... Like a thunderbolt from the blue came the truth of God's great message sent to us through the prophets from time to time until the last one Muhammad (*Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) and then there was to be no more, and there has been no more...

Man has polluted these good works of God and in so doing has committed sin and we who were brought up to believe it as the true message have been ignorant of the fact; but when Islam's faith with its true facts dawned upon us we look back and feel sorry that we had been taught wrongly with man-made religion

^[1] Courtesy: *The Orange Crescent*; reproduced from *Yaqeen International*.
22 February, 1986; Vol. 34, No. 20, pp. 236,237.

to suit their own demands. Surely the wrath of God shall come upon such ... I find that the Islamic religion is so very befitting to all our natural surroundings, such as night and day, sun and moon, the wind and rain and millions of signs for those who can see but some of us are so blind of self vanity, and the desire of money and other selfish needs that we are not aware of those signs, but a day will come when all shall see; but also, too late.^[1]

(By the First Australian lady to embrace Islam publicly in 1930)

Why I embraced Islam? From Christianity to Islam

[An interview with the learned Miss Ayesha Bridget Honey]

Question: When did you embrace Islam and what was your age at that time?

Answer: Three-and-a-half years back Allah illuminated me with the light of Islam. At that time I was 21 years old.

Question: Please tell us how you came to embrace Islam?

Answer: The family in which I was born and grew up was, from the religious point of view, no different from the generality of British homes. My mother is a Christian but she doesn't practise religious worship and rituals. My father however did not believe in any religion. In my childhood I studied at a religious school and learned the subjects which are taught in English Church schools. Our usual conversation was never even remotely concerned with religion. I don't remember any day of my childhood when I heard the name of God in my home.

[1] Courtesy: *Muslim Voice*, Fiji. Aug-Sept, 1982.

Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*. April 7, 1983, Vol. 31, No. 23, p. 266.

While studying at the Church school I was not satisfied with some of the basic beliefs of Christianity especially the concept of Trinity and the belief in Atonement that God or Jesus had ransomed the people and by accepting the cross had atoned for all their sins. I heard many discussions and arguments about these beliefs but whatever I heard seemed to me only one side of the reality while I wanted to know fully. My school was a Christian school but I left it as an unbeliever.

I was infatuated with philosophy and my desire to know the truth was intense. When at the age of 15, I read the book Taoteh Ching which is a collection of early writings about Chinese philosophy of Tao, I was influenced by its thought. Then when I found some introductory information about Buddhism I decided to go into the depths of both these philosophical beliefs. I decided to learn Chinese and to go to China myself but this was no easy task for a 15 years old girl with no money or means. So when I was 17 years old I went to Canada where, worked, for 2 years. I collected enough money to continue my education. My programme was to get the secondary school degree so that I could get admission in a university to learn the Chinese language.

In Canada I came to know Hindu philosophy and read the holy books of Hindus. The three beliefs, that is: Taoteh, Buddhism and Hinduism which I knew by now possessed beauty, profundity and exaltation but none of them could satisfy my mind or my feelings. In this vast universe and in daily life where people live together these faiths totally failed to reach any stability or balance. They completely neglect some one aspect. The founder of the Tao philosophy wandered in remote corners of the world as a mystic and an ascetic. In search of truth Buddha left his wife and family. The books of the Hindu are basically ethical but are all human ideas of collective life in society only baseless hallucination? This question bewildered me. I could not believe in any of these faiths. After all what could I believe in? What is the purpose of life? It is only a

chance, an accident as some people say? The tension and restlessness grew and I could not sleep nights.

In this way my success in the Secondary Examination and admission in London University to learn Chinese became meaningless for me. It is true that I fulfilled my desire to learn Chinese but the truth I had been searching for seemed still far away.

After joining the university I got the chance to be introduced to Muslims. Before that I had neither read nor heard anything about Islam. In fact like other people in the West I also harboured prejudices and misunderstandings about it. But here in the university, Muslim students explained their basic beliefs to me calmly and in a very nice manner. They answered all my objections and gave me some books to read. In the beginning I just skipped over the pages of these books when I had nothing to do. I only considered them a source of amusement and derision. But when I actually read parts of these books, they slowly reduced my suspicions about Islam.

Then I started reading those books carefully. Their style of presentation and the freshness of explanation and commentary surprised me. I was extremely impressed by the logic and argument with which their concepts of the Creator and the created and life after death were put forward.

After that these Muslim students gave me an English translation of the Qur'an. However hard I try I cannot fully estimate the impression the Qur'an left on my heart. Before I finished the third *Surah* I had prostrated myself before the Creator of the universe. This was my first *Salat (Namaz)* and since that time by the grace of Allah I am a Muslim. I accepted Islam hardly three months after I came to know about it. So I did not know anything more than basic concepts. After that started a lengthy process of question which I asked my Muslim brothers and

argued with them over the details and sections of these questions.

I am often asked about the main reasons which made me accept Islam. It is difficult for me to give satisfactory answer to this because the example of Islam—as a European Muslim has put it—is like that of a complete and perfect geometrical pattern whose every part completes its other parts and its real beauty lies in the harmony and cohesion of these parts and it is this characteristic of Islam which has a profound influence on human beings. Seen from a distance Islam's deep insight into the generality of things, motives, deeds, its explanations about the Muslim government will amaze you and if you look at its details you find it an incomparably guide for social life based as it is on straightforward and true ethical values. A Muslim takes the Name of Allah whenever he does anything. And when he remembers Allah he examines his own self and in this he tries to reach a high standard. In this way the gulf between daily life of the world and the demands of religion is bridged and both sides become proportionate, evenly balanced and essential for each other.

Question: After you accepted Islam what was the reaction of your family and your friends?

Answer: My parents did not pay much attention to my conversion to Islam. First they thought this was only a hobby-horse of mine, somewhat liked my desire to learn Chinese. Soon the enthusiasm would subside and as time passed the incident would be forgotten. But when time passed and proved them to be wrong and my faith fructified to the extent that it was not limited to my thinking but extended itself to my habits and influenced and changed my way of life, then they started expressing their regrets. I caused them annoyance by abstaining from wine and pork. They disliked seeing me enveloped my head covering (*Dopatta*) and everywhere keeping it on my head.

Actually I am convinced they were more concerned about what other people would say. They were not very concerned about faith and belief. However, my English friends were different. They had the ability to argue and debate and they were ready to accept anything proved rationally. When I discussed Islamic thought and its principles of social life they admitted its wisdom.

I remember once there was an argument with some friends about polygamy and the limits Islam has imposed on it. I compared it with the principles put forward by Western civilisation and they all agreed that polygamy limited by Islamic regulations is the best solution for married life.

Question: Did you face any difficulty or embarrassment after you accepted Islam?

Answer: People who have little ability to think are usually full of bigotry against Islam. They often make fun of Muslims. Even if they do not make fun of Muslims in front of them they deride them behind their backs. On the other hand they never tangle with the irreligious and the unbelievers. They in fact respect them for their so called "free thought" but Islam and Muslims irritate them. In spite of this I did not meet with any difficulties worth mentioning. The reason for this was that I was a student of the University's Oriental and African Studies Institute and the people I met knew something of religions and beliefs. However I am aware of what many other Muslims have to endure.

Question: After accepting Islam to what extent did you acquire knowledge?

Answer: My study of Islam is limited to the books which reached me. I also learned a lot by questioning Muslim scholars, I also gained a lot by arguing with Muslims of various areas. Last year I learned about Islamic thought and Western philosophy from a Sudanese student. This student held a meeting every week in which 10 persons used to be present. Our

method in this meeting was that we read important English translations of the Qur'an and compared with the original Arabic Qur'an to determine the nearest possible meaning of each verse. Then in light of various commentaries, especially Tabari's Tafsir we discussed the verse according to our own understanding. I am sorry to say that after the departure of our Sudanese brother there is no one in London who has such knowledge or the enthusiasm to carry on the work with the same constancy.

Question: Do you think Islam can influence modern civilisation in any way? Please tell us in which way?

Answer: Today the Western world is living in darkness. There is not even the slightest light of hope to show the way for the deliverance of the soul and the self. Any person who is aware of the actual state of European societies can see this universal restlessness and worry which is hidden behind the false glare of progress and material excellence. Now people are searching for a way out of their difficulties but they can see no way out. Their search is fruitless. There is only one choice before them and that is to go on advancing towards the hell of destruction and disaster. The beautiful harmony between the demands of the body and the needs of the soul which Islam presents has strong attraction for the West today. Islam can show modern civilisation the way which leads to the real success and salvation, it could give Western man understand of the real purpose of life and persuade him to struggle for the pleasure of Allah. This would also ensure his success hereafter. May Allah grant us success in this life and the next.

Question: In your opinion what is the method of propagating and spreading Islam?

Answer: Before worrying about spreading Islam it is necessary that in our life and needs we should attain the standard which this faith demands of us.

It is thought that if we become missionaries of Islam then we need not worry about anything else. It is necessary for us to know Islam fully and only then to become its missionaries so that we may be able to answer all questions and objects. No doubt the presence of certain books about Islam is useful in spreading its invitation. If we give a book to a non-Muslim he pays it more attention than he gives to debate or argument. But unfortunately there are very few good books on Islam in English. I would again stress the importance of a living example. Hence it is essential for us that we make ourselves the exemplary human beings the Qur'an wants us to be.

Question: What are the special difficulties of British Muslims?

Answer: Where entire British families become Muslim they achieve the Islamic social life and live in peace. But when an unmarried boy or girl or a married man or woman singly accepts Islam they have to face difficulties. They have a constant feeling that British society and its general atmosphere is not their own. As they are not in an Islamic society they face hardships in saying their prayers and keeping fasts in time. The Islamic families are fulfilling their responsibilities in this respect. We also need teachers who should be examples of Islamic culture and should be able to help new Muslims in understanding the Qur'an. Many new Muslims want to understand the Qur'an properly but they have no means of doing this. I feel sorry while saying this that the Islamic Cultural Centre in London is not doing anything about this. This work depends only on students who do not have much time owing to their studies.

It is also necessary to mention the youths adoration of the West's false nuggets. They have been deceived by its blinding glare and are unaware of its artificiality. Here I would also like to express my liking for the strong family bonds and the clean social life. If we compare it with the West's social life, it is

comparatively at ethical heights. If there were Islamic social life in the real sense how excellent it would be!

O Allah make us true Muslims according to the demands of Islam.^[1]

Ayesha Bridget Honey^[2]

England

An interview with Ayesha Kim

[The following is our English rendering of the story of Ayesha Kim, the Korean Muslim lady, that appeared in the Urdu daily *Jasarat* which picked it from the Arabic weekly *Al-Muslimoon*. Our thanks are due to both for this story of the inspiring spiritual journey of Ayesha Kim and her husband —*Editor*].

