



رابطة العالم الإسلامي
مركز التفتيش والإصلاح

The Reverters to Islam

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Translated by
Sadok Salehi

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MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

The Reverters to Islam

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INTRODUCTION

I fought the temptations to succumb to the term often used to describe those who have accepted or embraced Islam. To call these “converts” carries the idea that someone has been following a religion, yet at one stage of his life, crosses the floor to the other side of the house. In fact, it is not so. A human being according to God is born on the natural state of submission to the mighty Lord. It is his parents who will make him a Jew, a Christian or follower of any other belief or culture. At one time, I was thinking if I had been a 5000 year human; I would have been Jew, Christian then a Muslim consecutively. You see, according to the Quran, the book revealed to the Prophet of the Muslims, a man or a woman is born a natural Muslim. The change comes later influenced by immediate family circles and the environment surrounding that particular person. So, the matter isn't a conversion to Islam, but a return to it after a lapse of time.

Anyway, this is a compilation of “exes” Jews, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, who have made a return to the original faith. The author of this book is Dr. Mohammad Munqith Al-Sakkar a researcher, a writer and well-known religious debater. He authored the book titled: “Li hadha Aslamu.” He works as a researcher with the Muslim World League. He has favorably answered my request to translate some of those reverts to Islam.

Well, here is the translation depicting the experience of these selected people, and the transition they have made from their former faith to Islam. Generally, it wasn't smooth sailing for some of them. Some have been hounded down, and others met with violent death. Others, have carved a niche for themselves, and have become well known scholars teaching in Islamic institutions of religious science. Men and women have pursued relentless efforts seeking the truth. They have been rewarded with immense pleasure and inner peace of mind in this world. After all, they have found their callings. Their only solace is their high expectation of the greatest reward of them all: obeying God, achieving His satisfaction and a ticket to paradise.

Allah is indeed generous with His servants; He won't shortchange them. He is just and fair. He has said in the Quran; verse 21 Sura At-Tur: “**And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained.**”

Sadok Salehi

Translator/Interpreter

Muslim World League

Makkah

Abdulkerim-Gyula Germanus

A few days ago, I read an interview with Yana Korobko the Ukrainian Orientalist, who became Muslim. She revealed a most important piece of news. She said, “Numerous Orientalist convert to Islam after years of study and research. They travel to see up close and touch the reality of Muslims in their communities. The road to Orientalism will lead inevitably to embracing Islam, if the Orientalist isn’t afraid of the reactions of those around him.”

The Hungarian Orientalist Gyula Germanus is one of those orientalists, who converted to Islam. The Egyptian writer Akkad has described him saying: “He is ten scholars in one.” How cannot that be? He mastered eight languages: Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, German, Hungarian, Italian and English. And has the honor membership of many scientific academies, including the Iraqi, Egyptian and Syrian ones. In addition to this, he is a member of the Institute of Oriental Research in London, and the Italian Mediterranean Academy of Sciences. He has also been the Secretary-General of the Hungarian Pen Club.

Germanus has been born in Budapest; capital of Hungary in 1884 to Christian parents. His story with Islam began when he was sixteen years of age. He was leafing through a folder that contained pictures, when his eyes fell on a carved wooden plate. The pictures depicted the image of the eastern society through a story teller talking to his audience huddled around him. Germanus saw a light in this picture, and a vibrant culture that he did not see in European society. “I’ve felt an overwhelming nostalgia to know the secret behind this light that dispelled the darkness in this picture.”

In the following years, Germanus decided to study history and Languages at the University of Sciences in Budapest. He learned both Turkish and Persian languages, which led him to the study of Orientalism. His brush with languages has kindled his love in the Orient and its civilization. This step has awakened his interest in Islam, which was the spirit of the East and the driving force of its renaissance.

In 1902, Germanus visited Bosnia. His mind buzzed with distorted ideas about Muslims, and misconceptions that misrepresent Muslims. The books of his Orientalist teachers are bursting with fallacies that traditionally accuse Muslims of barbarism, violence and cruelty.

However, these lies have turned a laughingstock; they soon will be revealed and uncovered in his first contact with Muslims. He has imagined that the two men sitting across from him in a Sarajevo cafe were plotting to kill him. He said, their daggers strapped to their waist, “their head covers, and their odd appearance have given rise to a strange feeling within me. I

was intimidated by their awful appearance. I remembered then bloody stories I've read in fanatical books that talk about the intolerance of Muslims. I have noted that they were whispering to each other. This sight has filled my childish imagination with feelings of panic. He thought they soon would be planting their daggers in the chest of this curious infidel. I wished I could have emerged unscathed from this frightening place, yet; I didn't dare to move.

Few minutes of friendly talk with these Muslims were enough to turn the ideas nestled in his fertile imagination upside down. "Their faces lit up and with affection overflowing with tenderness, they invited me to their homes. Instead of stilettos penetrating my bowels, they overwhelmed me with their hospitality. Such was my first encounter with Muslims."

The Orientalist Germanus completed his studies at the Universities of Istanbul and Vienna. In 1906, he wrote his first book titled: "The history of Poetry of the Ottomans." This has been followed by another on the history of the Turks before obtaining a doctorate in 1907.

Germanus returned to Budapest in 1912, to teach the history of the civilization of Islam and Eastern Languages in Laurent Anovic University for nearly fifty years. His life has been filled with travels and studies that have honed the experience this erudite Orientalist. These have enhanced his intellect, and made him into a distinguished personality in contemporary European thought.

However, all this prominence hasn't been enough to provide Germanus with serenity. "I have found a thin trivial line in the books of science and knowledge nonetheless; my spirit remained thirsty. Hence it was longing for the serendipity of paradise. I quenched my mind's thirst, but my soul remained parched; I had to denude myself of everything it's clinging to. I am hoping to recover my loss through meditation and inner experience. I seek to purify my soul through the fire of torment, the same way soft steel becomes rigid when subjected to cold water."

In the years 1929 and 1932 Germanus studied Islamic history at the Universities of Delhi and Lahore. At the invitation of India's great poet Rabindranath Tagore, he carried his main concern and traveled there. His journey will be met with luck. In a dream, he saw the Prophet (PBUH) talking to him: "Why all the worry? The road is ahead of you. The true path is open in front of you. It is as safe as the ground, walk it at a steady pace with the light of faith."

On the following Friday, Germanus announced his conversion to Islam among a crowd of eminent Indian Muslims. He spoke to them in the Shah Jehan Mosque in New Delhi: "I came from distant land to acquire

knowledge not available in my country. I have come seeking your inspiration, and you haven't failed me."

Germanus added: "I carried on talking about Islam and the role he played in the history of the world. I mentioned the miracle that Allah had allowed His Messenger (PBUH) to perform. I have explained the reasons for contemporary Muslims decline, and the reasons that enable them to regain their past glory. It is an Islamic wisdom that everything functions according to Allah's command, but Allah says in Sura Ar-Ra'd, verse 11: ("Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their hearts.")

Many things have led Germanus to Islam, including its full compatibility with science. Hence, unlike other beliefs, science and faith are attuned to each other. "There's not a single word in the teachings of Islam that hinders the progress of a Muslim, or prevents increasing his share of wealth, power or knowledge. And there is nothing in the teachings of Islam that cannot be achieved practically. It's a great miracle distinct from others. Islam is a religion of enlightened mind; it will be the belief of free men."

Therefore, the learned Germanus sees no surprise in the spread of Islam. He said it is the "religion of enlightened minds, and I know in my country and in Europe enlightened men of the noblest families who respect Islam. They are about to embrace it as their faith, even in secrecy.

Germanus also saw in Muslims the opposite of what he has read about them in the Orientalist books. "I found treasures in the hearts of Muslims outweighing the value of gold. They gave me a sense of love and brotherhood; they taught me charitable work and the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Muslims should hold tightly to the moral values which characterize them. They shouldn't be dazzled by the glitter of the West. It's just that, nothing more than a hollow phony sparkle."

Germanus took pride and cherished Islamic values and recommend them everywhere he went. He once addressed an intellectual forum in Algiers telling them: "I strongly and courageously urge all Muslim brothers to uphold ethics. They are the spiritual tenets of our Islamic religion; and safeguard Muslim law, which is based on ethics. However, the creed and beliefs of the philosophy of western legislation have been established on human ideology driven by political considerations only. On the other hand, Islamic law is the product of faith and the conviction that the universe is merely a regular and coordinated creation of a moral spirituality. The basis of faith is the revelation. Hence, its implementation is based on the law of inference and conclusion of logical thinking. It's also based on ephemeral and worldly explanation, and physical conditions."

Since the day he embraced Islam, Germanus was eager to learn Arabic. It is the key that will open the gates to Islam's treasures. "I had the power of faith and the firm certainty; two elements that prompted me to learn this language regardless of the obstacles and the difficulties. First, I started studying Arabic without a teacher, and through books I have obtained from European libraries. Then, I embarked on reading the Holy Qur'an with the help of language dictionaries. Later, I have memorized by heart the meanings of important and complex words. I followed this program for several months. Finally with the grace of God and His support, I became familiar with its origins. Over time, I have overcome all odds, and I started to understand Arabic with ease and capability, although I have not heard an Arabic native speaker in my life."

To understand the importance of mastering the Arabic language and its minutiae, Germanus traveled to Egypt. He sought knowledge throughout Al-Azhar University's halls. There, he met its eminent scholars and writers. Henceforth, he set his sights to "complete all aspects of my studies in Arabic literature, and in-depth study of the branches of the true religion. This will enable to fend off attacks of those who slander or distort the greatness of Islam in Europe."

Germanus has also toured the Arab countries' capitals, and delivered very interesting lectures. From there, he traveled to Makkah to perform his first pilgrimage. He chronicled his journey into a book titled "Allahu Akbar" The book's introduction also included the story of his conversion to Islam. He included an explanation of the fundamentals of Islam.

Since embracing Islam Dr. Abdul Karim Germanus never spared any efforts to work relentlessly for his eternal religion and language. «I wish to live a hundred years, to fulfill my desire to serve the language of the Qur'an. Studying the Arabic language needs a century of traveling the paths of its beauty and culture." He died in 1979 without completing one hundred years. Nevertheless, he has left a scientifically distinct and enriching legacy in religion, language and history topics. He has penned nearly a hundred books. Among his writings, we mention the most important of his collection: "Modern Movements in Islam," and "Prominent Scholars of Arabic literature." He also wrote, "Between Two Thoughts," and "Leading Civilizations" as well as "Cultural Relations between Arabs and Central Europe" and "The Holy Qur'an" and « Study in Arabic Linguistic structures."

However, it's unfortunate that Germanus has authored these books in Hungarian, German and English languages. Albeit rendered into many international languages, they haven't been translated into Arabic yet.

Dr. Mohammad Zia Urrahman Al-Azami (Banki Ram)

He is one of the most prominent scholars of the Prophetic Hadith: an erudite scholar and researcher. Large numbers of Medina's university graduate students have benefited from his vast knowledge. His books have been scattered throughout the Arab libraries, a treasure to millions of Muslims.

Undoubtedly, many of us have known, read or heard about Dr. Al-Azami. However, most of us don't know that he was one of those who reverted to Islam. Panke Ram (Al-Azami) was born in 1943 UP in India. His family was Hindu fanatic family. He grew up worshiping idols, and used to honor their gods whose numbers are known only to Allah.

Since childhood, Panke Ram has been indoctrinated with the worst evil about Muslims who have governed India for twelve centuries. Hindu historians and authors have claimed that Muslims have wronged Hindus and were unfair to them. Hindu generations evolved with deep-rooted hatred of Islam and Muslims. Ram's hatred of Islam has been further enhanced, of the poverty and underdevelopment of these Muslims.

Panke Ram graduated from high school, and enrolled in Shipley's College in the city of "Azam Gharrah," a city that he will carry its name later. For the first time he has been introduced to Islam, when his friend gifted a book written by Mawdudi. The book's title was the "True Religion." Avidly, he read the book few times; to this experience he said: "I felt I was lost into utter darkness that has started to lift gradually. I wanted to get more of this light."

The young Hindu bought Mawdudi's books, and began reading them in his free time between his college courses. His astonishment about the writer and the religion he's calling grew. However, his admiration of Mawdudi reached its zenith in 1953. A biased military court wrongly sentenced Mawdudi to death. Mawdudi has shown a lot of patience and stamina, and above all his contentment with what Allah has decreed. He has exhibited an admirable strong faith, and refused to ask the court for clemency.

This attitude has deeply touched the young Panke Ram. He said: "I have always thought that those who faced destiny, and have resigned to their fate had all vanished into history's books."

Panke Ram took a step back, though; say if you want a step forward. He went backward to Hindu religious books called *Vida*. In them, he wanted to find a cure to his chest's constriction. Therein, he has found them teeming with fairy tales enticing people to worship trees, rocks and animals. They don't cause harm, nor confer favor or benefit. "After studying *Vida*, I

felt like a man who runs from rain drops to stand under the gutter.” He said. Alternatively, like the poet has said:

Seeking the help of a fair weather friend is

Like one who seeks refuge from heat to searing fire.

How could the young educated Panke Ram believe in books that call for polytheism? For each aspect of nature around us, it will assign it a specific god. They claim that “Agni” is the god of fire; “Vayu” the god of air; “Indra” the god of thunder; “Surya” the god of the sun; “Varuna” god of the cosmic law; “Vishnu” god of sustenance. These books also claim that the creator “Washu” is similar to man. He has many eyes, arms and legs. He gets tired; in order to regain his strength, he has to eat sacrificial animals to restore his might that brings downpour and manages the universe.

How could the young educated Panke Ram believe their claim that the supreme god “Permishur” has created water from his own body, then threw a drop of semen in it? This concoction has become an egg, and Brahma came out who broke the egg in half. From one-half, he has created paradise and heavens and earth from the other half. Furthermore, the universe according to their belief will remain in existence as long as this presumed god stays awake. However, if he dozed off and sleeps, the Day of Judgment will come. Allah says in Sura Al-Furqan, verse 3: **“Yet have they not taken, besides him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created; that have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection.”**

After embracing Islam, Al-Azami has quoted chapters of these books in order to shed some light of their weak argument and banal topics. For example, in the books of (Rag Vida), the Angels will tell (Indra) the (god of rain): “O Indra! Vishnu (god of sustenance) is preparing a buffalo supper for you” the books also say: “Indra is with the worshipers cooking the plump ox.” Furthermore, the alleged god Indra says: “Cook me, fifteen oxen and I will eat it, and I will be fat.” One would ask how such sayings could convince Panke Ram or anyone else of a religion in such a state.

Panke Ram inched closer to Islam when he read the translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an by Khaawaja Hassan Nizami. His conviction about Islam has been further strengthened when he attended a lesson in Qur'an presented by his professor in Shipley College. The man has been on the verge of becoming Muslim. However, nothing is delaying gaining access to its realm, except the fears of his family's reaction; they are fanatics who hate Islam.

By the mid 1960s, Panke Ram has overcome and vanquished his fears. His Quran professor was reading Allah's words from Sura Al-

Ankabut, verse 41: “The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of the spider, who builds (to itself) a house; but truly, the flimsiest of houses is the spider's house; - if they but knew.” The professor went on to explain the parable of the spider’s house likening it to any human relationship not sanctioned by Allah. “And he said: "For you, ye have taken (for worship) idols besides Allah, out of mutual love and regard between yourselves in this life; but on the Day of Judgment ye shall disown each other and curse each other: and your abode will be the Fire, and ye shall have none to help.” Ibid, verse 25. The words shook the core of Panke Ram, and he declared his Islam on the spot. “Light penetrated my heart. I have felt relieved when I cast away the religion of my fathers. And I finally renounced this creed of ignorance and entered into Islam.” I prostrated myself in humility thanking Allah for this gift. “The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will)” Sura Al-i-Imran, verse 19. Mohammad Zia Urrahman will be embarking on a new life. His will be a life of mixed feelings where belief intermingles with trials; and happiness will be mixed with fear. Reliving his unique experience, he commented: “I felt like I have come out from total darkness to glittering light. It was like I have floated from a deep hole to the highest summit. For the first time, I knew the purpose of life. However, most of all I have realized the blatant contrast between Islam and Muslims.”

When we ask ourselves for the reasons that led Al-Azami to Islam, he readily answers. “These are the elements that obliged me to enter Islam. Islam is not a religion inherited from parents; it is a religion which welcomes those who open their hearts to it. There are no racial disparities in Islam or biased intolerance.” Allah says in Sura Al-Hujurat, verse 13: “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”

This unique trait among many in Islam will be only appreciated by Al-Azami and others that have endured abhorrent racism. You see; The Hindus divide society into four social classes (casts). The Brahmins are at the top, they claim to have been created from the mouth of the god. These are the intellectuals and spiritual leaders and priests. The second social group is the Satyriasis; the protectors of society, they are the politicians, the police, and the military. They claim to be born from the arms of the god. The third cast is the Vaisyas; these have been born from the thighs of the god. They are the craftsman, artisans and farmers. However, the fourth social grade is the downtrodden class or the untouchables. According to the sacred Hindu books, the Shudras have been born from the feet of the god;

they are to serve other casts and perform menial jobs. To this cast belong Al-Azami and most Indians.

Al-Azami has said: “They have made Shudras the lowest of mankind’s classes. They have denuded them from all human qualities; they are like animals, even worse. Shudras class has been hurt and degraded while cows have been worshiped and venerated. By God, it is injustice and aggression committed against human kind. The only way to save this group of people is to invite them to the tolerance of Islam, a religion that makes piety a barometer for honor and kindness. **“Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.”** In Sura Al-Hujurat, verse 13.”

Needless to say, that this unjust system has encouraged tens of thousands of the Shudras to embrace Islam. The Hindu religious bodies panicked and started reviewing and improving their religious laws.

We return to the story of Al-Azami to when the news of his embracing Islam leaked to his family. Pressure started to build up against him. As a starter, he has been subjected to the Hindu priests for exorcism sessions. They wanted to relieve him of the evil spirits that have gotten hold of him. Then, he has been deprived of food and drink, and has been beaten with sticks and shoes. Finally, his mother and sisters have resorted to crying and shedding tears and hunger strike to return him back to kufr and idolatry that he has fled like a plague. They wanted Mohammad to transmute again to (Panke Ram) and follow his ancestors’ religion.

Neither has the young Muslim’s stance softened, nor has he hesitated in asserting his faith. In contrary, he has shown great resolve to stick to his religion. He has matched his family’s cunning to dissuade him leaving his faith with a strong conviction to keep it. Lastly, a bright idea has come to their minds; they decided to invite hermits to dialogue him. They have thought that, perhaps; with good argument, they will beat him. Fifteen long days Al-Azami kept debating them toe to toe. Fiery questions and harsh answers have been exchanged during ensuing sessions. The priests have found themselves against a staunch opponent who fought ferociously for what he believed. They have decided then to strike a bargain with him. If he insisted on leaving the Hindu faith, he should become a Christian instead of Muslim. The Christians are rich, and the others are poor. Perhaps he will gain a lot from the former. They have questioned his choice of Islam. The Muslims, after all, are disunited, poor and technologically backward. His reply stunned them: “I have chosen Islam as a faith, not the Muslims.” He further asked them to bring one single flaw that impugns his pure religion.”

The Hindu family was at its wit’s end; they didn’t know what to do with their rebellious son. His father decided to hand him over to an

extremist Hindu organization. The latter has been known for its cruelty, and specializes in the torture of the sons of Hindu who convert to Islam. He escaped their clutch living in utter poverty; the gang was chasing him from one city to another. Finally, he settled in the city of Madras in the south of India. He has lived there for six years enrolled in a religious school called (Darussalam University). There he has mastered the Arabic and Urdu languages in addition to a fair share of Islamic science. From there he went to the University of Medina to study the Hadith of the Prophet. He got his master's degree from King Abdul-Aziz University, and the PhD from Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

After getting his last degree, Sheikh Al-Azami returned to Medina to teach at the university level. He also started writing; he has authored several useful books. Among the books, to name only few, are the following: "Studies in Judaism, Christianity and India's religions." He has also written a book about the Prophet's Sunna entitled: "the Great Favor, Explanation and Classification of Lesser Sunna." In addition, he penned another in the "Studies in Contest and Modification"; "Introduction to Greater Sunna of Al-Baihaqi" and finally, the "Glossary of the Terms of Hadith."

Sheikh Al-Azami is still living in Medina giving lectures. We entreat Allah to grant him steadfastness and keep him firm on the faith.

Professor (Abdul-Ahad Dawood) Benjamin David

Few are those who leave their mark in the fields of science they deal with. For most authors and writers contend themselves to repeat what their predecessors have said.

Professor Dawood is one of those who have written extensively in the subject of religious argument. No researcher can ignore or overlook his writings.

You see; Abdul-Ahad Dawood was the former Priest Benjamin David. He has reached the highest academic and theological echelons. He was fluent in both languages of the Bible; Greek and Hebrew. Furthermore, he was well versed in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages.

In Iran and in the middle of the nineteenth century, Benjamin has been born in a Chaldean Christian family that follows the Catholic Church. He pursued academic and theological education in Provo Gann David College in Rome. Later, in 1895, he went on to become a priest. His scientific writings made him famous with religious newspapers and magazines. These used to compete to publish his articles and research.

Ever since his young age, Benjamin, the Pastor has worked with British and French Christian missionary. He has visited Rome and many other European capitals. He has been selected to represent his religious group in the "Eucharist" conference held by the Catholic denominations in "Paray-le-Monial" in France.

On the first day of the twentieth century, the pastor delivered a famous sermon. A large gathering of believers witnessed the event. The subject of his speech has been to urge followers to spread Christianity and modernize their methods of preaching to suit the twentieth century. However, before the end of the last days of that same year, doubts about religion have raged in his mind. Benjamin, the Priest, took a significant step in his life. After a month of isolation spent captive of his suspicions among his books, references and reflections, he has decided to quit missionary work.

