

Why Did I Embrace Islam? **By Muhammad Nazeeh Khalid**

I was born in the city of Mansoorah in the Arab Republic of Egypt in an ordinary Christian family in which religion had not much significance. We did not go to Church except on festive and ceremonial occasions. As far as we were concerned, religion did not mean anything more than rites which we observed, when necessary, even though we did not understand the language in which these rites were conducted. Despite our not grasping what they meant, the rest of my family was deep in the blind fanaticism of the ignorant, who fear the loss of a thing even though they do not know its value. As for myself I never had such feelings even for a single moment. I found the services so tedious that I never sat through them to their conclusion. I was plagued by boredom and unease. I felt sure that I was not meant to be one of them. I felt a total stranger in this place full of pictures, icons and statues like the temples of the idolaters of yore. Then I turned to reading with inexhaustible greed and enthusiasm, which stimulated my faculties and sharpened my feelings.

Questions began to strike my mind like a spade striking virgin land to prepare it for the sowing of good seeds to bring forth delicious fruits. It was at this time that doubt arose within me about the religion to which I was born, violently and extensively shattering my frame of mind. My heart rejected emotionally and my mind denied logically the idea that Almighty God could appear in the tangible form of a man and come down to the earth and permit sinners to beat him, to spit on his face, and ultimately to torture and crucify him (according to the Christian claim), even if it was to exonerate them from the fault of their father Adam, as the Christians argue. As for the belief that God has three entities, this too I refused to admit as true, because God is one and only one and He has no compare. As for the doctrine of the trinity, it must ultimately lead to a division of the entity of God Himself, whose glory is far above such a misconception. Such beliefs are the fundamentals of Christianity, viz., the divinity of Jesus Christ, his crucifixion as an atonement for humanity, and the Trinity—the Father, the Son and The Holy Ghost. I banished these beliefs totally from the domain of my thinking; expelled them from my mind; and struck them off the register of my beliefs and conviction. I thus discarded all false and misleading beliefs.

They say that it is not possible to acquire sound belief through wisdom, because it is too sublime to be within the reach of the human mind. I, on my part, am fully convinced that if we use our intellect rightly, refined of the turbidity of passion and pre-conceived, ready-made ideologies, we can surely find a wealth of firm and unshakable Faith in Allah and in His supreme might and ability, before Whose dazzling signs one has no alternative but to surrender in humility and helplessness. Thus did I cross over the mountains of doubt of firm belief: the true religion of Allah which is Islam.

REVEALED RELIGIONS

I studied the revealed religions as well as the non-revealed cults, like Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, etc. In some I found traces of high morals and philosophy of the sort to guide man to ideal conduct. But when it comes to formulating a definition of Allah, they go too far either by supposing many gods, each of them entrusted with the management of one specific department of the affairs of the world, or by presenting Allah in tangible form, resembling very closely the forms and shapes of earthly creatures. These gods indulge both

in serious activities and in vengeful pranks, express anger, eat and drink, and generally behave as mortals do.

As for Islam, it is the religion of nature. Almighty Allah has purified it of all material and tangible forms, and raised it to the highest degree of spiritualism and purity. Islam confirms that Allah possesses, will, wisdom, discretion, knowledge and authority. According to Islam, Allah beautiful names are attributes which cannot be separated from His Being under any circumstances. It also emphasizes His oneness, which is not shared by anyone, and His existence for all eternity, as mentioned in Surah 112.

Say He is Allah the One and Only. Allah, the Absolute, the Eternal. He begot none, nor was He begotten. And no one is comparable to Him.

Thus did Islam attract me to its sublime and sacred fold—Islam the purest and most sublime of the revealed religions, unsullied by apostasy or the doctrine of incarnation.

ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

On the 8th of Ramadan I entered the mosque for the first time with two companions. My soul and conscience became purified in the melting pot of magnificent faith. I underwent that sweet, pleasant experience which opened to me the door of salvation. Every bit of my body pulsed with a pious soaring, high in the high heavens. Neither did I feel disgusted nor perplexed—No, never. It was the radiation of brilliant light which shone outside and inside of me which acquainted me with who I really was. Soft, soothing, melodious inner voices whispered to me that from now onwards, till the end of my life, my path was Islam. In this moment which rose high above the summits of time, I stood before Allah, the One and Only, the Almighty, the Forgiving. His most High Spirit embraced me and asked me to resign myself to His care after the period of my prolonged loss and misfortune. Immediately after concluding the prayer, I took the Holy Book at the gate of the Al-Husain mosque, and came back home imbibing enlightenment from the seas of its sacred verses and its eternal, clear wisdom by which I was thoroughly overwhelmed. This is the Book of God *"about which there is no doubt."* *"Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or behind it."* (41:32)

It shall remain preserved till the end of the world without distortion or change.

"We have without doubt, sent down the message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)." (15:9)

In plunging into this Divine, copious and flowing bounty, I uttered the two Shahdatain (testimonies) and announced my Islam to Allah. So that the firmness of my faith might flourish and its impact on me might grow strong, I began to read books and works of contemporary Muslim thinkers who command influence in the Arab and other Muslim countries, Aqqad, a famous literary figure in Egypt, being one of them.

I hope in all humbleness that Allah may accept my Islam which I have embraced heart and soul as my last refuge. I have entered the fold of Islam in love of God, and His Prophet whose status is sublime and exalted and whose personality is unique and exceptional. I have always appreciated and honored him in the past and have an unflinching belief that he is the greatest of all personalities to love an indelible mark on the annals of world history.