Ayesha Kim belongs to Korea. She is a steadfast and resolute lady, soft at heart and strong of will. She had been struggling in search of Truth when the golden rays of Islam touched her heart. Ever since she has moved farther and farther on the road to Islam. Today she is known by her Islamic name Ayesha. She has become a lighthouse of faith for the ladies of Korea, and in particular for the girl students of that country. She guides them towards the path of Truth. Islam first came to her husband, Imam Mahdevoon, who is now the head of the Union of Muslim in South Korea. Inwardly, however, Ayesha was ahead of him in this matter. They both have started together to traverse the path of Truth.

Ayesha was able to discover truth in the thick of the devastating war that was raging when she chose Islam for her religion. She adopted the Islamic name Ayesha after the name of the holy

[1] Reproduced from *Islam, the First and Final Religion*, pp. 149-156.

[2] Miss Ayesha is an English revert to Islam. Her interview was originally published in the journal *Hadarat-al-Islam*.

wife of the Prophet (*Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*). She thought that it would be a source of blessing for her. She says:

“In the face of ever expanding ideological onslaught of the Missionaries in Korea, it was in Islam that I found the truth of assured certainty.”

Her touch with Islam

Ayesha who has since performed *Hajj* and possesses a deep passion for Islamic faith, did not happen to come near to Islam for fifty years. She knew nothing about Islam and its precepts, until the carriage of time brought her to old age. She lived in South Korea, and the call of Islam had not as yet knocked at the door of that country. At last when the good luck to gain knowledge of the magnetic teachings of Islam came to her, the Islamic faith took possession of her heart. She entirely turned into a flowing stream of bounty and many people of Seoul accepted Islam at her hand.

“The attachment of these Korean newcomers with Islam goes so plain,” she said, “that when Faith knocks at the door of human hearts, it is not deterred by the advanced age of the people. The ship of Islam is capable of taking the load of every person who cares to cast at it a longing look. It feeds such a person’s heart on guidance and the spirit of the true faith and, finally, leads him to the valley of salvation. The light of faith illumines the heart and fills it with zest.”

Towards Islam

Since 1955, Ayesha has been busy in the preaching of Islam and inviting non-Muslims to its fold. During this period that exceeds one quarter of century, she had not confined herself to Seoul but travelled through the whole of Korea for the sake of Islam.

Her early journey towards Islam, or that of her husband, was not at all an easy matter. Out of love for them, people made efforts to halt them at every step. Members of the family deprived them

of their possessions. Her husband was charged with insanity and life was made extremely miserable for them. Albeit, she says that "the persons who find the path of truth are neither daunted nor do they falter on account of troubles, difficulties, temptations, or greed."

Ayesha was interviewed for one-and-a-half hour in the Korean Islamic Cultural Centre in Jeddah. She was transiting there together with Korean girl students on their way back from Makkah after performing 'Umrah. When she was asked about her early involvement with Islam, she first kept quiet and closed her eyes, as if she was trying to look for something hidden in the deep recesses of her heart. She then became alert and after heaving a deep breath, said: "The story of my attachment with Islam is prompting me to look back to those early days which I passed in Korea. I belonged to an orthodox family of staunch followers of an ancient Chinese religion. Korea was run down by war. I was then married to Imam Mahdevoon and we both, the husband and wife, were still away from Islam. I had, however, always an inner feeling that we were away from the reality."

"My husband was educated in Literature in Japanese Universities", she continued. "In his student days, he came across a book by some Japanese writer that contained information about Islam. Both of us started feeling that it was our heart's desire that was drawing us towards the real security. We did not derive satisfaction in this behalf from Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, etc."

Visit to China

"In 1939, due to escalation of the World War, my husband and I moved to China. In the course of a talk, a Chinese gentleman asked us whether we knew something about Islam. We answered in the negative. That man took us to a Mosque where we met with the worshippers and others. But my husband felt shaky. For

his inner satisfaction, he wanted to have some more information. The time at our disposal was not long enough, as in the meantime Korea liberated herself from Japan. Thus, in 1945, we had to return to Korea.

The desire for Truth intensifies

“On reaching Korea,” continued Ayesha, “I became all the more restless in my heart pining to know the Truth. My inner voice was prompting me that there was one and only way to reach the Truth; and it was different from all those religions that I had till then come to know about.

“At that time the Korean war burst which compelled us again to be on the move, but this time the journey was within the country. We moved from the South of Korea towards its western seaside up to the port of Pusan. As soon as we came to an end, I told my husband that Faith was the only fortress to save ourselves as well as the society.

“We had a friend called Omar Kim,” she said, “He is now dead. He had embraced Islam publicly. He spoke to us when the war was still going on, urging us for the preaching and propagation of Islam and to invite people to accept it. Our mind was influenced by Omar too. Besides, as a result of war, the country was breaking up, not only economically but also morally. False belief and superstitions were at the root of this turmoil. Such were the pitiable conditions then prevailing.”

When asked as to what did she think of the worries of her husband before his acceptance of Islam, she smiled and said: “When my husband consulted me in this regard, I asked him whether it had not dawned on him already that Islam is the only way to guidance? But he was victim of some unknown fear and apprehension. He was worried as to how shall we two live together thereafter. I told him that when he would accept Islam, God-willing, he shall find me going with him.”

“These words came in very firm tone out of the very depth of my heart. My husband was, therefore, taken by surprise, realising that I was ahead of him in accepting the Truth.”

“Our friend Omar and my husband got introduced to several members of the Turkish troops that were then posted in Korea. Every day they would go to meet them some 20 kilometres from Seoul. At long last, the day came when our painful plodding reached its welcome climax. It was on a Friday in the summer of 1955. My husband, in the presence of the Turkish Imam Abdur-Rahman, accepted Islam at the hands of Zuber Kochi and offered Friday prayer. Both these gentlemen belonged to the Turkish troops.”

After the Faith

“When my husband returned after offering Friday prayer, he looked content and happy. I said to him, ‘Congratulations!’ Smiling, he provocatively inquired what did I think about my own self? I said: All praise be to Allah, I bear witness that there is none to be worshipped except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad, upon him be Allah’s blessings and peace, is His Servant and His Messenger.”

“That day I had uttered this auspicious *Kalimah*, but Allah is the witness that this Truth had taken possession of my heart on the very day we came back from China, for Islam is the religion of love, good dealings, kindness and forgiveness.”

Ayesha was turning back quickly pages of her life story in a state of ecstasy. She was asked, out of mere inquisitiveness, “What was your name at that time?”

She replied, “I was then called Chou Yoong Kim.” And quickly added, “To feel nearness of the Holy Prophet’s wife Hazrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her), and thereby to receive blessings, I started the journey of my new life with Ayesha as my Islamic name.”

About children

After this, she directed attention towards her children. She said, "I have only two daughters. I was apprehending difficulty about them, but I realised that after all we, too, had remained away from Islam for long. Nature itself guides. My elder daughter was then 25 years old. She said, 'My heart? It beats in unison with yours, but for the time being I would rather keep quiet until you procure maximum possible information about Islam.' After some time, she too accepted Islam. Her name was changed from Yoong to Jamila. She was married to a Korean Muslim. My younger daughter accepted Islam at the age of 20. She too was married to a Korean Muslim. She lives in Korea near us.

The days of torture

"The day my husband returned from the Mosque as a Muslim, it was for us the beginning of a long period of torture. Members of his family had deep-rooted prejudices and they proved very staunch opponents of Islam. They severed all relations with us. They dubbed my husband as an insane person and kept him deprived of all his assets for ten long years. During these trying days, we shared each other's hardships. We remained engrossed in the teaching of Islam which went to deepen our attachment with it."

"As for my own family, I have entrusted the whole matter to Allah. May He grant me success in bringing them into the fold of Islam. Despite my meagre means, I have maintained these relations according to Islamic principles.

Learning of *Qur'ân Majeed*

"In the very first instance, I learned Qur'anic *Surah Fatihah*. This *Surah* made me realise how great Islam is as a religion and how distinguished are the ways to act upon. All the religions prevalent in Korea and the cults spread by missionaries cannot be a match for Islam."

Da'wah and Tableegh

“I have induced many Korean women to accept Islam. I have made them understand how Islam protects the mutual rights of married couples, and how sound is the foundation it provides for family life. All praise be to Allah, I have succeeded in guiding a large number of women to the path of Truth. We arrange get-together for ladies newly converted to Islam.

“I myself can speak Arabic with great difficulty, because I began late to learn it. To learn Arabic is a difficult question for newly converted Muslim ladies. To overcome this difficulty, we are trying to establish a Department of Arabic in the Islamic Cultural Centre of Korea.”

“Another difficulty is that newly converted Muslim girls have to live in a society in which the majority religion has the upper hand. For this reason, in order to keep up the spirit of these girls, it is essential to organise their effective defence. This defence can come only through Muslim educational institutions.”

“For the beginning and as of now, Muslim women in Korea are organised in Seoul only. Welfare meetings are held by them to chalk out programmes for providing assistance to the poor. We have many instances of this. Several newly-wed Muslim couples have dedicated themselves to take the message of Islam to people at large.”

Hope for the Future

When Korea is the topic of the talk, Ayesha Kim narrates with fervour the stories of acceptance of Islam by Korean women, both urban and rural.

When asked about her last wish in her advanced age, she said, “All praise be to Allah! My husband, my children and myself, all have accepted Islam. We have performed *Hajj* and *'Umrah* several times. My first pilgrimage tour took place in 1978 when I also took the opportunity to try to understand how life goes on

in the Muslim community. Now that I am returning from Saudi Arabia to Korea, I am leaving my heart behind. There is an abiding desire to pay never ending visits to the City of the Holy Prophet, upon him be Allah's blessings and peace."

At the end of the interview, good wishes were extended to her for all success in her noble mission, and it was concluded on the Qur'anic verse:

"If Allah helps you, none can overcome you..." (*Surah Al-Imrân*, 3:160).^[1]

Ayesha Kim

Why I embraced Islam?

First and foremost I would say it was because fundamentally I had always been a Muslim without being aware of it.

Very early in my life I had lost faith in Christianity for many reasons, the major one being that whenever I questioned any Christian whether it was a person belonging to the so-called Holy Orders or a layman, regarding any point that puzzled me in regard to the Church teachings, I invariably received the monotonous answer: 'You must not question the teachings of the Church; you must have faith.' I did not have the courage in those days to say: 'I cannot have faith in something that I do not understand', and, from my experience, neither do most of the people who call themselves Christians. What did I do was to leave the Church (Roman Catholic) and its teaching and to place my faith in the one true God in Whom it was much easier to believe, than in the three gods of the Church. By contrast with the mysteries and miracles of the Christian teaching, life took on a new and wider meaning, no longer cramped with dogma and

^[1] *Yaqeen International*, 7th July, 1984, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 51-54.

ritual. Everywhere I looked I could see God's work. And although, in common with greater minds than my own, I could not understand the miracles that happened before my eyes, I could stand and marvel at the wonder of it all—the trees, flowers, birds and animals. Even a new born baby became a beautiful miracle, not the same thing that the Church had taught me to believe at all. I remembered how, when a child, I gazed at new-born babies and thought, "It's all covered in black sin." I no longer believed in ugliness; everything became beautiful.