Looking into one important Christian doctrine, Benjamin the Pastor began his mutiny on the Church. The cause of his scorn is the intercession and salvation practiced within the Church. His innate instinct has rejected the claim that God won't save anyone from hellfire except through Christ the Intercessor. However, this Messiah who combines human and divine traits will readily grant this salvation from purgatory. All he has to do is to be crucified on the cross to atone for the sinners' wrong doing.

The matter doesn't stop here. There are many other intercessors the Church asks believers to seek salvation from. This includes the Virgin

Mary, whom the Catholic believers worship. They ask her forgiveness through supplication, pleading and prayers. In addition, there are angels, apostles and monks. These, will forgive people in churches and accept their vows, offerings and rituals. Furthermore, the Church believes that no salvation will be granted to even those who do well unless by intervention on their behalf.

Abdul-Ahad's reply to this was: "This has mystified me and gave rise to uncertainty in the validity of Christianity. It has led me to search and analyze the foundations of religions openly." His bright mind doesn't accept nonsense and doesn't follow illusions and fantasy.

Studies have led the erudite pastor to believe that this faith is twice inconsistent with divine justice. The first of which: it requires the offender to escape punishment through someone interceding on his behalf. The second: the conviction and doom of a good doer who for the lack of an intercessor won't receive salvation. According to canonical perspective, it's only through alleged intercessors holding this right; a sin could be forgiven. Furthermore, this will make these people if they were honest, worthier of thanks and supplication than God himself. Denouncing this practice, David has said: "to whom would the forgiven and exonerated of his sins be grateful to? Would he be thankful to God or to the intercessor? Of course, he would be more indebted and obliged to his intercessor that saved him from the executioner. Through this "*kind*" act by the intercessor, he would be reminded of an unforgiving and revengeful Judge, seeking his doom." Thus absolute intercession through humans is a belief falsely attributed to God as: "weakness, ignorance, injustice and bad faith..."

Benjamin David the Priest visited Britain in 1904 where he joined a unified religious society. Then, on his way back to Iran, he stopped in Istanbul. There, he met a number of Muslim scholars headed by a renowned Sheikh called Jamaluddin Effendi. He had a talk, and discussed religions with them. A strange thing happened to him; he felt his heart has just cracked open with a new sensation. He has become Muslim and called himself Abdul-Ahad Dawood.

Once he has been asked: how have you become Muslim? First thing is he has acknowledged the bounty of God on him. He said: "I cannot attribute my guidance to anyone other than Allah the Almighty. Without His support, all readings, research and efforts spent to seek the truth won't be enough. The moment I have believed in the unity of God and his noble Prophet (PBUH), was the turning point towards the model behavior of a believer."

The erudite Professor Abdul-Ahad has authored two unique books in their subjects. The first bore the title "the Bible and the Cross," the second has been "Muhammad in the Bible."

In the first book, he tells the initial part of his journey to guidance. He says: "the result of my analysis and investigation has convinced me that Christ's killing, crucifixion and his rising from the dead has been just a tall tale. The four gospels haven't been written by Jesus himself in his time. They have sprung up a long time after the death of the apostles. When they have reached us, they were doctored and corrupted at will. After all this, I was conscientiously compelled to believe and recognize that our master Mohammad (PBUH) is the true Prophet; I couldn't deny that." He has thoroughly demonstrated and detailed the history of the Gospels' writing and the anonymity of their authors.

His second book titled "Mohammad in the Bible." is the most important one of the two volumes. In it, Abdul-Ahad surpassed himself by extracting the enunciation of the Prophet Mohammad in both the new and the old Testaments. As we know, both Jews and Christians believe in these two Gospels. Distortion and falsification have filled every page of these Bibles throughout the years. These haven't been able to dim the value of his research. A valuable book was produced as a result of his biblical knowledge added to his mastery of ancient and modern languages in which the Bibles have been written- and also his keen analysis, makes this book a must read.

The Qur'an in previous Books revealed by God has told about the arrival of our Prophet (PBUH). Allah states in Sura Al-Baqara, verse 146 "The people of the Book know this as they know their own sons; however, some of them conceal the truth which they know."

The touchstone of this verse is obvious to an expert the caliber of Abdul-Ahad Dawood. He has after all gathered all the bits of this prophesy from the Holy Writ. He has presented to the reader in his interesting book. Indeed, the name (Ahmad) of the Prophet (PBUH) is emblazoned in the Book of Haggai of the Torah chapter (2-7). The origins of the Hebrew Book state the following: "חמדת מגיעה לכל העמים". The text literally means: "Himdat will come to all nations." The name Himdat is the Hebrew version of the Prophet's name "Ahmad" (PBUH). It is noteworthy to mention that all diverse translations of all Gospels have conspired to conceal it and distort it. They considered the name "Himdat" an adjective and not a noun. The Arabic translations run as follows: "And the desired of all the nations will come." He was Mohammad (PBUH).

Jewish and Christian Holy Writ also mentioned the Prophet (PBUH) in another text. A saying attributed to Prophet Jacob (PBUH) when he

gathered his children and told them about what would happen to them. He said to them:” The scepter will not depart from Judah, or the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he (Shiloh) comes to whom it belongs, and the obedience of the nations is his (Genesis 49/10). The text in the Peshitta language translation states:”until comes the one to whom it belongs.” This means the kingdom and the Shari’a. It’s an explicit prophesy of a prophet from other than the people of Israel. Thus with his arrival the scepter of Judah will move away from them, and the eligibility of the children of Israel will cease. Furthermore, with his arrival, their law will be replaced by a new one of his (PBUH). He is (PBUH) “Shiloh” the one the obedience of the nations is his. Arabs, Romans and Persians submitted to his nation. His banners have flapped to the farthest corners of the world east and west.

The name “Shiloh” according to the scholar Abdul-Ahad has been derived from the Hebrew word meaning the peaceful one. There is another word that means the one who has been sent, alternatively the messenger of God. Now, no matter what the derivative of “Shiloh’s” name, the Prophet is the only person who fits exactly the Biblical prophecy. People of the book will never find in the long human history’s records anyone other than him that has fulfilled it. With his mission of Mohammad (PBUH), God has removed any preference enjoyed by the people of Israel. They have been given governance and Shari’a (the Scepter and the staff). Allah says in Sura Al-Jathiya, verses 16, 17, 18: “We did aforetime grant to the Children of Israel the Book the Power of Command, and Prophethood; We gave them, for Sustenance, things good and pure; and We favored them above the nations. (16)And We granted them Clear Signs in affairs (of Religion): it was only after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms, through insolent envy among themselves. Verily thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment as to those matters in which they set up differences. (17) Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow thou that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not.”

The guided Pastor has also unearthed another prophecy indicating the Prophethood of Mohammad (PBUH) and heralds his upcoming. The verse at the beginning of the third book of the chapter of Malachi mentions the arrival of Prophet named (The angel of the time long awaited by the people of Israel). The verse states: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes! says the Lord of Armies.” The Messenger, according to Professor Abdul-Ahad, is Mohammad (PBUH). He came suddenly from the Aqsa mosque the day of the ascension and nocturnal journey.

Abdul-Ahad Dawood has spent a total of forty years in the fold of Islam. In 1940, he died after a distinguished yet relatively short life serving the true and final religion of Allah. Pray! Allah will reward him abundantly on behalf of Islam and Muslims.

Carmen Sirkisian

Carmen Sarkisian is an Armenian Christian girl who has been born in Kuwait in 1965 where both her parents worked. She grew up in Kuwait; she would later work as a secretary in the “Kuwait Engineering Projects” company.

Carmen met a young Muslim man who lives in Kuwait and works in the same company. She has accepted his proposal of marriage without her family’s knowledge. Hence her family has been strongly opposed to her marrying a Muslim.

The judge - who tied the knot – suggested that she embraces Islam. She accepted the offer without hesitation and professed the faith in his presence. Carmen’s embracing the new faith hasn’t been out of conviction. She has done it because it pleased her groom. Her decision hasn’t passed unnoticed by her husband who saw it as a social courtesy (a marriage of convenience.) He also felt to be an emotional move of his bride who desires to win his heart and even more his love.

Carmen's people discovered her marriage to her Muslim colleague. They have tried their best convincing her husband to divorce him. They also promised him to give up all the dowry arrears and her full rights. However, the head over heel husband wasn’t about to give up his wife easily. Both love birds desired to maintain the continuity of their union. Furthermore, they wanted to keep their happy home, albeit ruffled only by a difference in religion.

Carmen mingled with her husband’s family, and learned a lot of the norms and values of the Eastern societies that stem from Islam. She got acquainted with the veil, the respect for parents and great reverence to the elders. One aspect has particularly drawn Carmen’s attention, is the passion of Muslims for prayers. Add to this, their keenness to gender segregation, and other traditions of our Islamic society.

Carmen has read through the eyes of her sisters-in-law and his mother their keenness that she becomes a Muslim. In her presence, they used to discuss Islam and Christ and his mother Mary the Virgin. They wouldn’t spare any effort in reading about Islam and what it would offer humanity in reform and enlightenment. They would cite statements of Eastern and Western wise people who would provide fair testimony for Islam and his book and the Prophet (PBUH). The famous French poet Lamartine says: “that Muhammad is the greatest man by all standards that have been developed to measure human greatness. As regards all standards by which greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?”

If greatness will be the measure of uniting divided humanity; then Muhammad is the most worthy of people of this greatness. Hence, he has reunited the Arabs after a complete decline.

If greatness has been measured by establishing the rule of heaven on earth; who will compete with Muhammad? He has wiped all aspects of paganism and established the worship of God and His laws in a heathen world.”

Carmen has also heard her husband's family talk about the writer Bernard Shaw’s testimony; he says: “I have studied him - the man and in my opinion is far from being an anti-Christ. He must be called the Savior of Humanity., I believe if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring much needed peace and happiness.”

And she heard them speak about Johann Goethe the famous German author, and his testimony in the compilation of poems titled (Eastern Diwan) when he said: “If Islam means to submit our fate to God, then we will all live and die Muslims.” He also said: “We - the people of Europe, with all our concepts - have not yet realized what Muhammad (PBUH) has achieved, and no one will precede him. And I have looked into the history for a model for humanity; I found it in the Prophet Mohammed. And so the truth must prevail and become supreme. Muhammad (PBUH) has also succeeded by subjecting the entire world to the principle of monotheism.”

As for Carmen’s husband, he refrained from talking to her about Islam. This decision has been the promise he made to her not to meddle in her religious privacy. However, he resorted to subterfuge to invite her to Islam. When they are together, he was keen to listen to both Quran programs from Kuwait and the radio call of Islam from Makkah.

One time, Carmen insisted to discuss with her husband the Christ’s divinity. As a supporting argument, she mentioned his immaculate conception, attributing his birth of a virgin. Her husband’s reply surprised her. He told her that he would embrace Christianity if she proves to him the validity of her claim. Again, Carmen stated that God had created Christ without a father, and he is also the son of God. This contradiction hasn’t gone unnoticed on her husband. He clarified it to her saying you testify to his divinity, and at the same time you recognize that is created. It is an utter contradiction to say that Christ is the son of God, and that he also doesn’t have a father.

Her husband explained to her that there is no great merit in ascertaining Christ’s divinity from the point of view of his immaculate birth. Adam’s birth is more awe inspiring; he has been born biological parents. And he didn’t come out of a menstruating woman the way Jesus and other

human beings did. Read the verse 59 of Sura Al-Imran. “(The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be". And he was)”

In 1978, Carmen embraced Islam, and wore the Muslim veil after two years of surfing the books. Allah has established Islam in her heart as a result of her passion for reading. The latter has enabled her to discover the treasures of the Quran. Various items and sundry drew her attention in it. One these have been its clear call monotheism. Such call is compatible with the Torah and the Bible say about the prophets (PBUH). In Sura As-Saffat, verse 4, the Quran explicitly states: “(Verily, verily, your Allah is one!)” The Torah-despite its distortion- states the same thing: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one)” as well as the books I Kings says: “(that all peoples of the earth may know that Jehovah is God, that there is none else)” 1 Kings 8:60.

Christ (PBUH) uttered the Oneness of God when he has called God saying - according to the Gospel of John: “(And this is the eternal life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent)” John 17.3. Thus, Islam is -as Carmen saw it - the true religion which has been preached by the prophets before Muhammad (PBUH).

Carmen’s certainty in Islam increased. Her feeling has been based on the level of compassion she has witnessed among people during the brutal invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, Carmen won’t forget as long as she lived the day her husband has brought two Westerners home with him. The two employees sought shelter with him to escape the oppression and brutality of the invaders. Her husband provided shelter at his home even though they are not Muslims. It’s remarkable that his action is punishable by death. He will be summarily executed if caught giving refuge to foreigners. Carmen was so scared by this prospect, that she asked her husband to get them out of the house. He told her that betraying them and handing them to their enemies is contradictory to Islam and its values. Her fear soon subsided, to be replaced by her pride in the values of her religion and utter delight in her husband’s chivalry.

In her book “Kuwait and my Story of Embracing Islam” Carmen discussed a number of important ideas. The first has been the clash of atheism with common sense and reason. She quoted the conclusion reached in a study conducted by a German scientist who analyzed the views of 290 scientists or philosophers. He found that 242 of them believe in the existence of God. However, twenty-eight of them are still undecided torn between different faiths; those who did not give a thought to the subject matter do not exceed 20 people.

Carmen also reported in her book many testimonies. These have been attributed to natural scientists and philosophers who have rejected the two-sided coin of atheism: (hazard and evolution). Her quotations have been brilliantly marked by splendid commentaries. She further supported each one with a verse of the Quran, which has already stated the findings by the geniuses of philosophy and natural science.

Claude M. Hathaway has once said: "I have found that faith in God is the only refuge in which the soul finds serenity." However, the Quran has preceded him to this conclusion. Hence, it has ascertained in Sura Adh-Dhariyat, verse 50: "(Hasten you then (at once) to Allah: I am from Him a Warner to you, clear and open!)"

St. Augustine once said: "God created us himself, but our souls are confused and worried until they find comfort in His vast mercy." This saying has reminded Carmen of Almighty Allah's words in Sura Ar-Ra'd, verse 28: "(Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.)"

The verse: "(Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly, it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts, which are in their breasts.)" In Sura Al-Hajj, verse 46 comes to support the earlier findings of the famous philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He said: "We must acknowledge the Almighty Creator; the Wise. How dumb is the theory that says that the magnificent order of the universe was the result of chance?" He has been right in his statement. The beauty and the harmony of the universe are clear proof to the Creator's design and great wisdom.

As for Christianity, Carmen old religion, it has received the lion's share of her criticism and analysis. For the sake of brevity, we cannot mention all the great details, and thorough criticism of the bible. However, she has highlighted in subtle gestures, the contradictions and the deviation off its origins. Nevertheless, I will only mention an important idea that has filled the pages of her book. The contemporaries of Christ believed that he is but a Prophet and Messenger (PBUH). This conclusion has come to her as the inevitable result of evangelical texts. For instance, the Samaritan woman saw his impressive miracles; she said to him: "Lord, I see you are a prophet" (John 4/19). Furthermore, the Christ's supporters believed in and protected him from the Jews' deceit who believed his prophecy. The Gospel of Matthew says: "And seeking to lay hold of him, they were afraid of the crowds, because they held him for a prophet." (Matthew 21/45). Again, when Jesus fed five thousand people from five loaves people said: "(When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!)" (John 6/14) After all this evidence,

and based on the testimony of the Bible and the Koran, Carmen is no longer in doubt. The Christ (PBUH) is the servant and the Messenger of Allah.

We supplicate Allah to keep her steadfast on the faith, and grant her a good ending in life. He is indeed able and omnipotent.

Deacon Emad Al-Mahdi

Today story is about a friend whom I cherish his friendship. They wanted him to become a priest, and God wanted him to be a dedicated advocate in the service of Islam. He is Brother Emad Samir Jet, known as Emad al-Mahdi.

Emad has been born in Egypt to an Orthodox religious family. His parents have been keen to make him and his sister «Hiba» permanent features of the church. They wanted them to seek refuge within its sanctity under the steaming fog of incense. The (dull confession - communion - hymns and prayers) were conducted in the Coptic language which Emad did not understand a single word. In any case, he was keen on coming to the church and attends lessons. He has been driven to attend by the pastor's small gifts given to him and his peers, which they have enjoyed immensely.

Emad trip to Islam began when his mother started watching episodes of Sheikh Mohammed Mutuwalli on television. The talk of the Sheikh grips the heart, and converses with the mind. She used to follow his programs eagerly; these facts lead her to listen to the Qur'an. She used to comment often about its verse saying that this verse is sweet, and that is convincing, and so on.

In that year, Ramadan has come coinciding to the fasting of the Christian Virgin, which extends fifteen days. Emad's mom abstained from eating food for thirty days, and broke her fast only after sunset. However, the Christian breakfast time starts with the first star appearance in the sky; few minutes before sunset. Their abstention has been limited; they must refrain from eating anything extracted from the animals.

Emad wondered no more about his mother's conduct; she confided in him the news of her secret conversion to Islam. Suddenly, she ran away from home, and vanished from sight, later, she publicly announced embracing Islam. No sooner the news of her conversion has spread; then, waves of insults and vilification were hurled at her. Furthermore, she has been subjected to slander, denigration and stultification for disbelieving in the Messiah. The Church claims she has lost eternal salvation as a result of leaving her home, her children and her husband.

When Emad has heard insults leveled at his mother within the family, he has been deeply hurt. However, the worst has yet to come on Tuesday. Along with his peers, regularly, he used to attend religious lectures dedicated to the Coptic Church Youth. On that particular day, the pastor has looked at Emad ruefully, his voice hiding subtle deception; he mumbled: The mother of our brother Emad has forsaken Christ. She was involved in a

moral case, and languishing in jail now. This is a divine punishment against her for leaving the religion of Christ!

The world has turned gloomy in the eyes of Emad and his heart almost stopped; everyone around was staring at him. The earth hasn't fulfilled his wish to swallow him alone among his class colleagues. He has imagined telling himself something he has heard before: "Ah! I wish that I had died before this! And I would have been a thing forgotten and out of sight!" This is the verse 23 from Sura Mariam.

Emad left the church his chest seething like a volcano. Various concerns and thoughts were bubbling in his unsettled imagination. Shall he visit the prison to kill that one who made him the laughing stock among his companions? Or shall he be grateful to her motherhood? His steps on the pavement were heavy and unhurried, telling the tale of his loss and sorrow.

From the depth of desperation, came a tender voice that lifted him from his stupor. And a word he has always enjoyed hearing: (O governor). It was his cherished mother, in her kindest tone, which used to call him by that name. However, this time a veiled woman has called out his soubriquet. She has been awaiting his exit from the church, longing to see him. Few moments only were needed to extinguish the raging volcano within his heart, and all sorrow has receded. Flood of tears of a mother embracing her son exploded to refute the false claims that Emad had heard from pastor at the church.

Emad's mother gave her son her new home address; five days later, he visited her there. In a poignant scene, she made him listen to verses from Sura Al-Ikhlâs. He saw her prayer and witnessed her absolute submission to her Lord. "That situation was beyond description; it left a great impression on me. I wished to sit on the ground, and kiss my mother's feet during her prayer. I felt something wash my heart. Serenity, love and strange emotion entered my heart, and a new spirit has taken my body."

Tuesday came around again. Emad made his way to the church to listen to the lying priest as he preached young people. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing. At the end of his sermon, he didn't miss the opportunity to remind the gullible young students about the fate of Emad's mother. He told them she betrayed Christ, and further claimed that yesterday visited her in the prison where she sits.

This time, Emad neither cared about his peers staring at him, nor was he afraid of facing the liar who is clothed in religious garb. In a bold move, not used by the people of the church, Emad stood to inform everyone that their pastor is liar and a cheat. He told his listeners that he visited his mother yesterday, and that she is not in jail. Furthermore, he said, his mother has

never committed an immoral crime. His mother has embraced Islam as her religion.

Emad fought his loneliness and grief, and decided to read the Bible beginning with Genesis. The longer he leafed through its pages, the more he grew distant from it. He was stunned to read the story of Adam's hiding from God between the trees of paradise. In addition, the book stated that God walked in Paradise searching for him until he found him. He asked: «and he said, "We told thee that you were naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that you shouldn't consume?», Then He ordered the angels to guard the tree of life so as not to have Adam gain immortality the way he has gained divine knowledge: «and the LORD God said: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:», the story is mentioned in the third chapter of the Book of Genesis.

One day, Emad asked his fellow Christians: What do you say about a man got drunk and consorted to his daughters? One said: an infidel!! The other said: He is the son of ...! Of course, they were right. There is no sane or honorable or lowly person who will commit such an evil act.

Emad answered them: The Bible is ascribing this horror to one of the prophets. Lips have been pursed, and blank stares have filled the room. The group of students has been torn between skepticism, disbelief and doubt. Unfortunately, this is what the Bible in the Book of Genesis (19: 33-35) has been saying about the prophet of Allah Lot peace be upon him.

Emad then asked: Do you know, intellectuals what our Bible says about Noah, peace be upon him? This 9/20-21time they kept quiet and did not dare to speak. So, quoting from Genesis, Emad began reciting to them what boggled their minds. «And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunk; and he was uncovered within his tent. »

Days have passed when Emad stood up in class again. This time looking at the pastor he asked him: O Father... Can anyone see God? The pastor replied immediately: our Holy Bible says in (John 1/18): « God has ever seen ». Emad threw a challenging look and said: O Father, the Bible that has said: «God has not been seen by anyone» says however in the Book of Exodus (33/11): «The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his neighbor».

The pastor's face turned red then yellow. He was about to thunder and foam, but he bottled his anger and said: «O Emad, stop your nonsense»!!! That was only his reply; he couldn't find a convincing answer.