Then one day my daughter brought home a book about Islam. We became so interested in it that we followed it up with many other books on Islam. We soon realized that this was really what we believed. During the time I had believed in Christianity, I had been led to believe that Islam was only something to joke about. Thus, all that I then read, was a revelation to me. After a while, I looked up some Muslims and questioned them on some of the points that were not quite clear to me. Here again there was yet another revelation. My questions were all answered promptly and concisely, so different from the frustration I had experienced when questioning Christianity. After much reading and studying of the religion of Islam both my daughter and myself decided to become Muslims, taking names of Rashida and Mahmuda respectively.

If I were asked what impressed me most in the religion of Islam, I would probably say the prayers, because prayers in Christianity are used wholly in begging God (through Jesus Christ) to grant worldly favours, whereas in Islam they are used to give praise and thanks to Almighty God for all His blessings since He knows what is necessary for our welfare and grants us what we need without our asking for it.^[1]

Mrs. Cecilia Mahmuda Cannoly
(Australia)

^[1] *Islam, the First and the Final Religion*, pp. 141-142.

Why I embraced Islam?

Shortly after I was born in 1934 it became a "fashion" in Germany to quit membership of the Church—Catholic or Protestant—and become "gottgläubig" which means believing in God but actually signifies rather the contrary. In fact when I was about seven years old, an elder girl told me that there was no God at all and as she seemed to me quite an authentic person and I had just learned that also Santa Claus is only an invention for children, turned all my interest towards this world. Yet the world at that time was far from being easily understandable for young people. There were bombs day after day, there was father who could come only now and then for just one day and mother who knitted gloves and socks for "our poor soldiers," there was a big house in the neighbourhood which was turned into a hospital for the wounded. When that was over, there were strange people who took away our house and American war-films started coming in which melted my heart. I was unable to judge who was right and who was wrong and everything looked cruel and senseless to me—there were a thousand whys to which nobody could give a satisfactory answer. I started to be on the outlook for God yet hard though I tried I could neither find Him in Catholicism nor Protestantism nor with Jehova's Witnesses. The road nearer to God in these religions was barred for me through the fact that all of them had doctrines in which to believe I found impossible and injunctions to follow which strictly seemed to me impracticable. And how could I accept a faith in which I knew from the very outset that I would be tortured by self-accusation for my own imperfection?

It is still a miracle for me that of all girls, I was the one to meet a young European who had already embraced Islam seven years before. The very first time we met I happened to enquire about his religion and when I learned that it was Islam I asked him to tell me more about it. I was a great sceptic at that time due to the disappointments I had had with other religions, yet when he

explained to me the meaning of the word Muslim i.e., one who out of free will surrenders himself to God's Commandments, something started waking up within me. Then he went on to explain to me that all men, animals, plants and everything else in this universe is already Muslim compulsorily because they would destroy themselves if they would not follow God's laws in matters such as eating, drinking, procreation and so on. Man alone, so he said, is in a position to accept Islam also spiritually, apart from the material sphere where he practically does not have a free choice but has to follow his inborn urges as animals and plants.

It was the wonderful logic, the pure commonsense in all Islamic teachings which attracted me so much, in the first few fundamental doctrines about which I learned as much as in the books I read in the following years small though the stock of unbiased Islamic literature in German language is. Apart from the help of the young Muslim he now is my husband—who never got tired of explaining things to me and answering all my questions. Muhammad Asad's book "*The Road to Mecca*" made me understand the deep meaning behind all Islamic Injunctions and thus helped me most while I was on my way to become a Muslima.^[1]

Fatima Heeren
West Germany

How I entered Islam?

Madame Fatima Mik Davidson is the Minister of State for Social Development and Local Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. In an interview given by her to the renowned Arabic Magazine *Menbar-al-Islam* of Cairo, Madame Fatima Mik Davidson (formerly Mrs. Model Donafamik

^[1] *Islam, the First and the Final Religion*, pp. 147-149

Davidson) talked about the beginning of her encounter with Islam and how she ultimately turned Muslim. She said:

“I totally deny the idea that I accepted Islam in 1975 by renouncing Christianity. Really I am quite unable to understand and explain what the matter was with me. Let me take you back to the 9th March, 1950, the day that was fixed for me to enter Christian Monastery. When I woke up in the morning of that day, I felt that the voice — *الله اكبر الله اكبر* (*Allahu-Akbar, Allahu-Akbar*) was ringing in my ears and it was thrilling my entire inner self. Lo! I had come back to Islam.

“I did not quite know what it was, but the monastery I refused to enter. After that I passed many years, seeking Allah’s guidance, until at last I was able to come across a copy of the translation of the Holy Qur’an. Then I readily put faith in it. I happened to meet a Muslim scholar, Maulana Siddiq from Pakistan and an Indian scholar Shaikh Ansari. I had detailed talks with them about nature and what I felt about it in my heart, so much so that these great scholars exclaimed to me: Thank Allah you are a Muslim! You are now a Muslim lady. Read what you like, enter the Mosques and pray. We are prepared to welcome you, whenever you feel disposed to learn anything”.

Imân is Bliss

“I felt happy. Ever since that day I have been feeling that my heart is overflowing with the bliss of *Iman* (Faith) and with love and high esteem for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*). Although the date of my formally embracing Islam is sometime in the year 1975, I have been a Muslim for the last 33 years, ever since the day I heard the great mysterious voice and I refused to enter the monastery. My heart proclaimed: *الله اكبر* (*Allahu Akbar: God is the Greatest*).

“I was the first coloured girl to enter the Mosque. This encouraged many Muslim girls to enter Mosques for prayer, particularly the Mosque of the Anjuman Jami’ Sanatal which was founded by the

great scholar Dr. Shaikh Ansari in the city of Francis in Trinidad. Its present Chairman is Al-Hajj Shafiq Muhammad.

“Prior to this the residents over there thought that Islam was the religion of the Indians who followed so many shades of religious tenets and paths. They thought Qadianism and Ahmadism being more important.^[1]”

“Later on a large number of the islanders, mostly of African origin, embraced Islam, until the ratio of the Muslims rose to 13 percent of the total population of the Republic, as against 31 percent Catholics, 27 percent Protestants, 6 percent Hindus, and 23 percent others.”

Effect on her Duties

About the effect of her embracing Islam on her work in a state where Muslims are not in the majority, she said:

“Islam demands of us efficient and sincere application to duty and I practise the teachings of the Faith (Islam) with sincerity. I do not tell lies either in my (official) work or in my (personal) life. To the best of my ability and with strong consciousness of my heart I shun everything that is repugnant to Islam. As regard the impact of my conversion upon my work, it was nothing but all blessing and good. Our former Prime Minister advised me to visit Egypt, because it is the land of the renowned Jami‘ah Al-Azhar and the source of civilisation. He used to talk a great deal about Islam.

“When I requested my present Prime Minister to give me permission to visit Egypt in connection with my assignment as Minister of State for Social Development and Local Government, he agreed and also advised me to visit Al-Azhar and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs about whose activities we heard so much during our visits to the U.S.A. and the U.K.

^[1] Followers of Qadianism, Ahmadism, or by whatever name they call themselves, are constitutionally a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan—*Editor Y.I.*

“I took part in the parliamentary elections many a time and came out successful in spite of being a Muslim. I have worked as Minister for Education and Culture and also as a Minister in the Prime Minister’s Cabinet, although I am a Muslim.

“I would like to tell something important. The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago allows official holidays on the occasions of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Azha* festivals. The Muslims have freedom to celebrate the month of Ramazan in their houses as well as in the mosques throughout the State.”

She further said: “I make an appeal to the Islamic World to close their ranks because unity is strength, particularly under cover of the excellent religion of Islam which has brought equality to mankind and which regulates our relations and dealings. It is, therefore, imperative that the Islamic World should halt the wars raging among its certain states. It is possible to resolve all difficulties and disputes with mutual negotiations, consultation and understanding.

“Almighty Allah has guided me to Islam and I pray Him to guide the Muslims towards fraternity and peace so that they may in reality become in this present age the best community that has been raised up for mankind.”^[1]

Madame Fatima Mik Davidson

Minister of State for Social Development and Local Government,
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

^[1] (Rendered from Arabic by Iqbal Husain Ansari, courtesy: *Minber-al-Islam*, November 1983).

Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*. January 22, 1984, Vol. 32, No. 18-19, pp. 208-210

Why Islam is my choice?

Islam is the religion I have been seeking for since my school-days. My mind was dissatisfied all along with the Christian teachings till I was old enough to have independence of thought to shake them off. Since I left school I have had the opportunity of spending a few years abroad, living with Jewish and Catholic friends, but their religions never appealed to me. Only this year I returned to my native country of Scotland and one day, quite by chance, a friend took me to an "At Home" held at the London Muslim Prayer House, III, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London, W. 8. There it was that I came in touch with the true religion of Islam. I became interested in Islam, whose keynote is implicity—for instance, belief in the Unity of God. This is why it appeals to me. As a Christian I could never bring myself to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonement, or the Virgin Birth. Islam is absolutely free from such gross impossibilities that it was necessary for an innocent man like Jesus to come to the world and give his life to save it from sin, as the Christian dogma would have us believe, is beyond my comprehension. Further, the Crucifixion has not made the world any better (except, perhaps, the few who tried to be like him). The world on the other hand, it seems to me, is worse than it was in Jesus Christ's lifetime.

To any thinking person who takes the trouble to understand Islam this simple and noble religion must appeal.

The religion of Islam has given me peace and happiness such as I never had before.^[1]

Miss Joan Fatima Dansken

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1930, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 18.

Embracing Islam: Its joys and heartaches

I have now been a Muslim for one year and it is time to share my thoughts with you. I pray that every new Muslim receives the love and understanding he needs in his new life. I ask them to recall how it was when they first became Muslims.

Everytime the words, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger" are uttered, the heavens smile. When an unbeliever becomes a Muslim with all his heart, it is the greatest moment in his life. May Allah not let them go astray.

In a way a new Muslim is a baby. But how can an adult be a baby? If you really think of it, you will realize how true it is. The new Muslim has many years behind him to undo and change. We might think there cannot be much to change or adjust to. Allah, of course, is Compassionate; He understands. But some people think it can be done overnight. The new Muslim needs understanding and ought to be shown the new ways just as a growing baby.