Emad astonishment intensified when he read the book of Psalms. In it, he found the prediction of Christ's escape from crucifixion. This was contrary to what he has read in the Gospels about the nails that pierced the hands and legs of Christ. The Psalms contradict by saying: «Many are the afflictions of the righteous, and the Lord will spare him from them all, saves all his bones and none of them is broken. »(Psalm 34 / 19-20) how have all his bones been delivered while they were nails have punctured his hands and feet? This myth that is hard to believe.

Thus, the texts of the Bible led Emad away from Christianity. His faith has started to wither whenever he read the inconceivable news in it: «I came back to the Bible grabbed it, and still holding to it. My depression increased, and my sadness intensified. There were many question marks popping around me. Who is the speaker in all of this? Why there are multiple conflicting accounts, and at times contradictory? Why this Book is filled with a lot of myths? I felt unusually bored reading the Bible; and other question marks stated swarming in my mind ».

In the confessional booth in the church, Emad told the priest: «There are many questions I will need answers for. There are questions in the Bible; I haven't found an answer to them».

The pastor – like many of the Church's people of the cloth - does not have an answer. He dallied by saying: «Promise me, O (Emad Effendi) to sit down together, and I will answer all your questions». At the end of this conversation, he gave him a cross of pure gold. He wanted to buy his conscience, so the yellow glitter of gold will dim the light in his mind.

Emad's audacity and candor and incandescent mind cost him dearly. The church has ruled that he and his sister will stay - say if you wish to be incarcerated for six months in the deacons' monastery in the city of Bani Swaif. This harsh punishment subjected brother and sister to a psychological torment. He has been forced to receive Christian teachings, and also ordained deacon. It's a rank in the church that will entitle its carrier to preach and help the priests in performing religious prayers and providing church services.

The church has moved Emad and sister to Minya. They have stayed there for five months in what has been dubbed the house of grace- rather resentment as Emad calls it. He has tried to escape but was unable. However, every day spent in this prison increased further his desire to get away from Christianity. Such decision will render the dream of his captors to make him a priest into a mirage.

Upon receiving his son's pleading messages Emad's father took pity. He was begging him to save him and his sister from this distress. He brought them out of the house of grace (or indignation). The suffering of

those five months has almost made him forget his mother. However, as soon as he came back to ask about her, and met her several times, he learned more about Islam from her and Sheikh Hussein Ahmed Aamer; the imam of the mosque next to her house.

The deacon invited Emad to exercise his duty as a preacher to the church's flock. The stunt hasn't lasted long; nine weeks later, he announced his conversion to Islam. A smooth transition took place, and Emad has joined the ranks of callers to Allah. Soon after, he started studying Islamic Shari'a avidly. His mentors were two highly respected Egyptian scholars, namely Sheikh Muhammad Safwat Nouredine, and Sheikh Safwat Ash-Shawadfy (Allah has mercy on their souls). Since then, Emad never ceased to confront the missionary work of the followers of his former faith. He is relentlessly inviting people to Islam through his tours and programs on the satellite channels.

I send a heartfelt greeting to brother Emad. I ask Allah fervently to make us practical tools in his service, guiding beacons to His divine religion and docile obedient to his commands.

The Deacon (Mohammad) Fouad Al-Hashimi

It wouldn't be proper to talk or write about the stories of popular people who reverted to Islam without talking about Dr. Mohammad Fouad Al-Hashimi. This scholar holds the highest academic degrees in the philosophy of religions. He has left behind a very useful legacy to the Islamic library. Such assets were worthy of his academic status before and after Islam. His comes as a true testimony to the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: "the best of you in Jahiliya is the best of you in Islam, when they are guided"

Fouad has been born into a devout Christian family. His mom took extra care in his religious upbringing. She has urged him to frequent the church and memorize the church's hymns and prayers.

Before going into public school, he has been enrolled in a pre-kindergarten. There, like many other Muslim preschoolers, he has learned some small chapters of the Holy Qur'an. One day, a priest went into a rage after hearing the child chanting some verses of the Qur'an. He started a class to teach the Christian kids and educate them away from Muslim schools.

Fouad studied primary education in a regular school. He would skip Sundays to study in the church's Sunday school. However, this hasn't prevented his attachment and loved to join the Islamic education class attended by Muslim students and exempted Christian students.

Fouad became actively involved in his school, and formed a Christian Students Group. And, with subtle support of the church, he started raising issues of religious dialogue with Muslim students. These Muslim students, who have fallen victims to alienation and colonialism, only know Islam by its name and the Holy Qur'an by its print.

This early religious activity has qualified Fouad to get the rank of deacon in the church. He will be groomed to become the pastor in the village church later. He began receiving seminary and theological education at the hands of specialized priests. He embarked on his study with utter devotion.

No sooner has he started acquiring this knowledge than he has faced issues of creed and recurrent questions. The young man with such overflowing enthusiasm couldn't find answers to his questions. He isn't mature enough to wade into these deep waters. He must wait until he has acquired sufficient knowledge in this field, then perhaps he will find answers to his queries.

An idea crossed his mind. Why shouldn't he take a short cut and spare time by asking those who are deeply rooted in Christianity? They are after all well versed in the Christian books, doctrines and various

denominations. He put the questions to his teachers, the priests and chaplains. However, their answers haven't quenched his thirst.

Al-Hashimi termed the increasing questions in his minds as "enigma and mysteries." And, an import and positive decision ensued. Let hear what he has to say in his own words: "I have decided to look for the true God. Life has no meaning without a genuine doctrine, for such a creed will put the mind at ease, and comforts the heart. It stems from sound human nature as given by God to all creatures. A belief that is free traditional nonsense parroted by men without will and thought. From this moment on, I began my quest for a creed or a religion that would lead me to the true belief in God to whom I will be most sincere."

In his book entitled "The secret of how I became a Muslim," Fouad Al-Hashimi narrates the story of his transition from Christianity to Islam. He said: "The beginning has started with doubt; the start of belief. And from research sprang faith. The way human and jinn have believed."

The details of Fouad's doubt about Christianity are a long story. We will cite here some of these feature. Throughout his extensive reading, Fouad discovered that Christianity is an improved version of past pagan religions. For instance, the cross has represented love and sacrifice to the pagan Egyptians. So is the case with today trinity. The latter has been practiced by ancient paganism that had preceded Christianity that has adopted those creeds. The improvement added to the fait didn't even exceed the mere change of the names of gods worshiped by the pagans. The God of the pagan Egyptians consists of three persons (Aton, Amon-Ra). The Indian also worshiped their trinity in the form of (Brahma, Siva and Vishnu). And, this is precisely what has happened, when the Emperor Constantine has distorted Christianity. In the fourth-century AD, the church councils (Synod) have claimed that God is the (Father, the Son and the Holy spirit). The pagan trinity repeats itself in Christianity with the change of names only. Allah says in Sura At-Tawba: (The Jews call 'Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! (30) They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (Far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him). (31))

The deacon Fouad has discovered that the clergy and church synods are the major reason for misleading his people. They have been mistaken. However, they have persisted on passing this gross mistake in many of the bible's texts, in particular, those texts that have mentioned the Christ (peace

be upon him). They have considered his parthenogenesis birth without father sign and evidence of his divinity. It is after all an obvious blunder. Adam was created without parents, and no one in this universe considers him divine, or God incarnate.

Hence, when some biblical texts call the Messiah “Lord”; this term should not imply recognizing his divinity; it simply means “teacher.” This phrase must be extremely and plainly clear to the bible readers. These, must have certainly had understood the meaning of the words in their original languages. The biblical word “Lord” is often derived from Aramaic word (Raba); the Hebrew word (Rabbi), and finally the Arabic (Rabbani). All of these words mean (teacher). To this Allah says in Sura Al-Imran: “**Be ye worshippers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all: For ye have taught the Book and ye have studied it earnestly. (79).**” The meaning is as clear as the day. In John's Gospel (20/16) Mary Magdalene turned to the Messiah and told him: “Rabouni, which means teacher”. Also in John's (1/38) she told him “Rabbi”, meaning teacher." Furthermore, this is the real meaning of the word “Rabbi,” when addressed to Jesus peace be upon him. It doesn't entail his divinity as the priests of the church claim.

When Fouad started reading his Bible and Torah closely and carefully, he found the Messenger (PBUH) mentioned clearly therein. Strangely, this fact has survived the onslaught of tampering and distortion on the two holy books. The Torah has spoken about the advent of a messenger who will be sent from what it calls the “Mount of Paran.” {And he said The LORD (i.e., the messenger of God) came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran. Deuteronomy: 33/1-2}. Again in the Book of Habakkuk the Prophet 3/3, the Torah says: “God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth.” Who is the one who filled the earth with praise? And where lays Mount Paran that the prophecy is gleaming on its top?

These questions have troubled the mind of Fouad the deacon. He has found the answer in the Book of Genesis 21/21. The Torah has mentioned that Ishmael (PBUH) has “dwelt in the wilderness of Paran.” Since Ishmael (PBUH) grew up in the valley of Makkah, called Paran in the Torah, then Mohammad is the promised prophet (PBUH). He has been called to Prophethood over its mountains.

Thus, Fouad Al-Hashimi reached the truth that has appeased his mind after long research and studies. He believed in Allah as the true God, and Mohammad as a prophet and a messenger. He swore and testified to the truthful belief, and called himself Mohammad Fouad. The values and principles found in Islam that have overwhelmed his mind attracted him to embrace it. He has summed up his decision to revert to the religion of Islam

by saying: "I believed in it, because it is the religion of pure monotheism... it calls people to worship Allah alone. I believed in Islam because it doesn't subjugate humans. This religion doesn't hold anyone accountable for the original sin, inherited from the father and grandfather." Allah says in Qur'an, Sura Al-Isra, verse 13: "Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open." I believed in Islam because it has never diminished human dignity. It hasn't granted religious dominance to anyone to the extent of telling his followers: Follow me blindly without thinking. I believed in Islam because it consists of canons and social systems that have made a wise balance and equilibrium between communal and worship matters. However, most important I believed in Islam because it has encouraged science and education. It has made seeking knowledge a sacred duty...."

In the book, he has authored "Religions on the scale," Fouad analyzed twelve contemporary religions. In his quest for answers, he has put their belief, canons; values and systems to the test. Then he found out that Islam is the only religion that is consistent with the human mind, his conscience and nature. "The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will)" Sura Al-Imran, verse 19. The former deacon summarizes his experience in testing religions and differentiating between them. He said. "I have embarked on this adventure for the sake of detecting defects in the Qur'an as inspired by my teachers. I have come to realize that, what they termed and claimed as flaws were, in fact, advantages. Islam swept me away; I couldn't resist its appeal, and I didn't see any reason why I shouldn't follow it. I have believed in it through deep reflection, study and scrutiny. These elements have tipped the balance towards Islam and lowered the others.

Mohammad completed his studies and received a PhD in comparative religions. He started his journey in announcing his new faith. He has enriched the Islamic library with twelve books in which he has never spared any effort in defending Islam. Within the pages of his books, this erudite and prolific writer has expressed the secret of his love of this religion. He expounded his favor of his new-found religion over that of his forefathers and ancestors. He has explained the great facts and truths he has discovered in Islam and has missed elsewhere. He has written such books as "Mohammad in Western books," "Man in religions," "Dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim," and "the True Messenger." These publications and other useful ones have shown his great knowledge of religion in general and Christianity, in particular. This hasn't come as a surprise; after all, he has been a deacon for many years leafing through various religious books. He has left a great impression clearly visible in the era of comparative religion and argumentative debates.

(31)

We implore Almighty Allah to bestow His mercy upon him and grant him ample rewards. Hence, the services he has rendered to the Religion of Allah are invaluable.

Dr. Abdu Abdulmalik Ibrahim

In the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, Abdu Ibrahim Abdulmalik Malik has been born to Orthodox parents in Cairo. He grew up in a wealthy family that could educate him at a time where it was so difficult for anyone else to acquire any degree of education.

During his studies at the secondary level, Abdu Ibrahim accompanied both Mohammed Tawfiq Sidky, and Ahmad Najib Barrada. The three of them stayed long hours studying together in a small room at the house of Mohammed Sidky. Nothing would interrupt their studies unless his two companions had to stop to wash and pray. Meanwhile, he will simply watch them performing their duty. In his heart, he was always wondering about the truth that Allah loves. Does it lay in Islam the religion of his friends of which he knows nothing? Or is it in Christianity that his friends neglected to follow arising from the way they grew up? Being devoted to his friends, he wished he could give them a lifeline to worship Christ rather than worshipping Allah.

One day, curiosity has gotten the better of Abdu. He made ablution with his friends, and asked them about its secret and philosophy. He couldn't get a credible answer from any one of them. The two young men, like many other Muslims, don't know their religion, but the bare minimum.

His friends' reply contained no answer, has forced Abdu to tell them, frankly, that they are all imitators. Abdu follows Christianity, yet he didn't choose it as faith. He was brought up in it since childhood. And so is the case of his two companions; they are Muslims, yet they know a little about their religion. Again, he was very blunt with them when he said: "we aren't worthy to be followers of a faith if we don't know its substance. How about if we make a pledge to seek the facts of religion? We must search for the difference dividing us despite the feelings of friendship and love for each other" And so a pact has been struck between the three friends. They have decided to cast away the cloak of tradition and undertake the means of science and investigation. They should be serious in their search for the true religion.

Years of reading and study in the books of religions and lengthy discussions with the scholar Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida, have ignited the sparks of faith in Abdu's heart. In the corridors of the Faculty of Medicine, he confided to his two companions of his intention to embrace Islam. Faith has moved his inherent self through viewing human bodies that he and his colleagues used to dissect in the anatomy classes. Everything around him calls for Allah's reverence, and the belief in the Creator. These elements transcend the Almighty Lord above human traits, which Christians believe in.

Abdu Ibrahim responded to the advice of his two companions. He decided to conceal his conversion. He was wary of the influence of his father and his retaliation, which threaten to stop his career in the Faculty of Medicine. He has spent two years praying privately in his room. He used to stay away skipping meals at the tables of his family throughout the days of Ramadan. However, his secret was soon discovered when he forgot his pocket Quran in his coat pocket. His brother and mother snitched on him as they saw him secretly praying in his room. Then, the fasting of Ramadan was the straw that broke the camel's back. Together, these factors have made the young man to face a difficult test, far more strenuous than the test he is preparing for in his final year at the College of Medicine.

Abdu's father erupted like a volcano, and spilled very harsh words at his son. These fell on him like whip lashes on raw flesh. You're a misguided son, how dare you to leave the religion of our fathers and grandfathers, do you know better than them?

It's a doltish logic blamed on the unbelievers by the Qur'an when they said in Sura Az-Zukhruf, verse 23: *("Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.")* Abdu met the challenge headstrong; a defiance that would make the mountains crumble. The young man declared that he was sticking to his religion. He even wished his parents, and siblings will follow him on the path of guidance. He has treaded this road for quite some time now; he embraced Islam through a long study and research. He has taken prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) as an example. Sura Maryam, verses 43,44 and 45 relate the following: *("O my father! To me hath come knowledge which hath not reached thee: so follow me: I will guide thee to a way that is even and straight. (43) "O my father! Serve not Satan: for Satan is a rebel against (Allah) Most Gracious. (44) "O my father! I fear lest a Penalty afflict thee from (Allah) Most Gracious, so that thou become to Satan a friend." (45))"*

Abdu's father weighed the matter wisely, and decided to use the priests to debate the misguided son and return him back to the churches fold. He followed Pharaoh's way when he challenged Moses (PBUH), and invited him to the debate: *("So make a tryst between us and thee, which we shall not fail to keep")* Sura Ta-Ha, verse 58 explains what Abdu's father wanted.

On the promised day, the pastors met to converse with the young man. He came ready armed with the corresponding directives of Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Rida. Furthermore, he has read two books "Showing the Truth" written by Rahmatullah Al-Hindi, and "Suppression of Crosses" Abu Obeida Al-Khazraji.

The young man amazed his interlocutors' priests for over three days. He has debated them with clear evidence and irrefutable proof. He also told them that the Christian origins were a reproduction of the pagan nations preceding the birth of their faith. He showed and revealed to them the flaws of their religion as much as he could within the time frame allowed to him. They couldn't find anything in his questions and his answers but to accuse him of insanity and pour eternal curses on him. Abdu had no choice but to leave his father's house a fugitive. He sought refuge at his friend Mohammed Sidky's room; not as a visitor, but as a tenant.

This blow has fallen hard on the young man. He is about to become a medical doctor. However, its impact is far better and more pleasant than the malice of infidelity that deprives the seeker of truth of sleep. Despite all this, he sees his agonies as a welcome taxation that he will readily pay for the faith he has embraced. He felt this faith will give him the serenity of the heart, delight in this world, and bliss in this world and the hereafter: The new convert realized a price will be paid in exchange for something dear. And the verses 2 and 3 of Sura Al-Ankabut are clear evidence to this effect. Allah will test people to know how much they can bear for the sake of salvation. He is the all-knowing the all-seeing. **“(Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe," and that they will not be tested? (2)We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false. (3))”**

Dr. Abdu Ibrahim's married the daughter of the Azhari Sheikh, Abdul Hamid Mustafa. Allah blessed him with the first of his children. He has surprised everyone by calling him (Isa); a name love by Muslims no doubt. After all, it is the name of the greatest prophets and messengers of Allah. However, selecting such a name to his son among others in the world has raised doubts about Dr. Abdu. Doubters started to whisper, and innuendo stated to spread. Do you think he grew nostalgic to the religion of his parents? Why shouldn't they doubt, especially after his Christian family visited him and congratulated him for the birth of his newborn (Isa)? They thought it was an omen for his return to his old religion again?

Reproachfully, Sheikh Abdul Hamid told him about his dubious choice. Soon, however, the doctor dispelled his doubts by saying: “I have always asked Allah to bless me with a son I would call Jesus. The more people call him by (Isa Abdu); or mention him - absent or present; it would be a reminder to the testimony of monotheism. A testimony that there is no God except Allah alone; and that Jesus (PBUH) is His servant only. He is neither God, nor his son.”

The reader will wonder long when he knows that the Christians' books, despite changes and distortions, are explicit in calling Christ Abdullah (the servant of Allah). The book of Isaiah called him (my servant)

in the alleged prophecy about him. "Behold, my servant whom I uphold" (Isaiah 42/1). Furthermore, the Gospels in which they believe says, in many places, from the bondage of Jesus to God and his humility in worship like all other human beings. He selected one instance to show this act. Mark related in his Gospel: "he was praying there" (Mark 1/35) Once more, in the Gospel of Luke, it tells how Jesus "knelt on his knees and prayed" (Luke 22/41). And again, that he "went out to the mountain to pray, and spent the whole night in prayer to God" (Luke 6/12). So, Christ is the servant of Allah. He prayed to God in front of him like any other faithful worshiper of God.

If so, why do Christians worship Jesus, who idolizes Allah? Why don't they venerate Allah, the Creator of heavens and earth instead of the man who has been created by Allah?

The world is constantly changing, and things don't stay the same. Dr. Abdu's father financial situation has taken a turn for the worse. His dad turned from riches to rags. He turned to his son for help in paying a debt that almost made him homeless. However, the son who admittedly was sated with the values of Islam extended a helping hand to his father and gave him eight hundred pounds in gold. It was a large tender of money met with reproach by Sheikh Abdul Hamid and his daughter. The doctor's wife saw all their lives savings ended up with her infidel father in law. It is his father who had expelled his own son when he insisted on his conversion to Islam.

However, Dr. Abdu presented his wife and her father with the strongest and ultimate of arguments. The money he has given to his infidel father was in lauded compliance to verses he has learned from the holy Qur'an. These, recommend kindness and good company of parents. Furthermore, compassion is called for, even if parents were unbelievers and try hard to dissuade their son and make him renounce his religion. Verses 14 and 15 of Sura Luqman in the Qur'an come to support the decision of Dr. Abdu's help to his father. "(And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal. (14) "But if they strive to make thee join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and follow the way of those who turn to me (in love): in the end the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that ye did." (15))"

Dr. Abdu Ibrahim died in Cairo before reaching the age of forty. He caught typhoid fever in the locality of his work where he had been infected by his patients in the hospital. He went to meet his creator, Allah Almighty in 1918. He gave the world his son Dr. Issa Abdu Abdul Malik. He has become one of the most modern scholars in Islamic economy. He was the pioneer of establishing Islamic banks. The idea germinated in his mind, and flourished to become a reality. Such feat was realized through lectures and writings, which amounted to thirty books; a legacy of substance to the Islamic renaissance in the twentieth century.

Dr. Abdu had another son, Dr. Mohammed Abdu Abdul Malik; professor of engineering in Switzerland's universities. He is the author of useful scientific research on the desalination technology.

We supplicate Allah to bless Dr. Abdu Ibrahim. He has done his Muslim nation proud of his children. We ask Allah to include us and him in His mercy. Allah is indeed most charitable and kind.

Emily Bramlet

She is an America girl whom Allah-in His wisdom and knowledge- has promised guidance to the one who seeks it. Sura Al-Imran, verse 73 states this fact: “Say: "True guidance is the Guidance of Allah: (Fear ye) Lest a revelation be sent to someone (else) Like unto that which was sent unto you? or that those (Receiving such revelation) should engage you in argument before your Lord?" Say: "All bounties are in the hand of Allah: He granteth them to whom He pleaseth: And Allah careth for all, and He knoweth all things.”

Emily has been born in a divided family. The mother is a Christian, who attends regular church, while her dad is an atheist. Being a scientific minded person, he couldn't reconcile between Christianity and science. He is a researcher that specializes in paleontology, and cannot find in his wife's religion what pleases his mind and conscience.

Often Emily accompanied her mother to visit the church, even though she's not satisfied with this religion. The priests say incomprehensible things in the church. The language of the Gospel is difficult also. The stories told are illogical, and sometimes resemble children's fictional stories. Can anyone say differently about the story of Samson, and his mighty power stored in his long hair? This hero kills thousands in every battle. He would carry the city's gate on his shoulder, the way one of us carries a small child. And if will meet a lion, he will slay it in half with his bare hands. However, if cuts his hair he will turn into a scrawny man. Samson is one of the heroes of the Bible. Bizarre stories are told about him in the book of Judges, which Jews and Christians believe in.

Reading the Torah, has led Emily to question the credibility of the stories and their significance. And what is the missing link in the biblical story of Adam's sons? For her, what defies comprehension is: why has God accepted sacrifice of Cain, and did not accept the offering of his brother able? Emily will soon discover the answer later in the noble Qur'an. “Allah doth accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.”

Emily asked her mother about the reason for being Christian. She wanted to know what she has favored it over other religions. Her mom's reply didn't go beyond following the inherited tradition of the parents and grandparents. Again, the Qur'an readily provides the answer. Sura Az-Zukhruf, verse 23 states the following: (We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps.)

Emily asked: How can humans worship an imperfect god, whether it is an idol made of stone that does not here? How can they idolize a tree that doesn't harm or benefit? Alternatively, how can they worship a human

being whose followers believed that he has lived on earth, has eaten and drank? Finally, he has been beaten, then crucified and died. And why has all had happened?! They say: it is for the love of humans, and to bear their sins. Hence, they will not be held accountable, and they can do whatever they want on this earth without reproach.

The absence of logic in the Christian beliefs made Emily's father leave the church and turn into an atheist. He sufficed himself with science instead of religion. He didn't accept the idea of blind faith, vague notions, and grumbles that the pastors repeat constantly. He loved Christ, but he sees him as a decent human being.

"Why shouldn't I be an atheist like my dad; he has adopted science over false religion," said Emily? Real science and true religion are two inseparable components.

Emily asked her father about his knowledge of Islam. He replied that he has read about it in some Orientalist books. And these aren't reliable sources in spite of their claims of scientific objectivity and impartiality. Hence, they use these elements to conceal their hatred toward Islam. This faith has demolished their mighty armies in time of the Crusades. It has conquered their most important cities to become Muslim land. Jerusalem hasn't been the first, nor won't Constantinople be the last.

Emily's father summed up his meager knowledge of the religion of Islam. It's a faith of an orphaned boy who herded sheep. Later, he has become a merchant to a rich widow; it has also been said that he stayed secluded in a cave in prolonged meditation. He claimed an Angel had visited him, or so he has imagined. People also say he has been afflicted with epilepsy. Emily's reply was astonishing; she asked her father again: Would epileptic people come up with such sublime verses? Allah says in Sura Al-Alaq, verses 1-5 the following: "(Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created- (1) Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: (2) Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, - (3) He Who taught (the use of) the pen,-(4) Taught man that which he knew not.(5))"

Furthermore, Emily mentions what had happened during the history lesson when the Professor ridiculed Islam and its decline of humanity-according to him. It has taken it from the peak of Christ's teachings to the ritual of a religion that crippled its followers with stagnation and inertia. The Prof has cited the example of a Saudi delegation visiting the U.S. for important trade negotiations. The members of the delegation stopped the negotiations to perform their prayer. He along with his students laughed at the followers of this religion who favored their prayer over the color of dollars?! What a strange world!

Emily responded to the laughter of her colleagues by presenting a research to the school. In it, she discussed the eligibility of the Palestinians to their homeland. She likened the persecution of the Jews to them to what Hitler has done to their grandparents, and what the Europeans invaders have done to America Indians. The research has caused Emily troubles with her parents. The school reproached her parents, wondering about how did these ideas seeped into their daughter's mind.

On the cusp of the university, Emily decided to learn Arabic and read about Islam. She has and looked long for someone who will help in her task. Allah has led her to a young man named Mohammed Assami. This Arab Muslim who's studying in that city will become after a while her husband Emily and the father to her children.

Her father has strongly opposed her reading a translation of the meaning of the Holy Quran, which Muhammad gave her. His anger knew no limits when Emily decided to study Arabic in her university life. He threatened her with expulsion from the house; a threat that soon became a reality, so Emily moved to university housing. She started working and toiling to earn her living and university fees. She has paid dearly for her frivolous decisions, which her father saw as acts of recklessness and arrogance.

Emily suffered difficult days away from her home and her parents. She has been almost driven to suicide or madness. Nightmares haunted her and robbed her sleep. She penned a letter to her parents saying: "you have the right to question why I am doing this to you and causing myself such misery? I swear I do not know, but day after day my desire [to learn Arabic] increases, as if the matter is not in my hand. Perhaps God wants to lead to me to Islam; and there is no power to fight the will of God."

Mary, the Christian missionary came to visit her in her room repeatedly. She told her: "testify that Jesus the son of Mary is God; he is our savior from our sins. He will save you, and you will be among the winners." The nun asked her for a final answer. Emily asked the sister to be given time to think it over. Emily muttered to herself: "if I followed her, I will have a way out in my life; my mother will be satisfied with me, and so will my dad. However, my mind hesitates, and what the Qur'an narrates is closer to my mind." Thinking about the answer has drained all her energy. She threw her tired body on the bed; suddenly floating between slumber and consciousness, she heard a voice inspiring her to answer the nun: "I worship Allah."

One day, Muhammad Assami told her about the secret behind refraining from food and drink in this day of Ramadan. It is the third pillar of Islam after the two Shahada and prayer. Muhammad was not performing

his prayers regularly. Emily has been appalled by his failing duty of religion and duty of his Lord.

Emily married Muhammad. Within her chest, she felt something tugging at her heart to supplicate the Almighty God and cry out to Him. However, she still doubted His existence. «What will I lose if no one hears me? She lifted her gaze heavenwards and said pleadingly: “O Lord, if you do exist, help us in this marriage, and steady my husband on his religion, so he can teach me.”

At the beginning of 1961, Emily’s mom has died. She was overcome with grief, and spent many sleepless nights. When anxiety gripped her heart, and couldn’t fight it, she found solace in the Holy Qur’an. Peace and tranquility have settled back throughout her inner self. She has read about the great rewards Allah has in store for those who face calamity with patience. Sura Al-Baqara, verses 155-157 are clear proof to that: (Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, (155) Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return":-(156)They are those on whom (Descend) blessings from Allah, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance.(157))

Emily traveled with her husband to his homeland, and got acquainted with his family members and relatives. She has disapproved their way of life, and has alienated them from Islam. She has read about this religion, its values and teachings. She realized that the Qur'an for these people is: “their neglected book, they read it to enjoy listening to its musicality only. Isn’t it the word of Allah for Muslims to follow? Has it become an instrument for particular events only?”

Anyone whose state is like this cannot teach Emily Islam. “I still believe the religion has great potential, but people are procrastinators.” She said, “I will seek knowledge through reading.” I must learn Arabic in order to possess the key leading all the way to Qur’anic science and its realities. Although she asked her husband repeatedly to teach her Arabic, he couldn’t do it due to time constraint and busy schedule. Exasperated, she lifted her hands to God asking Him: “Lord, I lodge my complaint to your Majesty! I have asked you to make my marriage a success, and you did. Then I asked you to keep my husband steadfast on the right path, and you did guide him. Finally, I asked you to make him teach me ... maybe I had rushed in this request, O Lord, forgive me the days go by; I am getting old, but my knowledge is not increasing.”

She went on talking to herself: «If God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. Therefore, change

becomes inescapable.) Why don't I read and teach myself?" And so Emily began to learn Arabic. She started with first, second and third grade primary books. She tried hard- despite the burdens and requirements of their children – to follow the Arabic language classes at the education institute she frequents. She spent long nights reading the translation of the Holy Qur'an. She has used the English interpretation and utilized it in her pursuit to master the language. Finally, Allah has opened her heart to Islam and fulfilled her third request. She started - thanks to Allah- repeating with the believers: ("Praise be to Allah, who hath guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah") Sura Al-A'raf, verse 43.

We ask Allah Almighty to keep us and sister Umm Mohammed steadfast on His religion. He is indeed capable of guiding and helping us all stay on the straight path.

Dr. Abdulwahid Omar –Gary Miller

It was not a big surprise that Dr. Gary Miller; a professor of mathematics converts to Islam. However, what's even more surprising is that many like him among the nations' most learned and wise people are still deaf to the call of the true religion chosen for mankind?

Gary Miller grew up in Canada, in the schools of the Franciscan Catholic sect. He then studied theology at the University of the Jesuits. Thanks to his intelligence and talents, he became of the active missionaries' advocates of Christianity in churches and television. Later, he got a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Toronto.

Miller scientific mind could not accept what the Catholic priests taught him in their churches. He left Catholicism and went on to become a protestant. He moved between different churches for nine years asking their scholars and priests to no avail. An Arab poet has once said:

You may hear a reply if you called the living.

But, those you are calling are not alive!

Once he asked the priests: Who is Jesus' father? They said: (God), he asked again: Who is his mother? They said: Mary. Spontaneously, he surprised them by asking: Do you mean that God Almighty married Mary and conceived Jesus?! They said no; don't say that, God did not marry Mary.

Miller then threw a bombshell: You mean to say that God and Mary gave birth to Jesus out of wedlock?

Their mouths stood agape, and lowered their heads; words stuck in their throats, while Miller asked priests again. He asked to show him one single text where Christ talks about his divinity or the trinity. It's notably worthy to mention that preachers and pastors rarely quote Christ's words when talking about their beliefs. They leave out the few lines in the Gospels attributed to Christ. These lines if collected won't exceed the length of two columns of newspaper articles. These, won't give the readers any proof that Christ has claimed divinity or God's hypostasis.

For years and the young impish Gary Miller is giving the priests a big headache. God has meant well for him. He has read many of the Orientalists' writings about Islam and the Prophet (PBUH). His readings brought him to one clear conclusion: The agreement of Western writers on the rejection of the prophecy of Mohammad (PBUH). However, they couldn't justify their perplexing and diverging decisions about him. Hence, some accuse him of madness, and others of lying. These are two contradictory lies; nay calumnies. Therefore, he is either smart who lie to

people of his claim of prophethood; or he is crazy unaware of his actions and words. The verses 52 and 53 of the Qur'an state this fact: "(Similarly, no messenger came to the Peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, "A sorcerer or one possessed"! (52) Is this the legacy they have transmitted, one to another? Nay, they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds! (53))"

The biography of the Prophet (PBUH) belied both falsities. Gary Miller has seen them in the book of the French Jewish Orientalist Maxime Rodinson. However, despite the biased book to the person of the Prophet (PBUH) it has opened vistas that have always remained closed to Gary. One of the stories includes the death of Ibrahim the son of the Prophet (PBUH). An eclipse of the sun happened on that particular day. The companions of the Prophet said: "The sun has eclipsed for the death of Ibrahim, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "The sun and the moon won't eclipse for the death or life of anyone" His answer to them is a clear proof that he is neither a liar nor a madman. Hence, if he has been either, he would have agreed with them and haven't denied their saying. He would have also claimed that this big event is indeed a testimony to his prophecy and his message.

In 1977, Dr. Miller decided to read the Qur'an and find out what is expected to be right and wrong in it. He read it in three days; through and through. After finishing, he couldn't help but say to himself: "That's what I have been saying and believing for the last fifteen years."

He was expecting the Qur'an to be an "autobiography"; a book talking about Muhammad's feelings, his family and his environment. He thought of it as the case is with the gospels of the people of the book. However, he was surprised to find the unexpected. The Quran mentions the Prophet's name (PBUH) only five times; while he said Prophet, Jesus' name has been mentioned twenty-five times. As for the prophet Moses, (PBUH), he has been mentioned more than one hundred times.

Dr. Miller has been astonished when he found a Sura named after Mary among the chapters of the Qur'an. In contrast, he did not find a Sura about Khadija, Aisha or Fatima. I've missed in the Qur'an everything related to the personal feelings of the Prophet (PBUH). Additionally, the verses of the Qur'an don't contain the euphoria of his victory in the Battle of Badr, or the agony of his defeat in Uhud. Not a single word is mentioned in the Qur'an about the sorrow that has befallen the Prophet (PBUH) the year of sadness. No mention of that, because it is the Book of Allah; not the book of Muhammad (PBUH).

Gary Miller predicted that he will read in the Qur'an ancient knowledge by a man who lived in the desert fourteen hundred years ago. Lo and behold, he finds a book not limited by time or space. The book has already preceded modern science in the most accurate facts discovered and recognized by recent scientific findings. Faced by what he has read, he bowed in appreciation paying tribute to this book and its facts.

Two hundred years ago, the Dutch scientist Antony Leeuwenhoek has discovered that water represents 80% of the living cell. He didn't know that the Qur'an has beaten him to it. Read what Allah says in Sura Al-Anbiya, verse 30: “(Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?)”

The introduction of the previous verse “(Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder?)” comes to support of the words of Allah in Sura Fussilat, verse 11: “(Moreover He comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly.")” These two verses are the first that have reported a crucial scientific theory of the beginning of creation and the origin of the universe. That is the “Big-Bang” Theory. It was the “unprecedented” discovery that won the scientists the Nobel Prize for physics; (except that it has been there in the Quran 1400 years ago).

The same thing happened in 2011 when Saul Perlmutter, Adam Riess, and Brian Schmidt have won the Nobel Prize for physics. The award they received was for discovering the phenomenon of accelerated expansion of the universe. Again, this scientific fact already existed in the Qur'an; it has preceded Nobel and the people of the Noble in mentioning it. Here is what the Qur'an says about this phenomenon: “(With power and skill did We construct the Firmament: for it is We Who create the vastness of pace.)” The verse 47 is in Sura Adh-Dhariyat. Who made Mohammad (PBUH) utter this statement before long gone centuries? It is The One, who has revealed this book, and has been present the day heaven and earth have been created. It is Allah the First and the Last.

The Qur'an has also talked about the stages of embryo in Sura Al-Hajj verse 5 saying: “(O mankind! if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (our power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes.)” This verse has drawn the attention of Professor Keith Moore; Dr. Miller's fellow colleague at the University of

Toronto. The former was a professor of embryology and the author of the famous book "The Developing Human." This tome is considered a reference book in the world's faculties of medicine. Dr. Moore said: "It's clear to me that this evidence inevitably came to Muhammad from God, because all of this information has only been recently discovered and after several centuries. This proves to me that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." The Qur'an states the following in Sura Saba, verse number 6:

“(And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord - that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (in might), Worthy of all praise.)”

The Qur'an made his mark in the books of Professor Keith Moore. In the subsequent editions, he added the information he had learned from the Qur'an about embryology. However, the world has been up in arms when Keith Moore issued a book on clinical embryology. In it, he wrote about the precedence of the Qur'an in mentioning the facts on embryonic development.

Dr. Gary Miller interviewed his colleague Professor Keith Moore on television. The Professor told the audience some of the sciences of the Qur'an. He said: "the description of the clot is new to me." He has displayed slides of both "human and animal" embryos on the screen. The images have proven without doubt the accuracy of the Qur'an description and the great similarities between them.

The journalists tried in vain to find justifications for this scientific precedence in the Qur'an. One of them assumed that the Arabs, driven by their brutality, have performed an autopsy on the fetus to reach this exact description. To this Professor Keith Moore replied, if the Arabs did it; they will not see anything because the clot can only be seen by a microscope. He added sarcastically: you mean to say that one of the Arabs had a state of the art microscope by which he saw the clot. He let Mohammad, and no one else, know about his discovery; to gain favor with him. Then this Arab breaks his microscope so nobody will uncover his findings. This is absurd.

The journalists were compelled to ask about the source of Mohammed's accurate information about the fetus. Dr. Keith Moore replied: "this couldn't have been possible, except through Allah's inspiration."

Gary Miller has been surprised by the Qur'an's ways calling others throughout the ages to consider the signs of Allah manifested throughout the universe. Hence, He is certain and confident of the outcome of their contemplation. “(Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all

things?)” Read Sura Fussilat, verse 53. The Qur’an is challenging its enemies to prove their claim that its verses are man-made. Furthermore, it provides them free access for verification and testing. And also, it gives them a chance to disapprove it if they could. “(Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other Than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.)” Refer to Sura An-Nisa, verse 82.

Dr. Gary Miller was amazed by the Western writers’ agreement that the Qur'an couldn’t have been written by the Prophet (PBUH). As it is a stunning book of knowledge and topics. Such conclusion may compel them to say: it’s God's revelation. The easiest claim would be that some anonymous committee helped the Prophet (PBUH) work it out. However, there are those who say, the devils helped him author it.

Dr. Miller thought deeply about the last claim and considers it a kind of escape and failure to confront the truth. Even if the Quran has been inspired by Satan as they claim; why would the devil fill his book in defamation of demons and warn against their snares and order the believers not to follow their steps, and to swear them enmity? In Sura Fatir, verse 6, we read the following: “(Verily, Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his adherents that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire. Furthermore, why this “alleged writer” would order his reader to seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan at the opening of every recitation of “his” verses? Again in Sura An-Nahl, verse 98, there is a clear proof to this: “(When thou dost read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the rejected one.)”

The New Catholic Encyclopedia couldn’t offer its readers an acceptable explanation about the marvels of the Quran. They grew tired of repeating the Orientalists’ balderdash on the sources of the Quran. The Encyclopedia’s big brass was forthright with their readers and confessed: “over the past centuries many theories have been provided about the origin of the Quran... Today, no sensible person would accept any of them.” At last, they spoke the truth!

Dr. Gary Miller embraced Islam in 1978, and took the name Abdul Wahid Omar. He resigned his job at the mathematics departments. Now, he devotes himself to the Islamic propagation work in Canada. He has authored his remarkable book “The Stunning Quran.” It is a distinct addition to the Islamic Library. We supplicate Allah to reward him abundantly and bless his efforts.

Hilal Masiha

In the mid-twentieth century, Isaac Hilal Masiha has been born in Egypt. He has been born to Christian parents who were the cause of deviating the built in instinct that Allah deposited has in the minds of people. This natural sense is the singularity of Allah and his veneration. They have doused the flame of faith in the heart of the newly born babe. The prophet (PBUH) said: “Every child is born on instinct; his parents will make him a Jew, or Christian or Magian. It’s the like of an animal giving birth to another. Do you see any lamb born with severed ear?”

Isaac grew up Christian worshiping Christ other than God. He began studying theology on Sunday school. He joined the School of Theology in Beirut until he received his Masters degree. He progressed in the church priesthood hierarchy. He moved from being deacon to the pastor, before obtaining the highest leadership positions in the church. He has become a pastor in the Christian Church. Later, he became president emeritus of the Egyptian associations for the salvation of souls in Africa and West Asia.

In the early period of his church life, Isaac has read the Bible. Throughout its pages, he has witnessed the derogation of prophets’ and the vices attributed to them even the scum of humans wouldn’t dare to do. Noah has been accused of drinking alcohol; David of adultery, Solomon of idol worship. He was always wondering: Is it possible for prophets to be like this? How could the Bible accuse the prophets of such vices? Would Allah send them to convey His message if what the Torah says about them is true?

Any Christian will not be pleased accusing his church pastor or his country’s bishop of such vices. As a matter of fact, Catholic Christians see the infallibility of the Pope as decided by the First Vatican Council in 1870. Would the Christians select their priests and popes better than God’s choice of His prophets and messengers? Why would they reject any vile accusation leveled at their priests? Yet, they accept that in the integrity of the noble prophets of God?

Perish the thoughts; may the peace and blessing of my Lord be upon them.

Many questions have been raised in the depths of Isaac’s human nature. They are objecting to and rejecting the attribution of vices to God’s prophets. There are questions looking for answers, yet, no one can provide any. The Reverend Isaac has been teaching the people in the church; however, he was himself looking for someone capable of answering the ever-present common sense questions in his mind. No large amount of money lavished on him could buy his misgiving and doubts. These questions have also plagued the sleep of the clergy around him.

In 1979, the Reverend Isaac began his thesis for the Master at the Seminary College in Cairo. His research objectivity took the better of him; he has reached a conclusion in his research. He has found that Christ has announced the coming of a prophet in the Biblical texts. He will be called the Paraclete; a Greek word meaning (the praised one). The Reverend has seen a clear sign to the prophethood of Mohammad (PBUH). Nevertheless, the Gospel of John attributes this to Christ,(PBUH): “sorrow has filled your hearts, but I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” John, verses 7-8.

Reverend Isaac Hilal has paid dearly for his objectivity; his thesis has been refused after four years of effort and perseverance. He has been accused of madness. It’s the same ridiculous lie that misguided people have described the advocates of the truth in every age and country. These are people of similar thoughts and related discourse. In Sura Adh-Dhariyat, verses 52-53 Allah confirms their claims: (Similarly, no messenger came to the Peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, "A sorcerer or one possessed"! (52) Is this the legacy they have transmitted, one to another? Nay, they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds! (53).)

Isaac will never forget the sixth day of August 1978. He was sitting in the bus with his church cloak when a boy came aboard selling Islamic books. The Reverend bought the chapter thirty of the Qur'an and another book. Unable to overcome his curiosity, he started to read the Qur'an. His life has turned upside down. The verses of this book completely destroyed the foundation of his faith and shook the depths of his conscience. The clear sounding verses of Sura Al-Ikhlās have made the Reverend stop and think. Allah says: (Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; (1) Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; (2) He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; (3) And there is none like unto Him. (4)). Furthermore, he wondered how Christ could be god, when he is born from a woman? He couldn't believe in the divinity of someone who needs food and drink. He couldn't accept associating partners with God the Eternal, who is serving his creation, and who is in need of anyone or anything?

One must question himself on how to talk about the divinity of Christ and equate him to Almighty God. Allah has neither an equal nor a son?

Sura Al-Ikhlās has been the second beacon in the life of Reverend Isaac. It has come after the scream of his inner self and its questions that caused him a lot of problems within the church.

During his work in the church, his innate conscience rejected the recognition of the so-called sacrament of penance. The offender or the wrong doer will confess his guilt to the priest. The latter will grant him a pardon absolving him of his sins. The priest will then declare his innocence and forgives him. (He will get a new slate until he commits another sin). Isaac was wondering: How can I forgive others their sins, while I need someone to forgive mine? Is Paradise so cheap to the extent that any priest in the Church can grant it to whom he pleases? All these questions and others have robbed him his sleep. His awakened mind couldn't hide them away. Furthermore, he has become addict to alcohol, an element that added to his miseries. To this example and many others, Allah says in Qur'an in Sura Taha, verse 124: ("But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.")