In the first year of coming to Islam, they face heartaches. Some of these problems may seem silly or unimportant but when you actually live with them, they weigh so much more. You are no longer the part of the society in which you live all your life. It is truly frightening when the old life chases you, beckons you to come back. Then you need help more than ever. But you are afraid of it. May be this is a little hard to understand, so I will share with you how some sisters offered to help me but, unfortunately, I was too nervous to ask for it.

When I became a Muslim, I received several names and phone numbers of Muslims who I could call for help and friendship. But no matter how much I wanted to, I couldn't call them. It was just so hard to take those first easy steps. I was so afraid. How to talk? What to say? What if they didn't accept me? I believe I am not the only new Muslim who felt like that. This situation is

comparable to that of a baby when it tries to take first steps. The child is so eager to learn to walk but in the beginning he needs encouragement and support to try again when he falls down.

Some new Muslims are fortunate because even after conversion their families don't reject them. What about those who are by themselves? They experience great pain when their families and friends reject them. Sometimes no one takes the change seriously and a usual comment is: "She must be going through a stage. Give her time she will be back to her old self." What can you do? You try to explain things. In return you receive cold stares. It is very upsetting to realize that everyone you love — parents, family, friends are unbelievers. You love them so much and yet you know they are far from the light of Islam. These thoughts are never far from the mind of a new Muslim. In expressing these thoughts I am not asking for pity; we do not need that. A new Muslim needs understanding, love and friendship. Remember that there is more to becoming Muslim than mere appearance.^[1]

Khadijah Abdullah

My conversion to Islam!

Not satisfied with the Church of England in which I had been brought up as it lacked vitality and definite authoritative teachings, I became a Roman Catholic at the age of 20. My conversion cost me many years of unhappiness because of the opposition of relatives and friends. I sincerely believed that the Roman Catholic Church along had the One True Faith, and I must do God's will, no matter what the cost to myself or those I loved.

^[1] Courtesy: *Islamic Horizons*, Nov.-Dec. 1985.

Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*. January 7, 1987, Vol. 35, No. 17, p. 203

I found that the price of unity in the Roman Catholic Church was the giving up of private judgement. I had to believe in the infallibility of the Church, and in any teaching of the Church, no matter how contrary to reason. If my reason rebelled, as it often did, I had to tell myself that my reason was wrong and that the teachings of the Church were above reason. One example was the belief that every wafer consumed at Holy Communion is changed into Jesus Christ, both God and man although no change is apparent to the senses. I wondered how a man could be contained in a wafer, and how he could be in so many wafers at the same time, not only in that church, but in churches all over the world. There seemed to be something repugnant about the idea of consuming human flesh and blood. Nevertheless, I compelled myself to believe that the teachings of the Church must be true, and I worked myself up into a state of spiritual ecstasy, by means of prayers, so that I could adore the wafer without arguing with myself or feeling repugnance. Another problem was how the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross could be repeated over and over again without his dying again. There were a number of other problems. These doubts caused me great unhappiness. I felt that I was not a good Catholic.

I also found myself unable to wholeheartedly accept the worship of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Catholics do not believe that the mother of Jesus is Divine, but they speak of her as the Queen of Heaven, Mediatrix of all Graces, etc., and regard her intercession as essential. I once heard a priest tell a class of school-children that a man who had been very wicked, was saved from Hell by one thing—he never forgot to pray to “Our Lady.” I could not reconcile this with the Biblical version of Christianity—Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

In spite of all these difficulties, I found many consolations in the Catholic Church, and was something very happy in it. For a period of about a year I felt very divided, as a result of coming into contact with a number of Protestants whose ardour and

sincerity matched that of Catholics. They presented me with a clear-cut alternative to Catholicism, based on the Bible along—unlike the vagueness of a large part of the Church of England. They believed in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Although I admired their simplicity of faith, I could not agree that one is saved by faith alone, nor that one can never lose one's faith once he has accepted Christ as Saviour. After much self-questioning, I was thrown back on an even more implicit obedience to the Catholic Church to still my doubts.

I knew little about Islam. I was rather prejudicated by reason of certain newspaper articles about the slave trade in Arab countries, polygamy, traffic in drugs and cruelty to animals. I had a vague memory of schooldays history of the crusades, which gave the impression that the Muslims were barbaric and intolerant.

I remembered how my feeling of being torn between the doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism had driven me to despair and serious nervous breakdown. Would this new quest for truth lead me to an even worse condition? Nevertheless, I felt that I could not forget about the Qur'ân and go on as if I had not read it. I prayed that God would guide me to the truth. In order to make a just judgement, I imagined that I was a person from a remote place, who had never heard of Christianity, and I put personal memories and prejudices out of my mind, as far as possible.

I considered the possible alternatives regarding the Qur'ân. Either it was a Revelation from God or Muhammad had obtained his information about histories described in the Bible from human sources, and had pretended to be inspired by God, or he was inspired by the devil, either because he was wicked (may God forgive me) or because he was a well-meaning man who had been taken in by the devil,

I obtained some information about the life and character of Muhammad from other books and sources, both Muslim and non-Muslim. It seemed unlikely that he had obtained his detailed knowledge of Jewish and Christian history from human sources, since he could not read the Bible, and if he had talked to Jews and Christians, he would have found it difficult to remember so many details from a few conversations while, if he had had any intensive instructions from Jews and Christians, other people would have known about it, and would have exposed him as a fraud. In fact some people tried to make these allegations, but were unable to make out a case.

A study of his character convinced me that he was incapable of misrepresentation. He was devout, kind, just, forgiving, and avoided the sins which spring from selfishness and self-indulgence. An unscrupulous man, prepared to tell blasphemous lies for his own ends, would not have faced thirteen years of persecution and discouragement as Muhammad did. Nor would his followers have shared his sufferings for so many years if they had not believed in his sincerity. When success came to him, he did not become a proud, intolerant dictator, as a self-seeking man would have done. He continued to live simply and with humility, and he forgave the people of Mecca, who had caused so much trouble for him and his followers, when he could have wreaked vengeance on them. Only a man who sincerely sought to please God could have conducted himself so well in adversity and prosperity. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." A hypocrite cannot avoid giving himself away at sometime. In Muhammad's life there was nothing to cause people to question his sincerity.

Again was it possible that the devil could sometimes take control of a normally good man, and delude him into thinking that his inspirations came from God? Was it likely that the devil would establish an apparently good religion for the sole purpose of preventing people from being saved through faith in the

sacrifice of Jesus Christ—a religion which abolished polytheism and idolatry, which established justice, enjoined worship of God and help for the poor and helpless, which improved the status of women, which increased knowledge of science, which enjoined universal brotherhood and tolerance of other religions, which advocated the freeing of slaves, which was stern towards theft, murder and adultery, which abolished the custom of the Pagan Arabs of burying baby girls alive, which restricted to four the number of wives a man could have, and admonished him to treat them justly?

As against this, there is no version of Christianity which is really satisfactory. Christians believe that because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, all human beings are born in a state of original sin, are unable by their own actions to merit Heaven. Muslims, however, do not believe that people are punished for the sins of Adam and Eve. They believe that all human beings are born of innocence, and can only lose their hope of Heaven by their own sins when they are old enough to be guilty of deliberate wrongdoing.

I was impressed by the words of the Qur'an: "No laden soul shall bear another's load." So the reward of Heaven or the punishment of Hell was to be the result of one's own faith (or lack of it) and actions—not someone else's sacrifice or intercession. This seemed more just and reasonable.

The course of research and reasoning which I followed, took many months before I felt sufficiently sure to make a declaration of faith in Islam. I married a nominal Muslim but I became a Muslim in spite of my marriage, not because of it. I was converted as a result of reading the Holy Qur'an, and, to some extent, by the example of good Muslims.

I have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a perfect religious organisation on earth, but when I consider

Islam in the days of its glory, and as it now is shown forth in the lives of the best of the Muslims, I feel that it is a guide for me.

Islam could be a great influence for good in the world if Muslims realised that religious principles are not incompatible with material progress and if they built a worthy civilization on the foundations of their great past, instead of copying materialism and loose standards of morality from other nations. Moreover, if Britain and Europe were converted to Islam, they would again be powerful forces for good, British and European Muslims are some of the best. Most people in Britain have lost their religion. They need to be given a new sense of purpose. I hope that Muslims from other countries who come into contact with them will give them a good impression and arouse their interest in Islam.^[1]

Khadija F.R. Fezoui

England

Why I joined the Muslim faith?

My relations belonged to the Church of England, amongst whom were many dignitaries of the Church; but I never agreed to the teachings of 'Churchianity'— the Atonement, the Divinity of Jesus, the Intercession, the Confession, and the Sacrament— which all to me seemed to be utterly against the real teachings of the Prophet Jesus, the teacher of Galilee.

I once visited the Mosque at Woking some three years ago and came in touch with the Muslims. I had since then put queries about the religion of Islam to A. Khalique Khan, Assistant Imam, and for that purpose at times invited him to Southsea. His

^[1] *Islam, the First and the Final Religion*, pp. 142-147.

exposition of the teachings of Islam were modern, scientific, and assimilable to my mind. The extreme simplicity, coupled with extreme sincerity of the worship of Islam by its followers, impresses me with the feeling that this Faith occupies the first place in the Universe.^[1]

Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton H.^[2]

“My Belief” — I

I think the sublimest conception of life is the one in which we regard ourselves as the agents of a Perfect Being Who guides and controls our Destiny. It is absurd to think that we can chalk out and control the destiny of Humanity when even the greatest of us cannot control our own impulses and do not know when we start our life and how we are going to end it. If, instead of having this sense of Providence instilled into our minds, we had been left at the hands of our own impulses, which are nothing but forces of arrogance and impetuosity, we would long have been extinct from the world as social beings, attempting the perfection of ourselves—individually and collectively.

As for the nature of this Providence whom we should apply to in spirit for the guidance of our individual and collective destinies, there is a divergence of opinion. I personally am inclined to think that the person of the Providence should be

[1] *Islamic Review*. December 1929, Vol. 17, No. 12, pp. 454,455. Please see “My Belief—I” which is connected with it.

[2] Mrs. H. Buchanan-Hamilton is a kinswoman of the late marquess Curzon of Kedleston, and of the late Sir Francis Ley, Bart., representative of a family of considerable antiquity and honour, which possessed lands at Mayfield, in the County of Staffordshire, in the early part of the sixteenth century. She was brought up in Germany and is renowned for her artistic taste. She knows German and French besides English, her native tongue—*Editor*.

one and all-comprehensive—admitting of no division and decentralization. People in this country talk so glibly about the different things in Islam, but they seldom take the trouble of understanding the spiritual meaning of the Monotheism for which that religion stands.

People would be well advised to recognize the fact that all attempts to confuse the issue raised on this score by the Islamic Faith are inevitably leading to the disintegration of the Socio-Spiritual life of Humanity.

Now, if the Will at the source is decidedly One, and possesses a perfect resourcefulness that comprehends all time and space, it is only reasonable to think that the procedure adopted for the guidance of Humanity must be the same all throughout and all over the world. If the moral and spiritual guidance of Humanity was effected in one nation and at one time through any incarnation of God, it must be the same in other nations and at other times. But if it had been through Prophethood in one nation and at one time, the same should be the case in all other nations and at all other times. It is this fact, more than all others, that made me change my Faith from Christianity to Islam. For, if I am to believe in the theory of Incarnation as presented by Christianity, otherwise a sublime religion, I find myself morally obliged to believe in all those God-incarnations which are upheld by different pagan nations. Indeed the Qur'an brought a great relief to my spiritual mind by stating that the method of God's revealing His Will to Humanity as experience and witnessed by the numerous and successive generations of Hebrew Prophets has been the one and only method known to Humanity, and that the method of Incarnation was only the figment of the pagan mind, which has no foundation in fact. The Qur'an clearly lays it down that all the religious heroes worshipped as Incarnations of the Divinity were nothing but human beings inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, and were deified only after their death.

The Islamic conception of Prophethood

I quite realize, however, the difficulty of a Christian in appreciating the effectiveness of Prophethood in the matter of the spiritual Redemption of Humanity, for his conception of Prophethood is the effect of the stories he reads of the Prophets in the Old Testament which we possess. If the Prophets were what these stories would have us believe, it is indeed only possible that instead of leading us to Salvation they will lead us to perdition, unless some more effective methods were adopted for our Redemption.

The Islamic conception of Prophethood, which, in my opinion, is the original conception of it in the Hebrew Tradition as well, is very different. The Prophet, receiving as he does the direct touch of the perfect attributes of God, is, according to Islam, the moving embodiment of all positive virtues, whose very company transforms the most sinful into a virtuous man. In fact, it is absurd to think that the Fountain-head of all virtue and purity will speak to a person who is more impure than an average man of the world, as the Prophets are depicted to be in our Old Testament Records, or that he should be leading a whole nation into moral conduct and spiritual elevations. The Qur'an, therefore, gives me a great reassurance when it asserts that all those stories in the Old Testament that hold up the Prophets in a bad light are spurious.

Given the Islamic standard of spirituality in the Prophet, humanity needs only Prophets, and nothing more or less than Prophets, for its Redemption. The theory of Incarnation would appear not only unnecessary, but indeed confusing. If God would take material shape for our Redemption, what would happen to His responsibilities as the Controller of the Universe and its Destinies? Christianity tries to solve this difficulty by assuming another person in the Divinity called the Father. But this only confuses the issue of the control. It is only the power at

the source that should be called God, and not the agencies that are subordinate to it. If, however, we ascribe Divinity both to the Invisible Spiritual Power that is at the source of Creation and to the supposed Incarnation whom people find living among them, we create a diarchy in the Universe which is incompatible with any peaceful and progressive administration of it. Moreover, the role of God as an Incarnation has always been found to be one of Helplessness, whereas He is found to be better able to manage the situation in His invisibility. To me, this conception of God Incarnation seems to be the result of spiritual poverty in a nation that prevents it from perceiving spiritual things spiritually.^[1]

Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton

(President of the Muslim Society in Great Britain)

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1937, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 67-70.

This article is one of a series of 'My Belief' published in the *Woking Review*.

Why I became a Muslim?

[Her ladyship performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in April 1933. She was, indeed, the first English Muslim Lady to have had that honour. She published her memoirs about the pilgrimage in her book, namely, '*My Pilgrimage to Mecca*'.

On 14th December, 1933, the Muslim Society of Great Britain held a reception in the honour of the memory of the Noble Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم at the Carlton Hotel, London. Her ladyship acted as the hostess on that occasion, and delivered a brilliant speech on the life of the Prophet صلى الله عليه و سلم.^[1] — *Editor*]

I am often asked when and why I became a Muslim? I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned upon me. It seems that I have always been a Muslim. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child, left to itself, would develop. Indeed as a Western critic once described it, 'Islam is the religion of common sense'.

The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God; that Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and others (peace be on all of them) were Prophets, divinely inspired; that to every nation God has sent an apostle; that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption; that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times; and that no one can intercede for us, not even Muhammad or Jesus; and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves and on our actions.

[1] *Islamic Review*. March 1934, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 61.

The word 'Islam' means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Muslim is one who is 'in harmony with the decrees of the Author of this world, one who has made his peace with God and His creatures.

Islam is based on two fundamental truths:

- (a) the Oneness of God and
- (b) the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free from any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above everything else it is a positive faith.

The influence of the *Hajj* cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth, on this sacred occasion and on the sacred spot, and to join with this mass of humanity, in all humility, in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by full significance of the Islamic ideal, is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to treat the sacred ground of the Prophet's struggle to call erring humanity back to God to re-live those hallowed by the memories of Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) long toil and sufferings in glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not all. The *Hajj*, above everything else, makes for unity among Muslims. If there is anything that unified the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy, it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet and know one another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Differences of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of

faith that unites all Muslims in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs.

Lady Evelyn Cobbold Zainab

What Islam means to me?

Born to a respectable family, her father being a salesman and mother a highly respected social worker, Jameelah, as she herself has written, began a prolonged and concentrated study at the age of nineteen of what Islamic literature existed in English translation, in order to obtain more intimate knowledge at first-hand what it personally meant to be a Muslim and more detailed information about current events in the Muslim countries that what was ordinarily available in newspapers and magazines.

She had correspondence with a dozen young people in Arab world and Pakistan. Most of these pen-friends did not last long because she soon grew bitterly disappointed with their westernized mode of living, their indifference and sometimes outright hostility towards Islamic faith and culture and their childish minds. At last, she decided to develop correspondence with mature and influential Muslim leaders, especially among the *Ulema*. By the end of 1960, she had exchanged letters with Dr. Fadhil Jamali, formerly Chief Delegate of Iraq at the U.N.; Dr. Mahmud F. Hoballa, former Director of the Islamic Centre in Washington, D.C.; the late Shaikh Muhammad Bashir Ibrahimi, Chief of the Algerian *Ulema* and the soul of the struggle for freedom against French Imperialist domination; Dr. Mohammad El-Bahay of Al-Azhar; Dr. M. Hamidullah of Paris; Dr. Maruf Dawalibi, noted authority on Islamic Law, Professor of the *Shariah* at Damascus University and ex-Prime Minister of Syria; Dr. Said Ramadan, Head of the Islamic Centre in Geneva,

and tried her best to contact the late *Shaheed*, Sayyid Qutb at that time serving a long prison sentence in Egypt.

In short, Sister Maryam Jameelah had been an avid reader of all books and periodicals in English she could find on Islamic subjects for nearly a decade. Later on, she had correspondence with Maulana Maudoodi who had no need to persuade her to adopt Islam because she was already on the 'threshold of conversion' and would have taken the final step even without his knowledge. Neither did Maulana Maudoodi exert any decisive impact upon the direction of her literary career as she had begun to write essays in defence of Islam more than a year before her acquaintance and the main outline of her ideas were already firmly established long before they knew of each other's existence.^[1]

Before her conversion to Islam, she had decided to devote herself for the cause of Islam. She makes it quite clear in one of her letters written from New York on the 5th of December, 1960 to Maulana Maudoodi. She writes:

"During the past year, I have discovered that I want to devote my life to the struggle against materialistic philosophies — secularism and nationalism which are still so rampant in the world today and threaten not only the survival of Islam but the whole human race. With this goal in mind, I have already written a number of articles.

"I am a young American woman, twenty-six years of age who has become so intensely interested in Islam as the only hope for the world that I want to become a convert".^[2]

In response to her letter, Maulana Maudoodi, in his letter dated January 21, 1961, wrote:

[1] *Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*.
Lahore, M.Y. Khan, 1960, pp. i,ii.

[2] *ibid.* p. 1

“The reason is that although you are still only thinking about your conversion, I am certain that you are already a Muslim. A person who believes in the Unity of God, in Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as His last Prophet and in the Holy Qur’an as God’s Word and in the Life Hereafter, is really a genuine Muslim regardless of whether he or she was born into a Jewish, a Christian or a pagan home. Your ideas bear witness to the fact that you believe in the above-mentioned truths. Therefore, I regard you as a Muslim and my sister-in-faith. No baptism or any proselytizing ritual before a priest is needed in order to enter the pale of Islam. If you are convinced of the truth that is Islam, you need only to affirm solemnly that:

“There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.”

Then you should adopt some Islamic name (i.e. Ayesha or Fatima) and make a public announcement of your name and religion so that the Muslim world at large should come to know that you are a member of the great fraternity of Islam.”^[2]

After her ‘reversion’ to Islam, Maryam Jameelah, wrote a letter to Maulana Maudoodi in which she made clear:

“Five days ago on the *Eid-al-Adha* after the prayers, in the presence of two of my Muslim friends for witnesses, I formally pronounced the ‘*Shahadah*’ which makes me a full-fledged Muslim. Then I received at the Islamic Mission of America in Brooklyn from Shaikh Dauod Ahmad Faisal my Islamic Certificate of Adoption. My Muslim name is ‘Maryam Jameelah’ with which I will henceforth sign all my correspondence and writings.”^[3]

[2] *ibid.* p. 4

[3] *ibid.* p. 36

In another letter dated April 7, 1962, addressed to Maulana Maudoodi, regarding her acceptance of Islam, Maryam Jameelah wrote:

“I have made mistakes in my life and admit I have done some foolish things but my acceptance of Islam was the most positive, most constructive and sanest of all my actions. I am also convinced beyond doubt that Islam is the most potent medicine for mental health. However, the Maulana may well be correct in the sense that because the transition from Judaism or Christianity to Islam means nothing less than the transition from Western to Islamic civilization and a wholehearted adoption of an entirely different way of life.”^[1]

This is worthy to note that Maryam Jameelah, since her entering the fold of Islam, has devoted her life for the service and propagation of Islam. She has written more than two dozen books which have won fame all over the world. We reproduce hereunder a very short ‘reviews’ by the Press on her following books:

1. *Islam versus the West*: Maryam Jameelah, formerly Margaret Marcus, is quite a well-known figure in the Muslim world now. She is firmly opposed to the so-called westernizers within the fold of Islam and with eloquent reasoning, she argues that Islamic society can flourish and contribute its own in a technocratic civilization without having to sacrifice the inner principles of its being. (*Daily Dawn*, Karachi)

2. *Islam and Modernism*: She upholds Islam in its pure form and stresses the necessity for a re-evaluation of Islamic history in that light. Written in a bitter tone but lucid style, the book makes very useful reading. The book is extremely readable and thought-provoking. Like all true Muslims, the author combines ‘practice’ with preaching. (*The Pakistan Observer*, Dacca, and *The Criterion*, Karachi).