Isaac has asked many questions that caused him some trouble with the church. Unable to answer them, and exasperated with his conduct, the church decided this time to incarcerate him. The jail has been located in the priory of (Mary Mina) in Wadi Natroon, where he has spent one hundred humiliating days. He has suffered all types of beatings and indignity at the hands of his jailers. Finally, he has been released to the senior monk to reason with him, and bring him back to the so-called church's straight path.

However, the senior monk has talked to him in a tone he wasn't accustomed to hear before in the church. He told him: son, be patient! Remember, whoever fears Allah will prepare him a way out; He shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who do one single righteous deed. Be sure to settle your affairs confidentially.

At first, Reverend Isaac didn't understand the secret behind the monk's strange rationale and words; he has been puzzled by his speech. One day, he came to see the monk in his retreat only to discover something shocking. He has caught him off guard performing the Muslim prayers. The senior monk admitted that he was Muslim concealing his conversion to Islam for the last twenty-three years. During this period, the monk said, he has found solace in the Qur'an and deep faith within his heart.

Reverend Isaac Hilal has been released, and returned to his church to make people understand what he was unable to fathom. He has come back carrying in his heart three blazing elements. These have awakened the call of instinct: Sura Al-Ikhlās, the complex of the confessional, and the priest's silhouette as he performed the Muslims' prayer.

Late in 1979, the church has commissioned Pastor Isaac in a missionary trip to Sudan. There, he has distributed large amounts of money on poor Muslims. In his presence, these wretched souls have declared to him their switch to Christianity. They were hoping to get more money from him to feed their sons, cloth their bodies, and buy medicaments. He then boarded the ship (Marina) accompanying them back to Egypt, where they will be initiated in their new religion.

In the cabin¹⁴ resides the new apostate Abdul Maseeh whose previous name was Mohammed Adam. The Reverend Isaac came to see him in his cabin, and found him praying like the Muslims do. He told him: “how could you pray like them after severing your ties with your previous religion?”

With an answer that could have shaken mountains, Abdul Maseeh- or if will say- Mohamed Adam answered firmly: - “I've sold you my body for your money, but my heart, my soul and my mind belong to Allah Almighty alone. I wouldn't sell them for the treasures of the world; and I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

This reaction has startled the priest who is still skeptical about the legitimacy of his faith. The firmness of Mohamed Adam has changed the roles; it has made the prey into hunter. Suddenly, the hunter fell prey to the truth; the truth that has rattled his heart for a long time. He returned to Egypt to announce his conversion to Islam; this move has cost him dearly. He waived his rights to what he owned in bank savings and real estate funds. He gave it all up willingly for Islam, for the tranquility of the heart, and for the peace of mind. His heart has long suffered the darkness and control of falsehood. Now, he is writing a new chapter in sacrifice for the sake of the true faith and belief. The verse 207 of Sura Al-Baqara fits Isaac perfectly (And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah: And Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees.)

The story of Isaac reminds us of one of the good righteous predecessors, to whom the prophet said: “What a profitable transaction Aba Yahiya!” The prophet (PBUH) gave Suhaib Ar-Roumi the promise of abundant rewards when he favored the hereafter on this ephemeral world. You see; Suhaib has relinquished his wealth and worldly assets in Makkah in exchange for Islam, paradise, and God's pleasure. He sets on a journey to migrate to Medina joining the new faith. It's a lucky sale and propitious exchange Suhaib concluded! The one who follows the tracks is indeed fortunate. After all, paradise is surrounded with adversity. “He who is afraid of the pillage of the enemy, sets out in the early part of the night. And he, who sets out early, reaches his destination. Be on your guard that the

commodity of Allah is precious. Verily, the commodity of Allah is Janna.” Islam is the road to paradise; whoever prefers it, will sacrifice everything for it.

Leaving his wealth behind to the church hasn't been the last trial faced by the new Muslim Isaac Hilal. Three assassination attempts have been perpetrated by his relatives. One has almost cost him his life, hasn't been Allah's providence. Allah says in the Qur'an, Sura Al-Baqara, verse 214: (Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? they encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah?" Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!)

However, the greatest tragedy that has touched Isaac was the immolation of his parents. They have protested their sons freeing himself from worshiping the Messiah, to worshiping the Lord of Christ. Doubtless he loved his parents and keen on keeping them alive. Nevertheless, his love for Islam was greater and the certainty of the truth that has touched his heart. Sura At-Tawba, verse 24 (Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings in which ye delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause;- then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.)

Earlier in time, Saad I Abi Waqqas (ABPH) remained steadfast; he didn't budge despite facing a great trial. His mother wanted to exploit his love and obedience for her. She said to him: “O Saad, what this religion, you have followed? If you don't leave it, I won't eat or drink until I die; then people will accuse you of matricide.” Her self-assured son replied: “Do not do my mother; I won't leave this religious for anything. Oh mother, you know, by God, if you had a hundred souls that will leave your body one after the other. I won't forsake my religion. So, feel free to eat or not to eat.”

Isaac is still residing in Jordan, far away from his family and his country. We supplicate Allah to keep steadfast on the truth and guidance.

Margaret Marcus – Mariam Jamila

It was surprising to a lot of people the spread of Islam among women. Their numbers have exceeded by far that of men in most countries. The whole world in general is experiencing a steady increase in the number of new adherents of Islam.

People have long questioned the reasons behind the transition made by women. They have moved from the life of fun and embellishment to a restricted and controlled life. Once she becomes a Muslim, a woman must cover herself and stop mixing with men. Now, how could these women embrace Islam while propagandists keep spreading its alleged persecution and the violation of their rights?

Sura Al-Anfal, verse 30 mentions: “**They plot and plan, and Allah too plans; but the best of planners is Allah.**” “Margaret Marcus” or “Mariam Jamila” is one of these women who had heard a lot of false rumors about Islam. She has been born in 1934 to Jewish parents of German descent. However, it didn’t take long for her and her family to embrace the doctrine of atheism, run by an organization called Ethical Culture Society. This group promotes the idea of changing values and ethics, according to time and place. According to them, what would be considered a virtue in a society may be seen as vice in another community or at another time.

After wasting ten years with this association; Margaret's family decided to return to Christianity and join the reformist church that rejects trinity.

However, Margaret did not follow her family in this shift. She chose instead to embrace the Baha'i faith. It has attracted her by alleging to unify the human race and fuse all religions into one that would accommodate everyone's calling. She immersed herself into for a full year before deciding to leave it to go back to Judaism. The New York University Professor Rabbi Koch has influenced her decision. Earlier, she has followed a course on Islam and Judaism by the said rabbi, whom he summed up saying: Islam is a religion adapted from Judaism and various ancient Christian sects.

Despite the influenced by the rabbi Koch; Margaret did not see these alleged similarities. Her love of reading has led her to discover an important fact. Islam is different in principles and branches from the Religions of the Book. It rejects all forms of likening God to His creation, which the Jewish books are filled with. Furthermore, Islam doesn’t contain any of the biblical myths, historical and scientific errors that fill the books of the Bible.

Margaret listened to the Qur'an for the first time because of her penchant for Arabic music. She used to search for Arabic music broadcasted

in radio stations. She liked the recitation she has heard without understanding its meaning or listening to its calls.

Margaret got sick, stricken by an illness that kept her in the hospital bed for two years. For the first time, her sickness provided her with the opportunity to read a translation of the Qur'an. Unfortunately, she was a victim of a distorted translation by the Orientalist George Seale. It has been filled with prejudice and false allegations on the Qur'an. This has persuaded Margaret – even for a moment - that it has been adapted from the legends of the People of the Book.

And, because God has good things in store for her as foretold in her destiny, Margaret realized George Seale's unbiased stance on the Qur'an. She refused his claims, and got rid of the illusions shrouding her mind. She got hold of the translation of the Holy Quran prepared by the convert to Islam, Muhammad Marmaduke Pikhall. Margaret loved this translation. It has led to see the real implications of this great Qur'an. Pikhall hasn't translated the Qur'an in the weak apologetic style the way some Muslims who are culturally defeated had done in their interpretation thereof. They have even changed its provisions to reconcile them with Western materialistic values.

Margaret Marcus realized that the Qur'an is the revelation of Allah. This book has elevated the Arabs; it made them into a vibrant nation in history; built on the ruins of rivaling tribes mired in ignorance and idolatry. Margaret says: "Islam is the only element that molded the Arabs into a grand nation. If it hadn't been for the Qur'an, this Arabic language would have been extinct by now. At best, without it this language wouldn't be as famous as Zulu. The arts and culture are indebted to the Qur'an, and rely on it to flourish. Without it, arts and culture would have been worthless."

Margaret embarked on a comparison between the Qur'an and the books of the Torah. Both Jews and Christians believe in the old and new testaments. Furthermore, the concepts of death and resurrection that have baffled Margaret have been shrouded in mystery in the Bible, yet absent in the Torah. It is, however, clearly defined in the Qur'an. She found in its Suras convincing answers to the big problems of life and to various others that frustrated her during her browsing between religions and beliefs; Judaism and atheism, and Baha'i.

Each passing day takes Margaret away from the miserable Western life. Mawdudi has described it as "tropical bush planted in the polar region." She wouldn't have prevailed -a weak female- to face this reality alone. She broke the barrier of isolation that's enveloping her. She began writing to famous Muslim intellectuals around the world. She requested them to provide her with answers that would appease her restless mind and the

spiritual turmoil she is in. Their answers came as a booster shot and gave her the peace of mind she was seeking. Their answers presented her great benefits that helped her in the way of her journey to discover the truth.

Perhaps the Imam reformer Abu Ala Mawdudi was the most distinguished scholar Mariam Jamila has written to. He was also very influential in her life. He has donated his books to her. Throughout the pages, his pride in Islam and his transcendence on the physical matters shone through. She had great admiration for this man. Her correspondence has been characterized by honesty and objectivity worthy of a man in the caliber of Mawdudi, God's mercy on his soul. That correspondence between them has been published in a special book, on the Internet.

Despite her Jewish origins, her humanitarian feelings shone through when she has expressed her rejection of the occupation of the land of the Arabs in Palestine. Her co-religionists' Jews were the culprit of such crime. In her novel titled "Ahmed Khalil," she tells the story of a Palestinian boy expelled from his village. The latter has been destroyed by the Zionists occupation's machine of tyranny and oppression. This machine has the full backing of Western colonial powers.

After ten years of research and scrutiny, study and correspondence with Mawdudi and other scholars and advocates of Islam, Margaret decided to become Mariam Jamila. She has declared her conversion to Islam. It happened on the blessed Eid al-Adha Day in 1961 in Brooklyn's mosque in New York. Mariam Jamila, the young lady who has been guided to this religion, will suffer more virulent and cruel treatment. Her alienation grew steadily, and her existence becomes unbearable in the society in which she lives in.

Shortly after embracing Islam, Mariam Jamila prepared a sermon. She has entitled the discourse "Could Islam be compatible with the spirit of the twentieth century?" In it, she has expressed her pride in her new faith. The speech has been delivered to the Friday sermon by one of the Egyptian students. It included the rejection of the alienation that has fascinated some intellectuals who call themselves progressive. These are demanding the replacement of the Moslem Sharia laws to man-made ones, and from Islamic brotherhood to nationalistic tendencies. In addition to all this, they demand what they call "the emancipation of women." Sadly, their real intention has been the adoption of Western values and the woman's isolation from her religion and Muslim values.

Mawdudi wrote congratulating her and expressed astonishment of this her great awareness. He replied saying: "I have analyzed your Friday speech carefully. And I assure you that what you have mentioned therein is the same request I have been repeating for thirty years. And that is the

reason why modern innovators fear us as a threat to them. Additionally, I was wondering how could have been possible that a girl born and raised in America could accommodate the depth of this problem? Mentioning your speech has awakened in me but deep appreciation. I supplicate Allah to grant you wisdom and resilience to illuminate and support the cause of Islam.”

Mawdudi, may Allah bless his soul, invited her to migrate from America to Pakistan. And he even offered her to stay in his house with his family in Lahore. By this act, Mawdudi wanted to revive the Sira of the Ansar and the Muhajereen. The former, have opened wide their doors and homes to accommodate their brothers fleeing Makkah to safeguard their faith. Right off the bat, he was sincere with her. He told her about the difficulties, she would face coming to Pakistan. His country lacks a lot of luxury and civilian life Mariam has been accustomed to in America. However, in a letter addressed to her parents, he pledged to take care of her as one of his daughters. Her parents permitted her to travel. They wanted her to get rid of the alienation she feels in her own country and the burden of Western material life that she grew to hate. It is a life that does shorten the goals of creation and hopes of creatures in an ephemeral world. Mariam chose to live among Muslim brothers, and with the blessed values of Islam. Later, she married Mr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan, and gave birth to four sons.

In Pakistan, Mariam Jamila began her life in study research, and writing in the Muslim community. She has enriched the Islamic library with ten books characterized by clarity and maturity and poise. The following four books are among the most important in Islam: (Islam Versus the West), and (My journey from Disbelief to Faith), and (Islam and Renewal) and (Islam in Theory and Practice). Her writings have exhibited a mature mentality and thoughtful and conscious mind. And this is especially evident as a result of her studies in Islam and its relationship to Biblical religions and Western philosophies. She has talked with a lot about pain about the images of cultural alienation and complexes of inferiority she saw with many Muslims infatuated with occidental civilization. Miss informed Muslims have listened carefully- even opened their hearts - to western allegations that “Islam is a thing of the past, and it is no longer suitable for this age.” She saw that some of the Muslims who agree with them are but satellites in the orbits of those Westerners, who have corrupted the cultural and educational life in the Muslim Levant. They will build a monument to any lowly man who accuses Islam of being reactionary and backward, yet claims to adhere to it. Mariam felt that these slanderers “suffer from a conflict of loyalty. They are the product of two quite opposite poles; even so, they don’t belong to neither... The outcome of this is a sharp

psychosomatic pain. However, in order to achieve a mental relief, they tend to interpret Islam as a compatible way to the life they wish to lead.”

Twenty years after embracing Islam Mariam Jamila sent message of advice and compassion to her parents. In it, she describes occidental life and the causes of misery suffered by humanity. Such life has been seen in an advanced vision of western life. This existence is similar to that of ancient “Rome” that has faded and has become ruins. In her letter, she says: “Indeed, the decline has been clear since the First World War: moral chaos in the absence of any decent values, or constant standards of ethics and behavior. Furthermore, corrupt sexual obsession, and its spread in the entertainment media; ill treatment of old people. Divorce rates are on the rise among current generations; hence, durable happy marriage has become rare. Add to all this, child abuse, environmental pollution, depletion of scarce and valuable resources, sexually transmitted disease; mental disorders, drug and alcohol addiction. Suicide has become a number-one element as the cause of death. Crime, vandalism, government corruption, and contempt for the law in general are the norms... The reason of all this is the failure of the secular system, obsession with materialism, the lack of moral values, and encroachment of the divine teachings and virtuous values.”

Mariam Jamila sums up her story with Islam saying. She says: “Since starting reading the Qur’an, I come to realize that religion is not only necessary in life, it life itself. The more I studied the further I became certain that Islam alone is the one who has made the Arabs a great civilized nation that has dominated the world.”

We supplicate Allah to grant our sister Mariam His divine mercy, and make paradise her last abode.

Leopold Weiss – Mohammad Assad

Leopold Weiss- a Jew- was not far in the understanding of Islam from what was in vogue since the beginning of the twentieth century in his native Austria and other European countries. As a result of intellectual writings and mobilization produced by the Crusades against Islam, Muslims have been falsely stereotyped.

Leopold Weiss studied philosophy and art at the University of Vienna. Later, he switched to the press, and worked as a reporter for the news agency United Telegraph.

His uncle, Dr. Dorian, invited him to visit him in Jerusalem in 1922. It was the first of his visits to the Islamic Orient. During his stay in Jerusalem, Leopold had numerous talks with his Jewish countrymen about the eligibility of the Judaic people to the land of Palestine. He has surprised them with his logical questions, and confirmed the Arabs precedence in building a civilization on this land. Hence, their entitlement to live freely and with dignity on their land is unquestionable. Leopold has, despite his Jewry, rejected the idea of stealing the land from its rightful owners based on abhorrent prejudice and injustice.

Important stages throughout the life of Leopold alerted him to the Islam's riches in values and principles. These, are indispensable to the world, especially the West. After the First World War, both have lost many of the values and meanings. Folks started to indulge in mundane matters and the search for prosperity and personal gains. They forgot religious and spiritual values altogether.

In Jerusalem, Leopold saw Muslims praying, and wondered about the usefulness of these physical movements. How could they refine the soul? He asked his old friend (Alhaji): It would have sufficed to take an hour of spiritual purity instead.

The man simply replied: God created the body and the soul together. Will it befitting to worship Him with our souls while our bodies refrain from that? It was a convincing and satisfactory answer that pleased Leopold. He has just discovered the bilateral linkage between the soul and the body in the Qur'an. It does not separate them. The man, after all is made of a soul and body without contradiction or separation.

Leopold refused to surrender to the misconstrued Westerners' idea linking Islam and what ails the Muslim countries in aspects of underdevelopment and technological backwardness. He felt that objectivity and fairness compel him to read the Qur'an. He started reading it and other Islamic books during his visit to Damascus. He has discovered the large gap between it and the people the book's scriptures; the Quran differs

entirely. There is no mention therein of the original sin committed by Adam the father of humanity. This sin has shackled the human race thereafter until the end of time. Therefore, man will be born in sin, subject to punishment thereof, without being present then, or had any saying in it.

In Islam, there are no clerics acting as a mediator between God and his creation up and down. No one will forgive sins of the guilty but God. The slave of is in and no need for a broker that will take his pleas and prayers to the Almighty Allah.

Leopold returned to his native Austria, carrying with him a lot of feelings of friendship, love and admiration for Muslims. There, something has caught his attention: the social values of justice among them. The salient traits of Muslims are hospitality, down to earth humility, serenity and simplicity. This conclusion comes contrary to the prevailing European idea that belittles Muslims based on the under-development of their countries. He saw this fact divested of the spirit of impartiality and fairness.

In 1924, Leopold and his wife Alyssa returned to the Levant again. Together they toured Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Palestine. On one of his trips by train, he shared the coach with a village Leader and a Greek businessman who accused Islam of violating the value of justice. His argument has been based on why Muslim men marry women of the People of the Book, and prevent their daughters from marrying non-Muslims. The Leader gave his interlocutor a discreet and brilliant answer: a Muslim while married with a woman with different religion than his will respect the prophets she believes in. He won't hurt her delicate feelings, and not provoke her anger by insulting anyone of them. However, the opposite won't be true. The woman won't be strong enough to stand the insult of the man who does not believe in her prophet. Furthermore, she cannot defend him faced with a tough man who could harm her.

Before the Greek could wet his throat, the Leader continued: boys usually follow their parents. Hence we believe in the primacy of Islam, we see it inappropriate to marry our daughters to non-Muslims. Such step will protect their children from following a religion we consider incorrect.

Muhammad Assad comments on this scene, saying: "Once again, as happened to me with that old (Alhaji) in Jerusalem; I felt that the new portal to Islam was open to me."

Perhaps one of the most important vistas that changed Leopold to Muhammad Assad was his encounter with a venerable scholar the Azharite Sheikh Mustafa Maraghi. Numerous discussions happened between the two men. He provided him the opportunity to listen to lecture and seminars at Al-Azhar. These have uncovered the facts that contradict everything he has learned in Western culture: "Muslims aren't the ones who have made Islam

great. Nay, it's Islam that made Muslims famous. However, their faith became a habit, and ceased to be a way of life to be followed consciously. The creative driving force that fashioned their civilization, faded into oblivion, inactivity, unproductiveness and cultural decadence set in."

Leopold began to think seriously about Islam. However, he wondered how he—a discerning and intelligent man could - give up all his culture and thought, and follows others emulating them in everything? He mentioned his mind's thoughts on Sheikh Maraghi, who replied: Most humans are restricted in their thinking through whims, desires and interests. However, few are able to understand the voice that speaks within them. If each one of us is left to follow the desires of the heart, we will end up with moral anarchy. Furthermore, we wouldn't be able to agree on behaviors; we all deem them upright. The situation will be further compounded if one claimed it to be a deviation from the norm, and that he is gifted with what other people don't know. That is why Allah has sent prophets with the divine message to protect human from the aberrations of those people and the deviations of others.

Leopold traveled through the capitals of Islam, such as Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad, and reached the mountain heights of Afghanistan. He continued on a journey he called "the slow discovery of Islam from a word here and talks there." He has been constantly accompanied by his wife Elisa, who was reading the Qur'an with him. He reached a significant conclusion; he summed it up by saying: "I have now a complete image of Islam. It appears to me in a final decisive manner that has at times astounded me... I have seen something similar to a building fully engineered, its elements complement each other in a harmonious way. There is nothing superfluous, and nothing is missing. This serenity and tranquility in Islam add a unique sense to the feelings that everything is in place."

Leopold remarked the following aspect of Islam as well: Allah—according to the Quran—did not ask man for a blind obedience. In contrary, he addressed his mind. Allah isn't far away from the human fate; He is (closer to him than his jugular vein). Furthermore, He didn't draw a dividing line between faith and social behavior."

The picture became complete when Leopold saw that the Islamic Sharia takes into account everybody's interests. It hasn't been established for the benefit of one in particular. This code of law gave the world a great model of civilization not expressed fairly through the reality of Muslims. However, this model foretells the unique ability to restore the Muslim Umma's role in building the civilization.

Leopold returned to Germany in the second half of 1926; he was thinking of Islam constantly. It has taken away his concentration to the extent that it has prevented him from performing his work as a journalist.