^[1] *ibid.* p. 75

3. *Islam in Theory and Practice*: The day of Islamic supremacy, this American-Jewish convert pleads, shall not be far away if only the Muslims realise their destiny, live up to the ideals of Islam, strive to uphold the Word of God in every walk of their lives to establish Islam in its entirety in political, social, economic, cultural and all other aspects. (*The Criterion*, Karachi).

4. *Islam versus Ahl Al-Kitab; Past and Present*: She grew up in a Jewish family, a member of the Jewish minority in Christian America and then embraced Islam. She presents Islam as the only authentic religion through which mankind can be united. This book is Maryam Jameelah's best work to date. (*The Muslim*, London).

We feel in presenting two 'best' autobiographical articles of Maryam Jameelah which give answers to all the questions commonly put to the 'reverts'.

Ever since the days of my early childhood, my life has been dominated by a religious outlook. This does not ever exclude my adolescence and early youth when, due to my disillusionment with the established Jewish synagogue and Christian churches I professed atheism for even then my life was religious in the sense that I was always in search of the absolute Truth which alone gives human life its meaning, direction and purpose. I am convinced beyond doubt that faith in transcendental theological, moral, social and legal values is one of the demarcations between the materialistic and spiritual view of life. The purpose of all materialists and materialistic societies whether past or present, is temporal happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment. The emphasis of the materialist everywhere is always on the transitory and how to extract the maximum pleasure, enjoyment and thrills of the moment. Chance is worshipped as a value for

its own sake. The moment a person asks one's self about Ultimate Truths, about the meaning, purpose and direction of life and death and what will happen after death, one enters the exclusive precincts of religion in which the physical sciences are powerless to help us. Materialists are always concerned with the transitory and the temporary while a genuine spiritual outlook always emphasises the absolute and eternal. I think almost all the problems, we are facing today in the terrible universal moral degeneration, social disintegration and the dehumanization of our relationships with our family, friends and acquaintances, can be directly traced to the absence of fidelity to transcendental values, standards and ideals. The decadence of contemporary arts and culture is also due to the same cause. Modern man is in desperate need of faith and implicit obedience in a Supreme Authority to be able to distinguish between what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong, what is beautiful and what is ugly and most crucial, what things in life are important and what are not. Only divine transcendental absolute law and morality can command universal respect, reverence, fear and obedience. Secular laws cannot possibly do this for how can people respect, what may be rejected by a vote of the people as obsolete tomorrow? The authority of Islamic morals and laws, proceeds from Almighty Allah. Thus they are feared, esteemed, loved and obeyed simultaneously. Islamic commandments combine the internal sanctions of fear of Allah and His retribution in the Hereafter with severe but just corporal punishments for violation of those laws on which the health of both the individual and society depends. I have never regarded "change" as a virtue in itself. To me, the absence of permanence and stability in anything means the outright denial of the value of human existence and makes life frivolous, superficial and meaningless. My quest was always after absolutes.

Neither Judaism nor Christianity could satisfy me. I was repelled by the narrow parochial-mindedness of the synagogue

and a faith severely impoverished by constant appeal to nationalist and racist sentiments and horrified by the atrocities of Zionism against the indigenous Arabs of Palestine which are justified, glorified and praised even by the most religious-minded Jews. I could never reconcile myself to the complicated, incomprehensible theology of the Christians and the endless compromises of the Church with moral, social, political and economic evils which accounts for the unparalleled dark historical record of the Church in Europe during the period of its ascendancy. As a child growing up in New York during the source of what Jewish training I received, it was but natural for me to be curious about the faith historically most closely akin to Judaism. I found that I could learn about the Arabs without also learning about Islam and its civilization and as soon as I discovered that it was not the Arabs who had made Islam great but the other way around, I wanted to know as much about this faith as I could. The superiority of the Qur'an over the Bible to me lay in its all-embracing universality in contrast to the narrow, rigid, nationalism of the Jewish scriptures which is one of the reasons, why Jews to this day have never been able to outgrow their tribal mentality. As this broad, all-encompassing universality in approach makes for the superior morality, it has exerted a drastic effect on the historical development of these faiths and the civilizations shaped by them.

Only in Islam was my quest for absolute values satisfied. Only in Islam, I did at last, find all that was true, good and beautiful and which gives meaning and direction to human life and death while in other religions, the Truth is deformed, distorted, restricted and fragmentary. If anyone chooses to ask me, how I came to know this, I can only reply that my personal life experience was sufficient to convince me. My adherence to the Islamic faith is thus a calm, cool, but very intense conviction. Unlike some other converts, I never saw the Holy Prophet during sleep at night in dreams; I never experienced my mystical

visions and nothing dramatic at the time of my conversion ever happened. Since I have, I believe, always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament, even before I knew there was any such thing as Islam, my conversion was mainly formality, involving no radical change in my heart at all, but rather only making official what I had been thinking and yearning for many years.

For the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all the great and genuine Muslims after him, the purpose of life was achievement and not enjoyment. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural by-products of emotional satisfaction in one's duties conscientiously performed for the pleasure of Allah to achieve salvation in the life to come. In Islam, duties are always stressed above rights. In the materialistic world, achievement is equated with the capturing of political or economic power, fulfillment in the arts, sciences or professions and acquiring fame through these if one be exceptionally gifted, or enjoying an ample income from business, the professions or commerce. In Islam, achievement is rated on accomplishing what is enduring and worthwhile through benevolent useful and productive work, no matter how humble it may be, and to refrain from wasting one's time in empty self-gratification disgraced by sinful deeds. To the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions, depth of experience was always more important than breadth. In the fast pace of modern, mechanized living where to be active and always on the run, are in themselves prized as virtues and meditation and contemplation in solitude scorned as worse than useless, the experience of modern men and women may be broad and varied, yet their minds remain superficial, fickle and shallow. To those who suppose that stern religious, moral and social commandments of the *Shari'ah*, or sacred Islamic law based on Qur'an and *Sunnah*, means a poor, limited and restricted life, I will point out to them from personal experience that many modern affluent people are miserable and

unhappy even though they can do virtually anything they please. They enjoy the highest standard of living in history, they are the best-dressed, best-groomed, best-fed, best-housed men and women anywhere with the least drudgery, they have the most freedom, the greatest variety of interesting social contacts, are unexcelled in the extent of their secular education, have the widest possible chance to enrich their self-indulgence and can do whatever they want, yet despite all these material advantages and opportunities, too many modern people are restless, dissatisfied, and even neurotic.

As a Muslim, the immediate purpose of my life is *not to waste it!* The ultimate, long-range purpose of myself and any genuine Muslim is to attain through implicit obedience to Qur'an and *Sunnah*, the pleasure and acceptance of Allah and eternal salvation in the Life Hereafter.

Maryam Jameelah Begum
(Formerly *Margaret Marcus*)

Why I embraced Islam

I trace the beginning of my interest in Islam when as a child of ten, while attending a reformed Jewish "Sunday School", I became fascinated with the historical relationship between the Jews and the Arabs. From my Jewish textbooks, I learned that Abraham was the father of the Arabs as well as the Jews. I read how centuries later when, in medieval Europe, Christian persecution made their lives intolerable, the Jews were welcomed in Muslim Spain and that it was the magnanimity of this same Arabic-Islamic civilization which stimulated Hebrew culture to reach its highest peak of achievement. Totally unaware of the true nature of Zionism, I naively thought that the Jews were returning to Palestine to strengthen their close ties of kinship in religion and culture with their Semitic cousins.

Together I believed that the Jews and Arabs would cooperate to attain another Golden Age of culture in the Middle East.

Despite my fascination with the study of Jewish history, I was extremely unhappy at the "Sunday School." At this time I identified myself strongly with the Jewish people in Europe, then suffering a horrible fate under the Nazis and I was shocked that none of my fellow classmates not their parents, took their religion seriously. During the services at the synagogue, the children used to read comic strips hidden in their prayer books and laugh to scorn at the rituals. The children were so noisy and disorderly that the teachers could not discipline them and found it very difficult to conduct the classes. At home the atmosphere for religious observance was scarcely more congenial. My elder sister detested the "Sunday School" so much that my mother literally had to drag her out of bed in the mornings and she never went without the struggle of tears and hot words. Finally, my parents were exhausted and let her quit. On the Jewish High Holy Days instead of attending synagogue and fasting on *Yom Kippur*, my sister and I were taken out of school to attend family picnics and gay parties in fine restaurants. When my sister and I convinced our parents how miserable we both were at the "Sunday School," they joined an agnostic, humanist organization known as the *Ethical Culture Movement*.

The *Ethical Culture Movement* was founded late in the 19th century by Felix Adler. While studying for the rabbinate, Felix Adler grew convinced that devotion to ethical values as relative and man-made, regarding any supernaturalism or theology as irrelevant, constituted the only religion fit for the modern world. I attended the Ethical Culture "Sunday School" each week from the age of eleven until I graduated at fifteen. Here I grew into complete accord with the ideas of the movement and regarded all traditional, organized religions with scorn.

Throughout my adolescence, I remained under the influence of humanistic philosophy until, after I began to mature intellectually and atheism no longer satisfied me, I began a renewed search for my identity. For a time I joined a *Bahai* group in New York called *The Caravan of East and West* under the leadership of a Persian by the name of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab (d. 1958) who told me that he had been the secretary of Abdul Baha, one of the founders of the Bahai. Initially, I was attracted to the *Bahai* because of its Islamic origin and its preaching about the oneness of mankind, but when I discovered how miserably they had failed to implement this ideal, I left them a year later, bitterly disillusioned. When I was eighteen years old, I became a member of the local branch of the religious Zionist youth movement known as the *Mizrachi Hatzair*, but when I found out what the real nature of Zionism was, which made the hostility between Jews and Arabs irreconcilable, I left several months later in disgust. When I was twenty and a student at *New York University*, one of my elective courses was entitled "Judaism in Islam." My professor, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Katsh, the Head of the Department of Hebrew Studies there, spared no efforts to convince his students—all Jews many of whom aspired to become rabbis—that Islam was derived from Judaism. Our textbook, written by him,^[1] took each verse from the Qur'an, painstakingly tracing it to its allegedly Jewish source. Although his real aim was to prove to his students the superiority of Judaism over Islam, he convinced me diametrically of the opposite. I was repelled by the subordination of the Hereafter, so vividly portrayed in the Holy Qur'an, to the alleged Divine right of the Jews to Palestine. The

[1] *Judaism in Islam*, Washington Square Press, New York, 1954, reprinted under the new title, *Judaism and the Koran*, A.S. Barnes and Company, New York, 1962; and *Ethical Religion*, David Muzzey, American Ethical Union; and *Religion without Revelation*, Julian Huxley, New American Library, New York, 1956.

Jewish God in the Old Testament and in the Jewish prayer book appeared to me distorted and degraded into some kind of real estate agent! The fusion of archaic nationalism with religion, I thought, had spiritually impoverished Judaism beyond redemption. The rigid exclusiveness of Judaism I felt had a great deal of connection with the persecutions the Jews have suffered throughout their history. I reflected that perhaps these tragedies would not have happened if the Jews had competed vigorously with other faiths for converts. I soon discovered that Zionism was merely a combination of the racist, tribalistic aspects of Judaism with modern secular nationalism. Zionism was further discredited in my eyes when I learned that few, if any, of the leaders of Zionism were observant Jews and that perhaps nowhere is orthodox, traditional Judaism regarded with such intense contempt as in "Israel." When I found nearly all important Jewish leaders in America uncritical supporters for Zionism who felt not the slightest twinge of conscience because of the terrible injustice inflicted upon the Palestinian Arabs, I could no longer consider myself a Jew at heart.

One morning in November 1954, Professor Katsh, during his lecture, argued with irrefutable logic that the monotheism taught by Moses (peace be upon him) and the Divine Laws revealed to him at Sinai were indispensable as the basis for all higher ethical values. If morals were purely man-made, as the *Ethical Culture* and other agnostic and atheistic philosophies taught, then they could be changed at will, according to mere whim, convenience or circumstance. The result would be utter chaos leading to individual and collective ruin. Belief in the Hereafter, as the rabbis in the *Talmud* taught, argued Professor Katsh, was not mere wishful thinking but a moral necessity. Only those, he said, who firmly believed that each of us will be summoned by God on Judgment Day to render a complete account of our life on earth and rewarded or punished accordingly, will possess the self-discipline to sacrifice transitory pleasures and endure

hardships and sacrifice to attain lasting good. While Professor Katsh was lecturing thus, I was comparing in my mind what I read in the Old Testament and the *Talmud* with what was taught in the Qur'an and *Hadith* and finding Judaism so defective, I was converted to Islam.

Although I wanted to become a Muslim as far back as 1954, my family managed to argue me out of it. I was warned that Islam would complicate my life because it is not, like Judaism and Christianity, part of the American scene. I was told that Islam would alienate me from my family and isolate me from the community. At that time, my faith was not sufficiently strong to withstand these pressures. Partly as the result of this inner turmoil, I became so ill that I had to discontinue college long before it was time for me to graduate so that I never earned any diploma. For the next two years I remained at home under private medical care, steadily growing worse. In desperation from 1957-1959, my parents confined me both to private and public hospitals where I vowed that if ever I recovered sufficiently to be discharged, I would embrace Islam.

After I was allowed to return home, I investigated all the opportunities for meeting Muslims in New York City and it was my good fortune to make the acquaintance of some of the finest men and women anyone could ever hope to meet. I also began to write articles for Muslim magazines and carry on an extensive correspondence with Muslim leaders all over the world. I corresponded with the late Shaikh Ibrahim, the leader of the *Ulema* in Algeria, Dr. Muhammad El-Bahay of Al-Azhar, Dr. Mahmud F. Hoballah, then the Director of the Islamic Centre in Washington, D.C., Dr. Hamidullah of Paris, Dr. Said Ramadan, the Director of the Islamic Centre at Geneva, and Maulana Sayyid Abul-Ala Maudoodi.

Even before I formally embraced Islam, I found the integrity of the faith in the contemporary world gravely threatened by the

so-called modernist movement which aimed at adulterating its teachings with man-made philosophies and "reforms." I was convinced that if these modernizers had their way, nothing of the original would be left! As a child I had witnessed with my own eyes in my own family how the "liberals" had mutilated what had once been a Divinely-revealed faith. Having been born a Jew and reared in a Jewish family, I had seen how futile was the attempt to reconcile religion to an atheistic environment. "Reformed" Judaism not only failed to check the cultural assimilation of the Jews I knew but actively encouraged the process. As a result, they had become Jews by label only. None had any religion worthy of the name. Throughout my childhood, the intellectual dishonesty, hypocrisy, and superficiality of "reformed" Judaism was a vivid experience. Even at that early age, I knew that such a watered-down, half-heated compromise could never hope to retain the loyalty of its members, much less their children. How dismayed I was when I found among the Muslims, the same threat! How shocked I was when I found certain scholars and political leaders within the Muslim community guilty of the identical sins for which God in our Holy Qur'an has so vehemently denounced the Jews! Convinced that God would not spare us from calamity and doom us to the same fate that Jews have suffered unless we sincerely repented and changed our ways, I vowed that I would devote all my literary struggle to combat this menace from within before it was too late.

Thus, in his first letter to me of January 1961, Maulana Maudoodi wrote:

"While I was scanning your essays, I felt as if I were reading my very own ideas. I hope your feeling will be the same when you have the opportunity to learn Urdu and study my books. And that, despite the fact there has been no previous acquaintance between you and me, this mutual sympathy and unanimity in thought has resulted

directly from the fact that both of us have derived our inspiration from one and the same source —Islam !”^[1]

Maryam Jameelah Begum
(Formerly *Margaret Marcus*)

Why I am a Muslim?

Until a few months ago I was regarded as a Christian, having been born into a Christian family some 26 years ago, and having endeavoured to live a good life based on the principles taught to me from childhood.

Since I have been an adult, good fortune has not been exactly my friend, and I have sought a tangible “something” which Christianity did not afford me; consequently, I became a “drifter.” I went to Church mainly because the work in which I was engaged demanded it, but spiritual help and uplift were lacking.

Some years ago—1926-27—I was in Egypt, and as an ordinary sight-seeing tourist visited the famous Mosque of Muhammad Ali in Cairo. I had the privilege of being present during prayers, and was immediately impressed by the true reverence of rich and poor alike, and by how much their “Allah” and prayer meant to them, and many times since have marvelled over it.

It is a long jump to 1933, but this year I found myself in Woking, and once again as an interested sight-seer visited the Mosque—again during prayers. These were followed by a lecture based on the first chapter of the Holy Qur’an, the prayer of every Muslim, and, indeed, a prayer for any man of any creed. I learnt of this worldwide brotherhood, possessing no racial or class distinctions; of the “Oneness” of God; of the respect and reverence ascribed to

[1] *Islam and Modernism*, by Maryam Jameelah, Lahore, Muhammad Yusuf Khan, 1968, pp. vii-xii.

all the former Prophets of God, and of the true meaning of Islam --
– Peace. It sounded wonderful, and I yearned to know more of this
faith, which is so practicable and broad-minded. I procured
literature, and a copy of the Holy Qur'an from the Mosque, and
was considerably helped by the Imam in my search for truth, and I
have found it! Three months ago, I surrendered myself to the Will
of Allah, and publicly declared that I was a Muslim.

To me, the Holy Qur'an is a mine of infinite wealth; with such
guidance—for every day of one's life—no one need fear or go
astray. Inwardly, and apparently, too, I am told, I am a much
happier person than before, though many trials have come to me
because of my changed views; in fact, I have had to resign my
position in a Church of England Institution because of it! May I
give some of the ideas and views of some of the Christian
people with whom I work? The Institution is a Home for
Destitute Children—*non-denominational*,—and my position is
that of Assistant Matron.

(i) A. is the Secretary of the Homes' Committee, and when the
Committee heard of my changed ideas, I received the
following letter from A.:-

Dear Miss Griffiths,

The House Committee learnt to-day with much regret and
surprise that you have recently become interested in
Moslemism,^[1] and that you are attending services and
lectures at the Woking Mosque.

In view of this fact coming before the Homes' Committee
at their next meeting, we wish to know if you are
intending definitely to associate yourself with Islam, and I
must make it clear that the Committee would consider this
a sufficient ground for dismissal as we can obviously not

[1] It must be Islam. Moslemism has been stated out of hatred by the so-called
committee — *Editor*

only have a person professing the Moslem faith on the Staff, but not even one who is making a practice of attending a Mosque.

I can only add that I am extremely sorry to hear that you contemplate giving up your Christianity, and do beg you to think very seriously before you take this irrevocable step.

Yours faithfully,
D.C.T.H.

I replied to this letter saying that I had "taken this irrevocable step," but I had always thought that religion was purely personal matter; therefore, my changed ideas had not interfered with my work, or in the welfare of the children with whom I worked. I received a reply, which unfortunately I burnt, in which the good lady said that apparently I had not realized the scope of my work when stating that religion was a personal matter, and inferring that it was impossible for me, as a Muslim, to bring up children in the straight and narrow path.

- (ii) B. is a member of the afore-mentioned Committee, and a very ardent church-goer. When she heard the news, it was as though a firework had exploded unexpectedly. Her hands were raised in horror and dismay—"Did I realize what I was doing? Had I lost my senses? Islam was a religion made for men by a man, and for coloured men only."
- (iii) C. is another member of the Committee who has lived in Bengal for many years. She affirms that Muslims in that district were acknowledged as the "not so-good type"; they were wonderfully honest, but terrible liars. In all classes, she says, wives are treated as mere chattels; a man reveres his mother, sisters and like relations, but his wife!—he can treat her as he likes, and all because his Qur'an allows him to do these things. (I produced my Holy Qur'an, and read passages from it which gave her statements the lie.)

(iv) D. is a male member of the Committee—a well-read and learned man—retired headmaster of a well-known public school. When asked for his views, he said, “Well, of course, we know that they (the Muslims) just look forward to the hereafter as a time of unlimited sexual enjoyment!” Could any theory be more ridiculous when naturally physical desires and needs die with the physical body?

(v) E. is the Vicar who was called in to endeavour to reclaim me to the Christian faith. “Did I realize what a terrible thing I had done?” “The matter was enough to make the Foundress of our Home rise from her grave!” “Did I realize I was denying Jesus!” “Certainly not!” said I, “I still revere Jesus, Moses, and all the Prophets, *but* I acknowledge Muhammad as the last of the Prophets of God!” “Did I dare to put Jesus on a level with Moses even?” “Yes, Moses gave the Commandments, and had Jesus not been born, if the people followed those Commandments they would not have gone far wrong!” “But Jesus is Divine, He is the Son of God!” I asked for proof, and pointed out how Jesus only refers to himself as the Son of *Man*.” This gentleman explained to me that Jesus was divine because of his miraculous birth. I disagreed, not on the birth itself but on the fact of divinity. “Did I ever pray?” “Certainly!” “Whom to?” “The One and only God!” “How could I mix with black men?” I mix with coloured people because I believe their faith, and that preaches a worldwide brotherhood which is really ordained by God but only practised in Islam.