Riding the train in Berlin, Leopold gazed at the faces of two rich people sharing the same coach. He saw gloom wrapping their faces. It even wraps the faces of all passengers despite their dapper appearances and signs of riches. He nodded to his wife Alyssa, and shared his observations with her. She looked at them carefully, and confirmed his thoughts about their misery and gloominess. When he arrived home, he wanted to close the open Qur'an on his desk. His gaze preceded his hand to the words of Allah: (“**The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things), (1) Until ye visit the graves. (2)**”) Sura At-Takathur, verses 1 and 2. He read the Sura to the end, then shouted: Alyssa “is this not the answer to what we have seen on the train today. I know now without any doubt that the book I have been holding in my hands has been irrefutably revealed by Allah. Although this book has been handed to man for more than three centuries, it has clearly predicted something that was impossible to occur only in our complex automated era. People have known abundance in all ages and times. However, amassing wealth has never ended before becoming just a longing to own material things. It has turned into a distraction that has veiled everything else. Now more than yesterday and tomorrow than today... I knew that this was not merely a human wisdom of a man who lived in the distant past in the remote Arabian Peninsula. Whatever degree of wisdom such a man has acquired, he wouldn't be able, alone, to predict anguish, which characterized the twentieth century.”

On a memorable day during the year 1926, Leopold went to an Indian friend who is the head of the Muslim community in Berlin. He embraced Islam in his presence, and gave him the name (Muhammad Assad). Few weeks later, his wife also accepted Islam. They left with their son Ahmed to the Muslim Levant again. He performed Hajj in 1927 and met King Abdul Aziz, who listened to him before leaving to Libya to support his Muslim brothers in their jihad against the Italian occupiers. Then he departed to Pakistan, to serve as president of the Institute of Islamic Studies in Lahore. He was later nominated for the post of Pakistan's representative Pakistan to the United Nations in New York.

Muhammad Assad retired from diplomatic work. Now, he gave his full attention and time to writing, lecture and introducing Islam. He took advantage of his familiarity with the Western society's way of thinking in his endeavor. He has also used his knowledge of many languages, such as Polish, Hebrew, Arabic, Urdu, Spanish, Portuguese and English to fulfill his goal. The German ambassador Murad Hofmann has ably described his

friend; he says: “No one could surpass Muhammad Assad during the last century in his great contribution to explain Islam and propagate it in the West.”

Muhammad Assad has authored unique books in rich topics to the Islamic library. These include books such as “The Road to Mecca” and "Islam at the Crossroads," and "The Principals of State and Government in Islam," and "message of the Qur'an", he also translated the Holy Quran into English, and translated Bukhari in four volumes. Three have been lost during the separation of Pakistan from India.”

In 1992 Muhammad Assad returned to his Lord after a lifetime of giving to Islam. He has summed up his journey saying: “Islam came to me stealthily as the light to my darkened heart, but to stay there forever. What has attracted me to Islam is that great integrated harmonious edifice, which cannot be described? Islam is a complete structure of exquisite workmanship. Each part has been crafted to complete each other. Islam continues -in spite of all the hurdles created by the backwardness of the Muslims - the greatest rising power known to mankind. Hence, I am fully convinced of its revival again.”

I conclude with one of the most important of his recommendations “a Muslim should live with his head held high. He must realize that he is a distinct individual. He must be greatly proud of that too. Instead of being apologetic, A Muslim should proudly and bravely celebrate his distinction.”

(Mohammad) Zaki An-Najjar

No one has expected Zaki An-Najjar to become Muslim. He has been born to Christian parents in the early second quarter of the twentieth century. He has become a caller to Allah and His true religion. Zaki has been born in the Egyptian province of Tahta. He regularly frequented church since childhood; as a matter of fact, he has progressed in its ranks to become a pastor then a priest.

The young Zaki worked as a carpenter, and this occupation hasn't stopped from loving knowledge. He was an avid reader. He never stopped moving through religious book shelves, and has read many Bible's books as well as the Qur'an. Years of research and scrutiny have been enough to switch the Priest Zaki an-Najjar to the Muslim scholar Mohammad Zaki An-Najjar. Once asked about his reversion to Islam, he said: "Becoming Muslim hasn't come in one single mutation or overnight. It was rather the result of research and quest to find the truth. I have read the Holy Qur'an after studying the Torah and the Bible. I wanted to record the results of my research into these books about the truth that has guided me to the straight path."

Between the years 1949-1952 after becoming Muslim, Mohammad Zaki An-Najjar enrolled in the Tahta Religious Institute. He donned the Muslim dress, like the students of Al-Azhar. He went on to become a preacher calling to the way of Allah the Almighty. He later joined the ranks of the Muslim brotherhood. He was a great poet and a man of letters.

The Church never spared any efforts to lure him back to Christianity. Sometimes they promised him marriage from a Christian socialite. Other times they promised him promotion to the highest position in the church hierarchy. However, all the promises on earth wouldn't be able to wipe the belief that has conquered his heart and engulfed his mind.

Mohammad Zaki An-Najjar recorded a synopsis of his experience and his reasons for leaving his old religion in a number of books. No books of his have been found, they seem to have been lost or disappeared. However, a look at the titles is a clear indication of the scholarly status of An-Najjar. In a book titled: "The straight path in reply to the people of trinity," he refutes the doctrines of Christians. Zaki has shown the distortion within the holy Bible in another one, titled: "the Barrel of the Gun Aimed at the Distorted Book." He has also written a tome calling to Islam and its principles that bears the title: "Guidance of Youth in Learning the Principals of Religion." In dealing with the Prophet, he penned "Miracles of Mohammad (PBUH) in the twentieth century." Finally, talking about Islam the religion he has embraced and its virtues, he wrote, "Savior of Humanity

from the Yoke of Slavery” and “Life Dictum and the Constitution of Immortality.”

An-Najjar has fended off two of the most important suspicions of the skeptics of Islam, who prey on laymen. The first one has been the story of the prostration of the Prophet to the herons. It’s a story circulating on the tongues and pens of missionaries during his time. In a reply to them, he wrote a book titled “Rejection of the missionaries’ libel in the story of the herons.” In this book, he has refuted it as aberration and has shown its corroboration and text weakness. It wasn’t suitable as a matter of protest. All scholars have agreed about its weakness. Ibn Al-Arabi has said, “This story is extremely weak in its text”

It’s rather unfortunate that none of these useful books have reached us, except one. The book is “Bright Beacons in the Darkness of a Gloomy World.” In it, the author has discussed many issues pertaining to his choice of Islam over his parents’ and grandparents’ religion. At the start, he didn’t see his reversion to Islam a desertion of the religion of Christ (PBUH). After all, Islam “is the religion of early and later prophets and messengers. [That is] the meaning of Islam is to submit to what Allah has revealed in His books, and obey his messengers.”

An-Najjar quoted verses of the Qur’an to support the validity of the concept of the unity of religion. Allah has sent His prophets and messengers with one religion and has named them all Muslims. All have shown utter surrender to Allah. On account of God, Mussa has said in verse 72 Sura Yunus: “and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to Allah's will (in Islam)” It means from those who submit to Allah the Almighty.

After him, Ibrahim has said in Sura Al-Baqara: “Behold! His Lord said to him: "Bow (your will to Me):" He said: "I bow (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe." (131) and this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob; "Oh my sons! Allah has chosen the Faith for you; then, die not except in the Faith of Islam (132). Were you witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers, of Abraham, Isma'il and Isaac, - the one (True) Allah: To Him we bow (in Islam)." (133).

As An-Najjar believes in Mohammad (PBUH), he sees himself honoring the Messiah by believing in the Paraclete’s (Extoller) Prophethood. Jesus has said about him: “ I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now (11), But when *he* is come, the Spirit of truth, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak; and he will announce

to you what is coming (12), He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall announce [it] to you (14)” [John 16-12/14].

An-Najjar looked carefully at what the messiah has said about his brother Mohammad “he shall glorify me.” That is, he will revere and honor me. He realized that it is Islam that has exonerated the Virgin Mary from Jewish lies and accusation of adultery. He considered this to be the worst lie that has earned them God’s ire, hatred, and wrath. Their hearts were darkened, and their lights dimmed. Allah testifies to this in Sura An-Nissa, verses 155 and 156 “Nay, Allah has set the seal on their hearts for their blasphemy, and little is it they believe. That they rejected Faith; that they uttered against Mary a grave false charge.”

An-Najjar has reviewed the causes of issuing this lie. He found out that it goes back to the birth of Christ without a biological father. He saw that this event-despite its miraculous aspect-is not beyond God’s ability. He is after all the Almighty. “Whoever created heavens, the earth and all the creatures of the worlds; the suns and moons, planets and orbits, is unable to make Mary carry a child without a man? Oh God, these are manifest error and great falsehood. Again, Allah gives evident proof of His might in Sura Ya-Sin, verses 81, 82, and 83 “Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?” - Yea, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)! Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, "be", and it is! So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things: and to Him will ye be all brought back.”

The Messiah has said, “He shall glorify me.” An-Najjar states: “The Prophet of Allah has achieved that. He has glorified him and lifted the stigma off his mother... he has also cleared him and his mother from the obvious and unfair wrong done unto them.” He has done it a second time around when it resulted in the evidence of the innocence of Christ’s mother. This has come in the words of her son (PBUH) in the cradle; a miracle of great proportion that has rendered his detractors speechless. This miracle is the only proof of her innocence; may the peace of Allah be upon her. The Qur’an refers to it, while all Gospels that the Christians believe in its sacredness failed to mention it.

The Christ’s prophecy about the anticipated messenger (PBUH): “He shall glorify me” has been fulfilled by his brother Mohammad a third time. He rejected the distorted gospels’ accusation about his ungraciousness towards his mother. In the Gospel of John (2/4), Mary may be the peace and blessings of Allah be upon her asked her son to turn the water in the jugs into wine so the wedding party she was attending in the village of Qana can drink. In a harsh tone, “Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with you? Mine hour is not yet come.”

Again in the Gospel of Mathew 12/47, his mother may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon her, asking permission to come in. one of his disciple told him: “Behold, your mother and your brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee... But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” The Messiah, according to Mathew, has ignored his mother, disowned her and accused her of not doing God's will. An-Najjar sees it as a calamity that the Qur'an has cleared Christ of it and glorified him.

Again, in Sura Mariam, verses 30, 31, and 32, Allah says in the Qur'an: “He (Jesus) said: “I am indeed a servant of Allah: He has given me revelation and made me a prophet” And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; "(He) has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable.”

The fourth time the Prophet (PBUH) has glorified his brother the Messiah (PBUH) who has foretold his Prophethood. “He shall glorify me.” It was his testimony exonerating him of what the Gospels have attributed to him of being crucified, slapped, insulted, tortured and stripped in front of people. He has been saved by Allah from this entire terrible ordeal. The Holy Quran tells a crystal clear testimony of Jesus surviving the conspiracy of the Jews and God raising him to Heavens. In Sura Al-Imran, verses 54 and 55, Allah states: “And (the unbelievers) plotted and planned, and Allah too planned, and the best of planners is Allah. Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise you to Myself and clear you (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow you superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall you all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein you dispute.”

In his Bright Beacons, An-Najjar mentioned important scientific issues in the criticism of Christianity and the distortion of its books and beliefs. The Christians believe and still do in the crucifixion of Christ. In one of these issues, the author has shown evidence in the Holy Bible testifying that the Christ has never been subjected to this alleged degrading crucifixion. In Psalms 91, one of the sacred Jewish and Christians' gospels, the following is noteworthy: “Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; ¹⁰ There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. ¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all the ways. ¹² They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. ¹³ You shall tread upon the

lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet.¹⁴ Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he has known my name.¹⁵ He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

Here, is in this Psalm, a true and honest testimony to the salvation of Christ from the humiliating crucifixion as mentioned in the holy Qur'an. Allah has commanded the angels to raise him into Heavens. He has granted him long life as a reward for his sincerity and devotion in worshipping his Lord.

An-Najjar continues through his book-rather his books-citing evidence as to the reason why he has chosen Islam. They are shining beacons for those who got rid of unshakable loathsome intolerance. The books he has penned were a proof and guidance to those who seek the truth. He said: “I want the reader to come out with a clear answer, and attain the result I have reached if he abandons the loathsome fanaticism and partisanship. So if you read my synopsis wit care and attention, you will find the truth through clear evidence, and will appear to you unmasked. You will see yourself guided to certainty. You see; a wise person will follow the truth and adhere to it if he sees it.”

We supplicate Allah to keep us steadfast on the true faith, and have great mercy on the erudite scholar Mohammad Zaki An-Najjar.

Dr. Wilfred Hoffman (Murad)

The veteran German ambassador in Algeria then Morocco Wilfred Hoffman, is a multi-talented man, He is an expert in nuclear defense, and information director at NATO. He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Munich. On top of that, he is a gifted thinker and prolific writer and a brilliant lecturer.

Dr. Wilfred Hoffman has been born in Germany in 1931. He grew up in a Christian environment, and belonged in the Catholic Mariana group. He was attending its weekly meetings, and a firm believer in its Christian beliefs. However, he quickly left the group after uncovering its corrupted beliefs, and its contradictions with reason, logic and common sense.

His religious experience with Christianity helped him. It has deepened his belief in God and the inevitability of Revelation as well as the necessity of religion to man. However, it has not succeeded in solving an important problematic issue with Hoffman. It is to determine, which true religion followed by most humans among the world's beliefs.

In his youth, Hoffman suffered a traffic accident that nearly ended his life. The doctor said to him: "Wilfred, no one can survive such an accident. God has spared you my dear for something very special."

Hoffman's journey to know Islam began in 1961 during his work in the German consulate in Algeria. It was during the era of French colonialism there. He witnessed some of the massacres in the country of one and half-million martyrs. "These sad facts have formed the backdrop of my first close contact with the real Islam. I've also noticed how the Algerians endured pain, and saw their strong commitment during Ramadan. These people were certain of their victory against the French. Nevertheless, the human behavior they display amid suffering and pain is incredible. Then, I have come to realize that the role of religion has something to do in all this."

Hoffman was eager to explore the role of Islam, so he bought a copy of the Qur'an. To this he said: "in order to know these astonishing people think and act. I started to read their book, the Qur'an; I haven't stopped reading it ever since." I have discovered that the secret of the Algerians' patience and steadfastness lay in the Book of Allah. In verse 45 of Sura Al-Baqara Allah says: ("And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]")

Through reading the Suras of the Qur'an, Hoffman stopped long pondering the verse 38 in Sura An-Najm stating: ("That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another") He saw this verse in utter contradiction to all Christian creeds he believed in. This denies the principle of guilt-ridden society starting with our father Adam and ending

with his descendants. Thus it refutes the belief of atonement's tenet- that falsely claims -that God enabled the Jews to crucify Christ to expiate the sins of Adam and his sons. This verse also has falsified all the beliefs that have been formulated around the idea of salvation through atonement. It has deified Christ and claims that he is one of the most sacred trinity. Dr. Hoffman disdainfully asked: "God suffers for humanity?! It is a terrible and horrible, blasphemous [What a heresy] and very insulting matter."

During his touring Algeria Dr. Hoffman's attention has been drawn to the great number of Berber boys who memorize by heart the Qur'an or part of it. It is noteworthy though, that the Qur'an isn't in the Tamazight language.

There is a more impressive matter Dr. Hoffman hasn't seen. That is the memorization of the holy Qur'an by Muslims, who don't understand the Arabic language. Whoever wishes to appreciate the proof to the great significance of God to save His book let him memorize a text in a language unknown to him. Dear reader, can you commit to memory one single page in Japanese, Russian, or other languages you don't master?

The second aspect that has attracted Dr. Hoffman to Islam was his penchant for art, and beauty happened when he visited Spain. There, he saw the beautiful work of art left by Muslims. Their graceful lines and ornamental decoration in mosques and palaces are vivid witnesses to their masters. [These works of art have] "Their architecture - such as in Alhambra and Granada, and the Great mosque in Cordoba- have inspired me that they exuded highly sophisticated civilization."

Dr. Hoffman presented his son Alexander with a strange gift for his birthday. He gave him a brief research containing a summary of his convictions in religion and philosophy. His mind, conscience and his nature have brought him to this conclusion. He sent the transcript of this research to the publishing house for printing. The press manager, who happens to be a Muslim, told him that he considered the writer a Muslim if he believes in what he has written. Generally, this author was consistent with the beliefs of Islam; the book was later reprinted with the title "Philosophical Pathway to Islam."

Dr. Hoffman says: "For years if not for decades I have been attracted to Islam like a magnet. I have become familiarized with it as if I lived before." He further says: "I have found that Islam has the purest and most basic progressive perception of God. The Qur'an's fundamental words its principles and moral call seemed to me very logical. Therefore, I no longer have the slightest doubt about the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH)"

Dr. Hoffman summarizes his philosophical research thus: "through this effort, I have come to realize that the typical intellectual position of

those who adhere to agnosticism and atheistic dogmas lacks intelligence. And that man simply cannot escape the decision of believing. The created objects that exist around us are a clear matter. Furthermore, the greatest harmony possible between Islam and the whole truth is not to be denied. Then, I realized- and this truth has shaken me to the core- that I have become a Muslim one step at a time despite myself, and unaware of what is happening. The metamorphosis has included my feelings and intellect. However, there is one final step remains to be made, and that is to announce officially my becoming a Muslim. At the Islamic Center in Cologne, I have uttered the testimony of faith. "I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Mohammad is His messenger." Among the Islamic names I chose for myself was the name Murad Fareed...starting today I have become a Muslim. Thus I have fulfilled my desire." This event happened during the summer of 1980.

Dr. Murad Hofmann cautions his readers that Islam is not a new religion to humanity. It is a legacy of the prophets who have come one after the other. It is the sincere extension to what Jesus (PBUH) called for. This has happened before Paul has introduced deviations and radical changes. These have turned Christians into "Paulists"; not Christians per se. Dr. Murad believed that Islam is taking Christianity back to its authentic and original beginning. It is putting Christianity upright after it was standing on its head.

Hoffman has chosen Islam, because it is the "alternative life with an eternal project that doesn't wear and tear or expires. If people consider it old, it is also a modern and futuristic. It is timeless and unrestricted by place. Islam is neither a whimsical notion of an intellectual nor a fashion; it will and can continue unabated."

Murad Hofmann enriched the Muslim Library with distinct works, initiated by scattered memories about Islam; he titled it (Diary of a Muslim German). Later, he detailed his experience in his transition to Islam in his book (the Road to Makkah). He also completed his book about the future of Islam entitled (Islam, 2000).

However, his book (Islam as an Alternative) has caused a great uproar in the media and German partisan circles. He saw Islam as the long-awaited hope and lifeline that would save humanity from its pain and sorrow. It is an alternative that will save the world in general and Europe, in particular, from both bankrupt systems communism and capitalism. Hesperian societies had become confident and convinced that Western civilization has failed to satisfy their spiritual needs. In contrary, it had involved them in brutal wars that have reaped too many humans and destroyed materials. All of this comes as a prelude to the possibility that Christians will become Muslims; and that the churches will be turned into

mosques. However, the Muslims must succeed in providing the proper image of their Islam. Hence, light comes always from the East.

Dr. Hoffman looks ahead in time in the future of Islam and says: “It is no secret to the visionary to see the Islamic March in the twentieth century as a possible dominance. Hence its spread will make it the religion of the majority of human beings. Islam doesn’t present itself as a choice or an option to Western societies. It is already the only available alternative.”

In his interesting books, Hoffman spares no effort to introduce Islam and defend it. He further refutes constantly the false claims of its hostile foes in his writings. Among the most prevailing of these charges, is their accusation that Islam's has been spread by the sword. This libel has been originally diffused among Westerners to keep them away from Islam and justify the phenomenal rapid spread of Islam in the world. Dr. Hoffman starts his reply to these insidious accusations by quoting the words of the Almighty Allah. In Sura Al-Baqara, verse 256 Allah mentions the following: (“**There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion.**”) As we all know, coercion calls for hypocrisy, and God abhors hypocrisy. So if the actions are based on intentions, and rely on the heart regarding goodness and faith, no one can be compelled to do that. The acts performed by someone against his will which he dismisses them inside won’t be rewarded for them. They are useless; God has no need for them. Religion is sincerity as taught by the Prophet (PBUH).

As for their fictitious tales inferring the spread of Islam by the sword, he gives proof, argument and statement. Islam has entered countries such as Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Chad and Nigeria without a single soldier present then. Many others have embraced Islam in what Dr. Hoffman dubs as the “spontaneous spread of Islam, [which] is a constant feature throughout history. It’s because the religion of natural instinct revealed to the heart of Al-Mustafa PBUH”

Now, here comes the accusation leveled at Islam for being intolerant. Dr. Hoffman rejects such a claim and gives a clear comparison between the history and reality of the Muslim communities with those that follow other faiths. Muslims have never demolished churches across the country, which came under their power eons long. The examples in Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and other countries are vivid testimony to that. Tolerance is a trait of Muslims; established by the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of His prophet (PBUH).

In an interview, Dr. Hoffman wondered at the mystery behind the disappearance of mosques in Al-Andalus, Greece and the Serbia after the Muslims have left.

We supplicate God to grant us and Dr. Hoffman to remain steadfast on his religion.

Alphonse Etienne Dinet- Nasereddine

It wouldn't be surprising that Islam has touched the talented and erudite artist and writer of the caliber of Alphonse Etienne Dinet. His magnificent paintings have adorned the halls of European museums and galleries. They testify to his high and delicate taste. He has crowned his fame with embracing Islam and supporting it.

Alphonse Dinet has been born in Paris in 1861; his parents were Catholics. They taught him the love of Christianity and the church. Later, he will go on to study in the College of fine arts in Paris. Soon, his talent emerged, and his artwork invaded the exhibition's walls. His tableaux have contended those of other gifted artists in Museums' halls. Honors and awards started coming his way. The silver medal was given to him in the World's Fair in Paris in 1889.