(vi) F. is my matron who has been a wonderful friend to me, but, however, I have lost her friendship. She tells me I have demeaned myself as low as it is possible, and that she has lost all respect for me. She asked me: “Don’t you feel highly superior to these coloured men with whom you’re mixing?” I thanked God that I had never suffered from a superiority complex. She contends that Islam is a political

bait! ! That if Indians—why do people think that Islam is confined to India?—can convert English people to their faith, before long they will be demanding to govern India for themselves. This I definitely refuted. Having read only a very small portion of the Preface to the Holy Qur'an (Muhammad Ali's translation) she tells me that *sex* is the main theme of the Holy Book, and though some of the beliefs are sound and good, the word *Islam* is a pretty covering for something very dirty, something which leaves a nasty taste in one's mouth! She compares the people who expound this Faith, though clever and subtle, to the legendary spider inviting the innocent little fly into the web. To her, Islam spells the unclean side of sexual matters, and states that I am being blindly led to a life of prostitution which she thinks is wonderfully cloaked by the word "polygamy." It is impossible to convince her against any one of her beliefs.

(vii) G. is a Christian friend with a very wrong conception of Islam. I quote a few lines from a recent letter:-

"... I feel your step is a very mistaken and truly downward one, for I cannot see what attraction there could be in the Moslem faith; it is essentially an Eastern religion, and, I should have thought, could have had no appeal to the mind of an educated woman of the West. It seems to me to be in no wise comparable to the Gospels. The God of Mahomet^[1] is a kind of Sultan or Despot to be held in awe and placated, but never a Father. Moreover, consider the immeasurable distance claimed to be a Prophet, but—at the most, Mahomet claimed to be a Prophet, but—Christ! he could calmly say: 'I came from the Father, and I leave the world and go to the

[1] It shows the hatred and scorn of the Christian called G. when he uses Mahomet in place of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم — *Editor*.

Father'... also he said to his carping critics: 'Before Abraham was, I AM!' ... All these majestic utterances remove him (Christ) altogether from the category of a mere prophet, and proclaim him God—in the flesh! ... I will not say much about the distinctly lower morality of Islam, but that is undeniable. The status of woman is lower; the Koran allows for polygamy and slavery, also for proselytism by the sword; all these things are purely carnal ...”

These are a few of the slurs which have been cast upon Islam and Muslims; I hear more daily; some are too ridiculous to pay attention to.

From what I gather, these accusations are absolutely unfounded, for no real evidence is forthcoming in support of any one statement. Thus, I am even more sure of my convictions, but I am sorry for these people who are so bigoted that they will not listen to the truths which Islam proclaims. They may one day!

Moreover, I am proud and thankful to be a Muslim, and my faith in Islam will never be shattered. Allah be praised.^[1]

Miss Rahima Griffiths

My allegiance to Islam

I was born in a Tatar village in Russia, where my father, a Roman Catholic Pole and an exile from Poland, was a doctor. He married a Muslim woman who became a Christian in order to marry him, as in old Russia marriages between Christians and non-Christians were not allowed. My mother never went to church or took part in any religious service elsewhere, and my earliest recollections are of her whispering to herself the Muslim prayers whenever she was

[1] *Islamic Review*. December 1943, Vol. 21, No. 12, pp. 405-410.

alone. I grew up in the shadow of a Mosque, and all my childhood memories are bound up with the call of the *Muezzin*, the Tatars saying their prayers at home and in the fields, and the whole sober, clean and decent life of the Muslim community which I subconsciously compared with the drunkenness, brutality and filth of the neighbouring Russian villages.

Both my parents died early, and I was brought up among the Russian intelligentsia without any religion, principles or traditions. I must say I never gave much thought to spiritual matters until, after having lived in England and America, I imperceptibly became convinced that one must have some guiding principle in one's life and some kind of moral code. I studied Christianity, but, even stripped of all the trappings of ritualism and superstitions, it could not satisfy me because I could not accept the fundamental principles of Christianity—the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the original sin and redemption. It seemed to me that the true God was completely overshadowed by the tremendous figure of Christ, and I could not believe that the suffering and death of one person, however saintly, even divine, would redeem the sins of the whole world, especially as the world went on sinning as if nothing happened. So naturally I turned to Islam. I say naturally because I always had a sort of nostalgia for Islam, brought up, as I was in its atmosphere from my earliest childhood. It was like coming home, and the more I read the Qur'an and the books on Islam by Muslim writers,—the most lucid and convincing of them being those of the Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din,—the more I became convinced that it is the only true religion,—a religion for people who think and do not want to shut their eyes to the realities of life and the discoveries of science. I could not help comparing it to the teaching of Jesus which, lofty as it is, either leads to asceticism and virtual denial of life, or demands an enormous structure of casuistry and sophistry in order to adapt it to the earthly life of mankind. How could it stand in comparison with

the pure logic of Islam—submission to the will of God and striving towards His perfection? There, "one has not the theological dogmas and magic formulas for salvation, but a perfect guidance and a moral code for the whole conduct of life, which does not demand denying the evidence of one's reason, nor the violation of one's natural feelings. Indeed, I cannot understand how any thinking person can fail seeing it. That is why so many critics of Islam fall back on the "bad life" of the people in Muslim countries, willfully shutting their eyes to the fact that their vices are due not to the teachings of Islam but to the dire poverty and ignorance in which they live owing to the physical and political conditions of their countries. My only regret is that I did not see the truth earlier, as it would not only have made me happier, but would have helped me to become a more useful member of the community."^[1]

Mrs. C. Sa'eeda Namier

Bliss of my new Faith: Islam

I had worked as a missionary for nearly seven years in America. When I felt I must "go out on my own." I felt the Almighty was leading me to somewhere and that I must follow until I found the answer. I always wanted to travel to another country, so I decided just to go. I went to Germany, and there I met my husband who introduced me to Islam. Together we went to Pakistan where I lived for 1½ years in a small village called Mahji. It was quite a big change for me, being away from large cities I lived in throughout my life. The way, the people lived here was the thing that impressed me the most and inspired me to believe so strongly in the Islamic way of life. In my past life I

^[1] *Islamic Review*. January 1935, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 1-3.

had lived with Christian and Jewish people, but I could not find them up to the ideals they were teaching. It was only in Pakistan that I found people who were really *living* up to what they believe. Being reared in America, I know at first hand the *hell* the daughters have to go through. There is no control, no moral standard, and the girls are let loose at the age of 18 to "find their own way", just like an animal. Where is the love in such actions? But in Pakistan, you can't find a girl alone on the street. The parents have strict control over them. According to Islam, they are married at the appropriate time. There is no room for Satan to invade. Now I have been blessed with two daughters of my own and I am proud to say that when they grow up, they will be protected by the Islamic faith and traditions and won't have to go through the terrible hell that I experienced. To me, this is the essence of purity and faith, restored on earth by man. For in the beginning it was the failure of Adam to protect Eve from Lucifer and thus the Fall of Man occurred. Through Islam we can keep ourselves away from that failure by protecting our daughters from Satan and leading them to Allah. It is my firm faith that Allah has chosen Islam to correct this present-day world and lead it back to the original purpose of Creation of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. *Ameen!*^[1]

Virginia Hajarrah Mir

[1] *Yaqeen International*, April 7, 1986, Vol.34, No.23, p.273.

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PERSONAL PROFILE

Name: Muhammad Haneef Shahid
Country: Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Place of Birth: Lahore, Pakistan
Date of Birth: 1st January 1939
Addresses: (i) *In Saudi Arabia:*
King Saud University
P.O. Box No. 22480, Riyadh 11495,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Tel: Office 4676118-9
(ii) *In Pakistan:*
170, Jehanzeb Block, Allama Iqbal Town,
Lahore- 54570, Pakistan.
Tel: 5419987

Education:

- a) M.A. (Punjab University, Lahore) -1970
- b) Diploma in Library Science (Punjab University, Lahore) -1963
- c) B.A. (Punjab University, Lahore) -1962
- d) Certificate in the French language and literature (Punjab University, Lahore) -1965
- e) Research Scholar, Punjab University, Lahore, doing Research Work on the "Life and Works of Sir Sheikh Abdul Qadir" for Ph.D.

Honours:

- a) Participated in "The Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal International Congress" held at Lahore from 2nd to 8th December, 1977 and contributed a paper entitled "Iqbal & Government College, Lahore" and awarded Gold Medal by General Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

- b) Participated in 'A Dialogue on the Political Views of Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal & Quaid-i-Azam'- a programme telecast by the Pakistan Television Corporation, Lahore in 1977.
- c) Participated in different programmes conducted by the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, Lahore from 1972 to 1977.
- d) Participated in "A Guest and A Dialogue; Dr. Muhammad Iqbal; Poet of Islam", a programme broadcast by the Saudi Arabian Broadcasting Service, Riyadh on the 10th November, 1985.
- e) Participated in "Views & Thoughts; Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal; Poet of Islam" a Television programme telecast on the 20th and 27th December, 1986 respectively by the Saudi Arabian Television, Second Channel, Riyadh, K.S.A.
- f) Presented a paper entitled "Allama Muhammad Iqbal & the Arabic Language" at International Iqbal Congress held under the auspices of Association Marocaine Pour la Solidarite Musulmane, Rabat, Morocco, held from 28th to 30th March, 1988.
- g) Participated and presented a paper namely "Educational Philosophy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal" at the Iqbal International Symposium held on 9th April, 1987 at Riyadh K.S.A.
- h) Participated and presented a paper namely "Allama Muhammad Iqbal & Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab's Contribution to Islamic Thought" at the International Symposium held on the 19th February, 1990 at Riyadh, K.S.A.
- i) Participated and contributed a number of papers in various "Allama Iqbal & Quaid-i-Azam Seminars" held in Riyadh, K.S.A.

Moreover, written and published more than 300 articles on different subjects. These articles, papers, and lectures were published in newspapers and journals of repute in Pakistan and abroad.

Distinctions:

- i) Life Member of the Pakistan Library Association
- ii) Member of the Punjab University Library Alumni Association.
- iii) Life Member of the Punjab Public Library, Lahore.
- iv) Life Member of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore.
- v) Life Member of the Pakistan Writers' Guild, Lahore.
- vi) President of the Bazm-i-Iqbal, Riyadh, K.S.A.
- vii) Secretary General of the International Islamic Research Institute, London (Riyadh Branch Office).

Tributes:

- 1) It would not be out of place to mention that the Editor's life-sketch (bio-data) is included nearly in all the Reference Works published in Pakistan.
- 2) It is noteworthy that nearly all the important publications of the Editor are processed and preserved in the Library of Congress, Washington, U.S.A.
- 3) It is creditable that a life-size photograph -- Portrait of the Editor has been placed in the "Hall of Fame" - Conference Hall, Pakistan Academy of Letters, Islamabad - as a recognition to the contribution and services rendered for the cause of Art, Literature, and Pakistan.
- 4) It is also worth mentioning that the Editor has been named in the "Who's Who in the World" of Marquis Who's Who, U.S.A.; and his detailed *curriculum vitae* has been published in its 13th edition of 1996.

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- b) Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah: Founder of Pakistan**
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