The string of successes Dinet has witnessed hasn't allayed a latent concern that has worried him every time he pondered his faith. This situation becomes worse when he leafs through his holy book. His natural instinct cannot afford to accept the idea of the canon forgiveness with the innocent blood of Christ. Furthermore, his broad mind also cannot accept the idea of the infallibility of the Pope. He is confounded by what he, and the Pope's followers think about the person of Christ (PBUH) is he God? Is he the son of God? Or is he just a human being?

How many times has Dinet wondered: how could Christ be God, and the Gospel bears witness that he (PBUH) doesn't know the resurrection day? "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son; but the Father" (Mark 13/32).

Alphonse Dinet has returned to the Bible, and has been shocked by he has read in it about the Messiah (PBUH). The Gospels insult him frequently. Sometime they show him ingrate to his mother (John 2/4); another time, they show as a rude person who does not hesitate to curse the fig tree that didn't have any fruit (see Matthew 21/19-20). However, the worst is yet to come. In the story of the Canaanite woman who has come to Christ, asking him to heal her daughter is the harshest racial insult leveled at this Messenger of Allah. According to the story, he told her: "I was sent only to the lost sheep to the house of Israel... It is not fitting to take away the children's bread and put it to the dogs" (Matthew 15 / 25-27).

Alphonse Etienne's pain and misery increased when he read what Luke has attributed to Christ "if one comes to me, and does not hate his father and mother and sons and brothers, even himself also, he cannot be a disciple» (Luke 14 / 26-27).

Study and research have indeed led Dinet to conclude that: "Catholic religion does not tolerate dialogue and debate. Many of the evidence—whether moral, historical, scientific, linguistic, psychological [behavioral] or religious have demonstrated that Catholicism is filled with blatant mistakes."

Dinet tried to overcome his worries by using his mind during the search for truth. However, he hasn't succeeded in accessing major facts without the guidance of prophethood and its sublimity. The human mind is imperfect. It is powerless to walk alone in the darkness of metaphysical matters that have overshoot the minds wise men who have preceded him.

Dinet looked around and realized that many of his confused countrymen have found their way to Islam. They have embraced it willingly. This elite of men included Lord Headley, who says: "I think there are thousands of men and women who are Muslims at heart also. However, the fear of censure and the desire to avoid tribulations brought about by changes, conspired in preventing them from showing their beliefs."

It happened that Dinet found a magazine called "Islamic magazine," a monthly magazine published by European Muslims. He leafed through its pages reading an article entitled "Why some British and other Europeans embraced Islam?"

The article's writer answered: "because the Europeans seek an easy reasonable scientific creed in essence. We, English people among all earth's creatures brag a lot about our love of work. We look for a creed that would suit the conditions of all peoples their customs and actions. This religious doctrine must be infallible that will allow the creature to stand in front of the Creator without an intercessor."

Alphonse Dinet wondered about the possibility that the truth was in Islam as alleged by the writer. Then, in 1884 he carried his bag and headed to Algeria and the Arab Maghreb. He moved between its cities, and talked and discussed relevant issues with people. He was watching their livelihood and their religion. He has discovered the invalidity of the claim Orientalists about Islam: "the "Muhammadan" creed doesn't stand obstacle to thinking as many Orientalists proclaimed. It is possible to have one true Islam, and at the same time to be a free thinker."

Dinet loved Algeria and its people, and was impressed by their religion. And since 1905, he settled in the city of Boussaâda. There he made up his mind to conduct some comparisons between Islam and Christianity. He was able to record the significant paradoxes, including:

- That Christianity doesn't see any compunction about drawing the picture of God (Yahweh) on the walls of their churches. The Muslims, on

the other hand, do not dare to carve or paint a picture of Allah. He is the God; no one is like Him, and He has no equal.

- Furthermore, Islam is a religion of science and civilization. Dinet liked what monsieur Casanova has said: "The Prophet of Islam is the one who said the merit of science is better preferred to the merit of worship. What a great religious leader or any one of the greatest priests has the audacity to say such a strong decisive solid word?!" And those prophetic words formed the springboard for Muslim's civilization. Dinet mentions few of its creativity in architecture, mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine and surgery. It's these sciences that modern Europe, since the dawn of its inception, has borrowed from. "All those wonders have astonished Europe's minds even in the harshest days of hostility to Islam."

What has surprised Dinet most in Muslim civilization, what he saw in their chivalrous values? When the West was praising St. Louis's chivalry, Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire was praising the Arabs. He said: "Arabs are credited with modifying the coarse habits of the Lords and knights of Europe and softening them in the middle Ages. They have taught them how to mitigate their passion. They have elevated them to the lofty levels of civility and nobility."

Dinet gives another example of high morality. He tells the example the governor of Cordoba has set in (1139AD). During the siege of Toledo, the Queen Beranger sent a messenger telling him: "It is not the character of virility and chivalry of a noble knight to fight a woman. The Andalusian Prince returned to Cordoba and ended his campaign. Along with the followers of his civilization, they have become Europe's teachers in noble manners. Such behavior required a call filled with pain, anguish and a sense of disappointment from Reverend Michon. He wrote the following in his book "Religious Tourism in the East": "It is sad for the Christian nations that Muslims are the ones who taught them the principles of doctrinal tolerance, which is the greatest code of mercy and charity among nations."

The journey to find the truth has reached its terminus. It was in 1913, that Alphonse Dinet announced his conversion to Islam in the city of Algiers. In a dazzling ceremony attended by the Mufti of Algeria, and took the name of Nasereddine. He said: "My conversion to Islam fortuitous, nay, it was the result of complete awareness and deep long historical study of all religions." He also said: "When I became acquainted with Islam, I felt attraction and inclination towards it. I have studied it in the Book of Allah, and I have found in it the guidance for all mankind. It further ensures the good to man spiritually and physically. Hence, I thought of it to be the most suitable of all religions to worship Allah. I embraced as a religion, and officially announced publicly."

He named himself aptly Nasereddine. After his conversion to Islam, he wrote series of wonderful books that defended and supported Islam. At the top of the list was a book titled “Muhammad is the messenger of Allah” He penned it two years two years after embracing the faith. He co-authored it with his Algerian friend Sulaiman bin Ibrahim Ba’Amer. In this tome, they have exposed the methods of Orientalists writings and the fallacy of their claim of objective neutrality. The “edifice built by the orientalist’s biography of the Prophet has been a house card built on the edge.” Therefore, Nasereddine turned his back on their writings, and didn’t include them in his reference. He said you, «the reader won’t find between the covers of this book anything of those Western doctrines that work on the demolition of the Sunnah. Contemporary orientalists have a passionate love for innovations or strange ideas. However, the innovations that have sneaked in through this way, has enabled us to disclose that have been sometimes the result of intense hatred of Islam. They were difficult to reconcile with knowledge; hence, not worthy of our times.”

Nasereddine has replaced them with Islamic authentic references. He opted especially for the biography of Ibn Hisham and Tabaqaat Ibn Saad. He also revealed the covert disease that has poisoned the orientalists’ pens and afflicted them with the insanity of the pen. The [Orientalist] will take the most original news and information and deliberately modifies them. The more the news is authentic and true, the stronger the urge and desire to fabricate them. Their actions are based on the principle that says: “(People tend to conceal their flaws and show the opposite)” Nasereddine gives examples to that. He stated that the Belgian Orientalist Henri Lammens wrote a book titled: “Was Muhammad Honest?” In it, he described the Prophet (PBUH) as gluttonous. As everybody knows, this is entirely contrary to the Sunna. He has been known to be ascetic, and for his lengthy hunger, prolonged fast, and the scarcity of food in his home!!

Lammens -in his warped mind- has seen no regret as well in describing the Prophet (PBUH) that he was a big sleeper. It seems he has misunderstood what Allah says in Sura Al-Muzzammil, verse 20: “(Thy Lord doth know that thou standest forth (to prayer) nigh two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night)” Furthermore, he didn’t get the gist of the Prophet’s Sira where the swelling of his feet due to lengthy standing has been mentioned.

In contrast, fair-minded people among Orientalists have recorded different testimonies. De wit, the words of the famous historian Gustave Le Bon who said: “If the value of men will be estimated by the greatness of their work; it would be possible to say: that Muhammad was one of the greatest figures in history.”

Dinet has also written books in intellect and religion: "The Radiant light of Islam." In it, he explained in more detail what he likes in Islam. He also authored the book "East as seen by the West" and «Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah» Writing in response to Lammens, he penned a book titled: "You're in a valley and we are in a valley."

Nasereddine has also in his credit few literary books. These are "Life of the Sahara," "the Mirage, and "Antar's Poetry, "the Bane of Colors," "game of Lights and the spring of the Hearts."

However, the last book Dinet has penned has been "The Pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah." He performed Hajj in 1929, and wrote the book few months prior to his death. Prince Shakib Arslan, the Lebanese writer described the book as "the best book ever written in this era." In this book, Dinet presented a critique of the orientalist's writings on the pilgrimage journey. Dinet included outpouring feelings that overwhelmed him within the time-honored house and in front of the tomb of the Prophet (PBUH).

Before the sun sets on the last week of 1929, Nasereddine died in the Marseille, France. In response to his will, his body has been transferred to Algeria to be buried in Boussaâda: "My funeral must be celebrated according to Islamic teachings. I converted to Islam wholeheartedly several years ago, and devoted all my accomplishments and efforts to glorify Islam. My body must be buried in the Muslim cemetery in Boussaâda where I have completed the bulk of my paintings."

God blesses Dinet, who said: "Islam has proven from the first hour of its appearance a valid religion for every time and place. It is the religion of natural instinct. The latter doesn't differ from one person to another. Hence, it is valid for each degree of civilization."

Noah H. Keller

Noah H. Keller was born in the United States in 1954, to a devout Catholic family. Nonetheless, despite his religious upbringing, his childhood has seen three frustrations that have cast massive doubt in his heart about Christianity. He has been shocked by the ritual amendments adopted by the second Synod (1962-1965). New worship formulas have been added as well as allowing the use of various musical instruments in prayers. All of this has been done under the pretext of convenience. The Church saw that modern and technological development must be integrated into worship. However, to Noah and others, these amendments show the instability of the Church. Religion, it seems could be altered to accommodate people's conditions and their environments. Isn't worship supposed to satisfy the spiritual needs of man? They are after all fixed, unchanged and unaltered needs. Time and places have no bearing on these principles.

The second issue that has shaken his belief in Christianity and has sent it into a void has been the doctrine of trinity. Noah hasn't met or heard about any person who can elucidate it or make it easier to understand. The church says (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) are three dissimilar figures in names, attributes, characteristics and in deeds, yet despite all this, they are one single God. How could that be?!

Noah has tried repeatedly to get along positively with this doctrine. He used to worship each one of what he has termed "the divine committee members" (Trinity). He would cement his relationship with one of the trios, giving him full attention. And he used to request the current one to mediate with the other two for his lack of interest in them. He has kept on the move between three different deities, worshiping one for a period of time, then going to the next. He was fed up worshiping three gods, and finally decided to worship one single and unique God. He has no partner, and nothing equals him in anything. He has stopped worshiping Christ, believed in him as a human and got rid of the chaos engulfing his mind. He has grown tired of pleasing the trio that the church commands their veneration. Its claim is that they are three in one and one in three.

Noah's frustration is matched in numbers by the trinity in Christianity. The latest of which was his rejection of the sale of Indulgences. For centuries past, the Catholic Church made the remission of temporal punishment a practice. Hence, in exchange for a fee, a believer is absolved of his sins. The priest provides the sinner with a signed certificate to start afresh. It's the same way a doctor issues a health statement to his patient. This has been the "last nail" to Noah's Christian faith.

Keller wanted to save his faith and restore it anew through a thorough reading of the Bible. However, this exercise proved to be futile. Reading the Holy Scriptures has driven Noah further away from religion. Illogical stories and digressions made it a discarded book even with believers. Various churches have turned away from most of the Bible's content, replacing it instead with some liturgical texts during mass. Noah has realized that the Book is unable to establish a reassuring life of faith.

In 1972, Noah's problems with the Bible deepened when he started studying philosophy at the Gonzaga Catholic University. He studied the book of the German Lutheran theologian Joachim Jeremias "The Problem of the Historical Jesus." This great critic has concluded that gospels have failed to provide a clear-cut biography of the Messiah. He further stated, "It's safe to say that the dream to write a biography of Jesus has forever ended." Here, Noah wondered what would be the outcome reached by another researcher who doesn't believe in Joachim's assertion, who with difficulty, has ascertained the existence of Jesus and minute fragments of his biography.

Studying Philosophy has taught Noah two logical questions: What does this truth really mean? And how did I reach it? He asked himself these two questions about his Christian belief. The question came: "I realized that Christianity has lost its luster for me. Henceforth, I have decided to embark on a research for a meaning in life in a meaningless world. It's safe to say that many western youths have undertaken the search, one way or another"

In the midst of this experience, Noah became an atheist. He transferred from his Catholic university to the University of Chicago, where he wanted to study ethical epistemology of atheist philosophers and thinkers of the West in the 19th and 20th centuries. Philosophers such as Nietzsche, Freud, Durkheim, Arthur Schopenhauer and others are unanimous that human values are not divine laws. They are rather man-made. Furthermore, they state that they are not fixed rules, and they change with time, situations and space. Hence, what would be considered a virtue in one society, might be seen as vice in another community or another time?

This is a satanic philosophy that ignores religion. However, it became clear to Noah that this ideology hasn't been able to fine-tune the lives of people in the past. It hasn't satiated their hunger for piety either. It has left them like prowling wolves in a jungle of selfish and opportunist individuals."We have inundated our culture and our past with everything that is material; we have stripped ourselves of our humanity in its broad sense. We have also divested ourselves from the pure instinct and the relation with a lofty truth."

During summer breaks, Noah used to work on a fishing trawler to earn his university tuition fees. The ocean is another book that Noah has

opened to take respite from philosophy books. It's a book as large as the sea unfurling in front of him. In every tempest that almost swallows his boat in its violent waves; the sea has made him feel how minute and weak man is. Death besieged him on many occasions; it has snapped few around him. It has even convinced him to abandon the idea of atheism. The sea has also inspired him to seek reconciliation innately and to find a truth that would give meaning to life.

Noah's various readings and his sea reflections have led him to a very essential truth: the existence of God. This God has set rules governing proper behavior for which we will be justly accounted for. However, this truth involves three religions; (Christianity that he has just left, its predecessor Judaism, and also Islam). Where does this truth lie?

He started looking into Islam for answers. He began reading a translation made by the prejudiced Orientalist George Seal of the meanings of the Qur'an. Noah concluded that "even if this book is distorted, there is no better expression that deals with the core of religion than this book."

Noah is not yet convinced of what he has read. He read again a translation by Arberry, to this he says: "No matter how accurate the translation is; it cannot convey the true essence of the Qur'an in Arabic. However, the superiority of the Quran in this translation has manifested itself- in every single line- over the Bible in its old and New Testament; namely, the Torah and Gospel. I felt as if I am seeing the true divine revelation with my own eyes. I saw in this book high style, strength and flawless authenticity. I was astounded how amazing the Qur'an is in answering the arguments of the atheist heart preemptively. The questions find answers before being tabled. I saw in all this a clear indication of God as Deity, and a man as a human. So the revelation about the oneness of God that raises fear and reverence is the same revelation that came down with social and economic justice among men."

The broken language used by George Seal, and the usual Orientalist prejudice encouraged Noah to learn Arabic. He wanted to learn the language away from Seal's outrageous interpretation. So, in 1976, he has packed his bags and headed to Egypt. He arrived there and has lived among them. He has been astonished about the extreme kindness of this population. He says: "Once in Egypt I have found why people are attracted to Islam. What I mean by that, the impact of pure monotheism on its followers... I have moved throughout Cairo and other regions, and I have observed people and looked at their habits and ways of life. I have met many decent and not so good Muslims. All of them have been influenced by the teachings of their book more than I have seen in any other place."

Many of these nice people have left an unforgettable impression in Noah's heart. He hasn't forgotten the Egyptian young man who has stopped in the street to perform his religious obligation devoutly towards his Lord. And he would never forget the high-school student who spoke to him with passion about Islam and his ardent prayers of guidance before taking leave. Once he was shaken to the core because his friend has dropped the Qur'an on the floor. Distressed, he swiftly retrieved it with reverence and respect to the words contained within the fold of its pages. "During the few months I have in Egypt, many ideas have swirled in my mind. I have found myself thinking how necessary for a man to have a religion. You see, among the Muslims I have met in Egypt the nobility of purposes, magnanimity in spirit (acquired) through the impact of Islam on their lives. This influence has surpassed any other religion I have known... I was greatly impressed by that...thus I found myself longing more and more for Islam. It's rich in noble meanings and affluent in expressing these beauties."

However, the most unusual situation that Noah encountered happened when he met an Egyptian woman clad in her Islamic garment. She saw him dressed in modest clothes and thought he was poor. The difference in race and religion didn't stop her from putting her alms in his hand. Dazed, he accepted her gift: "this event made me think seriously about Islam. Her faith was the only motive that prompted the woman's action."

One day in the hotel lobby, came the straw that broke, or rather saved the camel's back. An old lady felt sorry for this young man full of vitality adhering to a religion of confusion and delusion. It happens so often than ordinary people wonder why educated individuals endowed with wisdom follow a religion other than Islam. They shouldn't be blamed. Hence despite their lack of education, these people have seen the beauty and the splendor of Islam. This religion has amazed the far and near. How could then their eyes fail to see its lights?!

The elderly woman asked him: why you aren't a Muslim? He said: "at that moment in time I asked myself that same question." I suddenly felt that Allah has created in my heart a resolve to belong to this religion. I felt the extent of its power on the hearts of its ordinary or brightest followers alike. My mere desire or mental persuasion wasn't the reason behind my reversion to Islam. Ney, it is Allah's mercy and guidance that have saved me from the abyss of darkness to light and from doubt to certainty. Allah indeed grants his mercy to whomever he wills."

In 1977 Noah uttered the declaration of faith in Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, Egypt. From there, he moved to Jordan where he is teaching religious science. He has become an erudite teaching Muslim their religion. He still lives in Jordan where he keeps busy writing, translating and teaching.

We supplicate Allah to grant us and him guidance and keep us on the straight path.

Omar (Shiam Gautham)

Shiam Gautham has been born in the sixties of the last century to a Hindu family of ancient lineage. He has been educated in the state of UP, India. His family belonged to the Shudras caste, the second class of the Hindu community based on its position, and the advantages accorded by the Hindu religion.

Shiam, the Hindu grew up in India for some time. He has worshiped stone idols, and venerated animals and trees, and has glorified their foolish lies. Shiam's family was not religious and couldn't care less about it. For them, faith was merely: "Customs and traditions handed down by their fathers and grandfathers; so they have adopted them as a way of life." Allah supports this claim in Sura A-Baqara, verse 170: "(When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah hath revealed:" They say: "Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers." What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance?)"

The first thing that shocked Shiam in Hinduism has been the caste system. Humans have been divided into four branches in the books of the Vedas that are sacred to Hindus. For instance, the (Brahmins claim to have been created from the mouth of God. In second position comes the caste of Shudras, who have been created from God's arm. The third class is the Vaishyas; according to this claim, they have been created from God's thigh. And finally, the last and fourth group is the Shudra caste. Of course, we know about another layer of society called the untouchables, or out of caste.

This division hasn't been to the liking of Shiam despite belonging to Shudra caste. It's the second societal class in status. He used to feel hurt by the sight of his father torturing his farm workers who hail from Shudra caste. He was always wondering, how does religion allow such a racial discrimination? The priests then reply with a disgraceful answer: this is the will of God. Here, Allah rejects their false claims in Sura Al-A'raf, verse 28: "(When they do aught that is shameful, they say: "We found our fathers doing so"; and "Allah commanded us thus": Say: "Nay, Allah never commands what is shameful: do ye say of Allah what ye know not?)"

To me, it is "repulsive to see arrogant Brahmins or descendants of high-class families, consider themselves superior to others. They expect people to fear their wrath or even seek their friendship without doing any good work and worthy deeds. And likewise, it hurts me great deal to see lower class people outcast without guilt or shortcomings. They are followed by disdainful looks and derogatory remarks for no other sins but stereotyped by society. I am still captive of these doubts like a feather floating in the wind."

The Hinduism's contempt for these outcasts has reached a level that it has prevented them from practicing their religion. It has also forbidden them to read or touch religious books. It has even denied them hearing the hymns of those books. Furthermore, it has forced them to plug their ears to stop the readers' sounds reaching their hearing. According to Hinduism, these creatures have been found to serve the upper classes only.

All of these images and others have led Shiam to a firm conviction. "This religion will never provide man with correct guidance. How can this happen with a faith based on such unfair differences and privileges"?

Shiam's doubts increased and strengthened when his mind rejected the large number of gods in Hinduism. Everything has been worshiped in India; nothing has been left out. The Hindus have worshiped things they love, and things they hate. They even worshiped imaginary deities. Their books are packed with the names of their gods and their wars with each other. They even describe the plots against their rivals of the alleged gods.

"I have seen in those books, contradicting religious theories in the process of the many 330 million gods. I felt suspicions creeping into my heart more than before. I have fallen prey to anxiety and chaos. Deep down, I believed I was looking impulsively for the one and only God. Whenever I read Hindu books, doubts after doubts preoccupy my mind."

To get rid of the pain of these suspicions, Shiam kept to the shelves of the university library. And for two years (1978-1980AD), he read the books of the Vedas and other books of the Hindus. He looked also into the books of Christians and Jens philosophers. He hasn't neglected to leaf through the pioneers of reform in the different religions. His dedicated reading into these various references has added but a waste of time in a sea of falsehood. Nevertheless, a solid fact grew in his heart: Monotheism is the absolute truth promoted by all religions; however, quickly contradicted. The Hindus who believe in millions of gods claim that above all these gods there is one unique God. And so does Christianity, they worship the Son and the Holy Spirit. They also claim to be Unitarian in belief, yet, their three gods are one god. The verse 106 of Sura Yusuf in the Qur'an suits their claims to a tee: "(And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (other as partners) with Him!)"

Shiam ended up taking a decision; that is to become a hermit and to go into seclusion away from people. Lucky for him, he has postponed the implemented of his decision until after graduating from college. He continued to read and see in the books of different religions and faiths.

One religion Shiam did not read about; it is Islam. What made him overlook it was the memory that still lingers in his mind. "They are the false and negative perceptions that have permeated our minds since childhood.

Since early boyhood, we have been hearing that Muslims insult Indians. They are envious lot and assassins and worthy of ostracism and disdain. Will anyone whose heart is filled with such emotion and effusive aversion against Muslims think of Islam?!"

Shiam has been seriously injured in a motorcycle accident and needed hospitalization that had lasted weeks. His friend Muhammad Nassir Khan visited him regularly. "He comes every day, and gives me food, drink and medicine, and enquires about my health. Weeks have gone by like this. He spoke to me about everything except Islam. However, his noble and compassionate demeanor as well as his good manners affected me profoundly. One day, I decided to ask him where he has acquired such lofty traits. His reply didn't exceed more than these words: "I am a Muslim; I have been weaned on the values of Islam. Its principles teach us impartiality, compassion and cooperation among neighbors."

Mohammed Nasser has learned this great behavior from the Prophet (PBUH). He has visited his uncle Abu Talib in his death bed. He also visited a Jewish boy in his illness that led to his death. He later visited the head of the hypocrites Abdullah ibn Ubay Bin Salool, when he was breathing his last.

Bara 'ibn Aazib said: "The prophet (PBUH) ordered us to perform seven acts and avoid seven: we follow funerals, visit the sick, and answer invitations, and assist the oppressed, and fulfill the oath, return greeting, and bless the sneezer. He has forbidden us the usage of silver vessels, to wear gold rings, wear silk, brocade, and bows and arrows, and."

At Shiam's bedside began his story with Islam, has embarked on reading it for the first time. He has read more than thirty books. The most influential and has touched his heart was "to understand Islam" authored by A-Mawdudi. He was also impressed by "Islam in Focus" of Hamouda Abdel A'ati; "Social Justice" of Sayed Qutb; "Our Islamic Life" Yusuf Islahi. It then came the center piece of all books: the translation of the Holy Quran donated by his friend Mohammed Nasser. Omar said: "the more I read a page; I felt drawn to it; it's like iron attracted to a magnet. I have felt light wrapping my existence, and fill me with faith and spiritual pleasure. At one moment in time, I felt the dark falsehoods lifting away after they have been weighing on my chest for a long time."

Shiam says: "I liked Islam's teachings and ethics and values that Hinduism has no inkling of. These principles include the neighbor's right, the respect for the parents, and the conviviality of the wife. And after all, Islam is not a religion of obsolete rituals; it is a way of life." Allah says in Sura Al-An'am, verses 161-163: ("Say: "Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight - a religion of right - the path (trod) by Abraham the

true in Faith, and he (certainly) joined not gods with Allah" (161). Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds: () No partner hath He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His will. (163)"

However, one thing has puzzled Shiam and kept him away from Islam. It is the conditions of the Muslims and their behavior that didn't look anything like the wonderful things he has read about in the Qur'an. The behavior and actions of these people are deplorable. They present a miserable image for religion; they embrace. How truthful the Prophet (PBUH) has been when he said about the sort of people: "O people, there are among you those who discourage others."

After six months of reading about Islam and deep pondering of the translation of the Holy Quran (July 1984 AD), Shiam pronounced the two Shahadas at the hands of his friend Muhammad Nasser Khan. Then he declared it openly among Muslims on Friday prayers. He took the name Omar. He has been influenced by Omar Al-Farooq's (RA) character. Gautham described him as the "Colossal genius who has exceeded all other prominent persons of Islam."

Since embracing Islam, Omar hasn't spared any effort to show Islam to the wandering thousands of his people. These were bowing and prostrating in front idols in Hindu temples. He has embarked on a mission to invite Indians to Islam. The media has written coverage warning of his activities. He was kidnapped by Hindu gangs, and threatened to kill him. They have given him three days to renounce Islam; likely he escaped their clutches and settled in Delhi. There, he completed a Master's degree at the International Islamic University in New Delhi (1990). Then he proceeded to study for a doctorate in comparative religion. He couldn't complete it due to financial conditions that have befallen him after his conversion to Islam. In addition to his woes, his family has cut him off. Again, Allah states their precise intentions in Sura Al-Munafiqun, verse 7: (They are the ones who say, "Spend nothing on those who are with Allah's Messenger, to the end that they may disperse (and quit Medina)." But to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth; but the Hypocrites understand not.)

Omar was holding tight to his conversion to Islam. There is nothing helping him in his adversity except: "The sweet taste of faith in my heart, the comfort of confidence and the tranquility of the heart."

Omar was happy in the company of a group of Indian senior scholars. These experts were Abu al-Hassan Nadwi, Abdullah al-Hassani, and the ascetic scholar Siddique Albawandi. The company of these eminent scholars enabled him to acquire a lot of Sharia's sciences. Brushing shoulders with

such elite had paid off. Omar has authored a book titled "Islamic Knowledge," which has been printed in Urdu and Hindi.

Omar Gautham has become among the preachers to orthodox Islam. God has made him likeable among the people. Hence, the fruits of his efforts have guided more than two hundred of his family and acquaintances. So did many more people who frequent the Research and Education Knowledge Center managed by the guided Omar Gautham for over ten years.

We supplicate Allah to keep him steadfast on Islam, and to bless his efforts.

Ahmad Faris Ash-Shedyaq

Faris has been one of the prominent figures of the nineteenth century, and one of the great scholars of the Arabic language and literature. He likes to call himself "Alferiaq." It's a combination of his first and last name.

Faris has been born in Lebanon in 1805, to a Catholic family called Ash-Shedyaq. It's a Greek word refers to a prominent religious title. He studies in elementary school, and then at the hands of his older brother Ass'ad. He was an adept in languages and literature. Then his father died; and he started working in the book printing industry. Faris took advantage of God's gift of beautiful handwriting; he took up calligraphy as a profession. This move made him a constant friend of the book. This vocation honed his talents, especially in his knowledge of English, French and Turkish in addition to his proficiency in Arabic. He wrote an English grammar book titled "Appetizing Firstling in English Language Grammar." He followed it by another titled: "Conversation Medium in both Languages Arabic and English." He also wrote, "Support of the Narrator in French Syntax."

During his childhood, Ash-Shedyaq moved between - what it will be called later-Lebanon and Syria. Then he set sail to Malta- the bastion of Christian missionary. There, Anglican missionaries have taught the arts of preaching Christianity. While there, he wrote his first book "The Means to Know the Conditions of Malta." Then traveled to Egypt, and worked as an editor in the Egyptian newspaper the Facts. He has also met some Azhar scholars like the erudite Nasrallah Trabelsi and Sheikh Mohammed Shihabuddine Al-Halabi. It's at their hands and other scholars from whom he has acquired more Arabic Science.

The most important milestone event in the life of Ash-Shedyaq has been the death of his brother Ass'ad. The latter has been held captive for six years in the monastery of Qannoubine for changing from Catholicism to Protestantism. This is an important event that has left a gaping wound in Ash-Shedyaq heart. His long pages of writing have bled ink in his books in contempt and taunt of the Christians clergy. Once, he has told about his stay in a monastery with some monks. "I could see the monks' stubbornness, their difference of opinions, the demeaning each other, and their constant complains to the abbot for baseless trivial matters. The blatant ignorance of everyone is so obvious; none of those in the monastery could write a meaningful text in any subject. Even the abbot himself did not know how to write one single line in Arabic!!"

At another instance, he wrote the following: "Look how many monasteries we have in our country, and how many of these places house monks!! However, I haven't seen anyone of them excel in any branch of

science. Furthermore, you never hear anything good about them; you hear only what discredit and disgrace man and his honor.”

He wrote again to bemoan the ignorance of the clergy, giving evidence of the prosaic Arabic translation of the Scriptures. “The book of Psalms is filled with solecism, grammatical mistakes and errors. The reason behind such a debacle in translation is the person who has rendered it into Arabic doesn’t master the target language. The same thing applies to the rest, and all the books printed in your country. Do you think that solecism, and lapsus calami are features of the religion and its traits and obligations? Do you also believe that rhetoric will lead you to disbelief, atheism, heterodoxy and corruption? Did you suppose that these mentioned verses in the book of Psalms will hinder a Muslim scholar from arguing and challenging your claims? Is there any blood running in your veins that would stir you up to love exquisite and enchanting language? Since you started reading the Psalms in primary school, your brains have been saturated with solecism, and your minds poisoned with jargon. This disorder will remain with you until you become adults and reach old age.”

The hatred of Ash-Shedyaq for the clergy, and his poking fun at their ignorance and fanaticism led him to criticize the ritual of Christian churches. He wondered at many practices that have astonished him. To this effect, he writes: “The churches’ people usually have particular days in which they bring out their effigies and statues. Despite their heavy weights and sizes, zealots and religious enthusiasts will carry them on their shoulders, running vociferously in the streets. While everyone would like to seek refuge in a cave in the belly of the earth to avoid the intense heat of the sun, revelers lit candles ahead of these processions.

Alferiaq moved again to Malta, to work with Americans and British missionaries. There he became a Protestant. He translated the book of “Prayers” in 1840, which included a set of songs that have been recited in Protestant churches. In 1848, the Bible Society invited him to translate the Bible into Arabic. He traveled to England and France, and completed a full translation thereof. The Archbishop Joseph Ad-Dibbs described it as “the most accurate Arabic translation of the Bible.” However, this bible became neglected later because of his conversion to Islam. It was soon replaced by the translation of the famous Vandyke, now in the hands of various Arab churches.

The translation of the Bible made him the most knowledgeable persons of the minute details of the book. Hence, it has placed in front of him a lot of religious problems. These, he will compile many of them in 1865 in a book called: “Interpretation Argument in Gospel Contradiction.” He has embarked on a comparison between the Gospel of Matthew and other Bibles in 176 texts. He has documented the contradictions, oddities,

and errors, and then concluded by saying: “The head of the Roman church has taken the best step to prevent the public from reciting these books. Accordingly, anyone who reads them will soon see clearly how contrary to the reality they are. Furthermore, whoever reads them and doesn’t realize their fallacies, a blind man is far better than he is.”

After his conversion to Islam, Ash-Shedyaq also wrote another book of over 700 pages in the criticism of the first part of the Bible. He titled it called: “The Torah in Retroactive Mirror.” He gave his son the manuscript and asked him to protect it, and never publish it before his death. The writer died; the house burned down, and the manuscript was lost.

Two years before his conversion to Islam, Ash-Shedyaq wrote the book “Leg over Leg.” Within its pages, he uncovered the tip of the iceberg in the lost manuscript “Mirror.” In fact, he has voiced his denunciation of some of the unacceptable information mentioned in the Holy Writ. Such facts will be utterly rejected by minds liberated from the bondage of blind imitation. “The Torah has mentioned the following on the account of Almighty God. “Fill the earth and multiply.” The exaggerated term is used here; filling the earth with human beings necessitates its devastation and not its urbanization.”

He wrote askance denouncing some repulsive biblical information printed about prophets. “Now, is it lawful for the Prince of the mountain when he grows old; and his clothes no longer keeping him warm; to seek a beautiful virgin to warm himself by the heat of her body, as did King David? [See the Book of Kings (1) 1 / 1-3]. Furthermore, would it be possible if he has fought the Druze and defeated them to kill their married women and their children and spare their virgins for the enjoyment of his virile soldiers, as Moses did to the people of Madyan as has been mentioned in Chapter thirty-one of the Book of Numbers? Or is it permissible for him to marry a thousand women among Queens and servants as Solomon did? Or is it warranted for one of the governors to kill every man, woman and baby of his enemies as Saul did to the Giants in the Jehovah of hosts did? [Samuel (1 15) / 2-3]” Perish the thoughts; Allah is indeed far above such a thing.

One day, Ash-Shedyaq spoke to some his co-religionists; he said admonishing and reproving: «As understanding is concerned, I don’t think you understand what you read in the Bible. What is the meaning of the foreskin when Saul asked David one hundred prepuces of the people of Palestine dowry for his daughter? “Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men slew two hundred men of the Philistines. David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in the full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.” See

Samuel (1) verse 18/27]. There are women here, and I'm embarrassed to explain the meaning of the term lest women will cringe." However, on another occasion he has eventually explained it to the women. Suddenly, one of them grabbed the book and threw it on the ground saying: "God forbids that this speech is the word of God."

In the tome «Leg over Leg» - one of the most important books of Ash-Shedyaq, the reader will note the bitter critique of Christianity, its books and the situations of its clergy. In contrast, the author shows a clear fondness to Islam and Muslims. Once, he compared Muslims to his own people, the Christians. He said: "It seems that the Franks when misfortune befalls them do not entrust their affairs to God. Christians show a great deal of religiosity, and courage. However, no sooner death has felled one of them; they will forget him quickly. Submitting to the will of Allah is the characteristics of the Muslims, and the word Islam is enough evidence thereof."

Speaking of the Christians in the Levant and how they have been affected by good Muslim manners he said: "It should be mentioned here that Christians born in the land of Islam and follow Muslim customs and morals are no match to them in eloquence, literature, beauty, civility and etiquette, and hygiene. They [i.e. Christians] are most active in travel, dealing and trades and more aggressive and fortitude in arduous business. Muslim people are known for their contentment and asceticism, while the Christians for their insatiable greed."

When Ash-Shedyaq used to mention Prophet (PBUH) in several places in the book «Leg over Leg», he used to pay homage to him by praising him in awe and appreciation. He never hesitated to call him (the Prophet). Such magnificent speech comes only from a loving person who is proud of the Prophet (PBUH), and his esteemed is companions.

Muhammad Sadeq Pasha the Bey of Tunis - the title of the acting leader then – has extended him an invitation his country. There he met Sheikh al-Islam Mohammed bin Khoja. Together, they had lengthy talks that have ended with As-Shedyaq embracing Islam in 1857. From that moment on, he added the name of the Prophet (PBUH) to his, to read: «Ahmad Faris As-Shedyaq." Henceforth, he began defending Islam through his newspaper "Al-Jawa'eb" which has become an indispensable instrument for intellectuals and politicians in the capitals of the West and the East.

In "Al-Jawa'eb", As-Shedyaq helped defend Islam long and hard. He wrote about an issue debated at length among intellectuals at that time. It was whether the reality of Islam is relevant to modern civilization. "Is there anyone who is aware of some people who claim that the Islamic approach

does not apply to the rules of progress? At the same time, there are those who advocate this approach, do not permit departing ways with it.”

In Contrast, Ash-Shedyaq has warned Muslims against getting carried away or fooled by the sight of progress in the West. Such progress shouldn't be linked in any way to Christianity. “If you look at the essence of the Christians' religion, you'll realize that it forbids progress and serious pursuits. The Gospel tells a story about Jesus ordering his disciples not to care about tomorrow. For that reason, Christians in the early centuries have embraced asceticism. They never rise to perform noble deeds, nor care about commendable acts. There are also many other verses in the four Gospels and in the Disciples messages. They have the same merit as the previous verse in inciting to inactivity and reclusion and the lack of concern for earning a living.”

When the news reached Ash-Shedyaq of an apostatizing Muslim, he wrote that this apostate “is of the general public who doesn't differentiate between the verse: (Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep,) and between the words of the Psalms: “Awake, O Lord. Why do you sleep?” Refer to Psalm 44/23. We judge that his renouncing monotheism to the Trinity hasn't been based on insight and rationale and the pursuit of truth, but on whimsical and impulsive decision.”

Ash-Shedyaq has left an abundant library in Arab Science and travel literature, including interesting books we have mentioned before. His book “Spy on the Dictionary” [Al-Jasous Ala Al-Qamous] criticized Firozabadi's encompassing dictionary [Al-Qamous Al-Muheet]. He authored another in the art of syntax and grammar he has titled: “Comprehensive Guide for the Student” [Ghuniyat At-Taleb]. Other books include “Secret of the Nights in Inversion and Substitution,” and “Collection of Every Humorous Meaning.” His writings revealed a great talent and flowing penmanship in addition to books filled with useful science. Ash-Shedyaq has been an unrivaled knight in the charm of poetry. The qualities of the stories and articles are quite rich; he has well over 22 thousand verses of poetry to his credit.

In 1887, Ahmad Faris Ash-Shedyaq died in Constantinople, and his body has been transferred to Beirut. They prayed over his remain in the Omari mosque in the presence of dignitaries and writers. May the mercy of Allah be upon him, and may his soul rests in peace.

Mary Wildes (Shukran Wahida)

There are still a lot of people who take a biased stance and attitude against Islam. They claim that this religion derogates woman, deals with her unfairly, and restricts her freedom. However, the language of numbers belies their claim every day. When one sees that the number of women embracing Islam is far superior to that of men.

Mary Wilds is one of these statistical numbers, an English girl who has been born into a religious Catholic family. She lived and studied in a boarding school for nine consecutive years. She has spent all these years, under constant supervision of the nuns in the church. This long period of time spent in a religious environment hasn't brought Mary and her peers any closer to religion. They doubted their religion assertion, and questioned the practicability. One cannot be convinced of a religion that is based on formalities and rituals, an empty structure void of any substance and divested of any conviction.

Mary left the school housing looking for an abode for her heart and something that will satisfy her religious hunger. She was looking for an explanation to the meaning of her existence in life. She was searching for the gist of religion and the wisdom in faith. To sum up, the experience about her quest she says: "I was looking for substantial answers in life. I have lived with Buddhists, Sufis, and various religious and political people of all shades. I have often tried and done my best to ascribe to their ways, but to no avail. None of those beliefs and ideologies has answered my questions or the needs I feel they are necessary to determine my goal in life."

Mary faced a shocking material reality engulfing the entire western life, tinted with selfishness, cruelty and violence. She hated her world, even the beautiful things in it. Earth seemed constrained to her despite all its spaciousness. In Sura Ta-Ha, verse 124, Allah describes the state of such people: **"But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a miserable life."**

Mary has been introduced to Islam through her studies in the department of Turkish and Persian Literature at Durham University. During that period, she has read numerous books about Islam written by Orientalist authors. She has also attended many lectures and symposia. However, nothing has opened the locks of her heart except the series of the Letters of Nur. These have been written by the Turkish erudite Badi Uzzaman Nawrasi, who lived in the first half of the twentieth century. His Letters have made an inroad to understanding the purpose of human existence. "We have learned the language of the Qur'an from Badi Uzzaman Nawrasi. He has taught us-through pure faith-in the Nur Letters, what is the universe? What is nature? What are we? Why are these large numbers of creatures?"

What are their functions? Why they were created? To what fate are they destined? He taught us why Islam is an integrated religion? It talks to the mind of man, his perceptions, his subtleties and emotions... we see through the creation to the names of the Great Creator, and the Compassionate Wise.”

Mary’s journey of meditation and revision wasn’t a short one. After three years, Mary turned the page on her Christian life, and chose Islam. “All praise is due to Allah, who guided me to this path, and blessed me with Islam. I have escaped that black hole, where I have been captive. It’s thanks to the support of some Muslim friends at the university, the veils shrouding my mind started to lift off gradually. With their patience with me and their encouragement, I kept on the road to recovery. At the end of these long (three) years, a new world began to blossom in front of me. I seemed full of meaning, significance and harmony.”

With the help of his colleagues, Dr. Faris Kaya, a professor of Mechanical engineering and Mary’s colleague during her university studies in England, have convinced her about Islam. They helped her get rid of what she calls “the creed’s dumbness.” With unshakable conviction, she happily and willingly embraced Islam. She called herself “Shukran Wahida” and married the Turkish preacher “Mohammad Fanange” a companion of Sheikh Said Nawrasi in his struggle journey.

Quickly, Islam brought a dignified luster to her life, and touched her with its breathtaking beauty. “My previous life has been a journey downward. I was sinking lower and deeper into an abyss of darkness. I have been engulfed in misery, despair, and a sense of loneliness and alienation. Today I see myself -and the people around me-that we are armed with implement that will help us achieve the happiness in this life; as well as lead us to an eternal and everlasting happiness.”

Shukran wanted to give back some of the favors of the erudite Nawrasi. She has decided to take up residence in his country of birth, where she began translating his books and letters to benefit those who are seeking the truth. She has penned a book about Nawrasi titled it “The Author of the Nur Letters.” She has also written, “Islam, the West and Us.” Last but not least, she has recorded the chronology of the most prominent features of her journey to guidance in “My journey from the Church to the Masjid, Why?”

In her books, Shukran talked about her old religion, Christianity. She reminded her readers to the authenticity of monotheism in Christ’s teachings. Furthermore, she said that the Church, which considers itself a representative of Christ, has contradicted its beliefs and teachings. Therefore, the Church, out of fear of being exposed, has been forced to tighten its grip on the intellectual movement, and to prevent scientific

advancement. It has also thwarted any attempts of knowledge development. All this has been achieved through its control over the cultural and intellectual life in Europe, since it has considered the calls for reform an abominable heresy.

Shukran responded to an anticipated question that may cross the mind of her readers. These will allege that contemporary Western civilization and technical expertise are part of some Christian intellectual creativity. Such claims are absurd. They would come only from those who do not know Europe's history during the iron rule of the Church before the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Development and advancement took off after Europe escaped the clutch of the church and its vague religion. Europe took refuge to its ancient heritage of the Greco-Roman civilization. As Shukran pointed out Europe has derived new materialistic values and a philosophy based essentially on power, violence and egotism. Christianity, Europe's religion at that time has been unable to provide them with any substantial additional morality. Although it has influenced its followers' individual behavior, it hasn't encompassed the collective values of the community.

Shukran Wahida, the Muslim western woman, took upon herself to enlighten her own people about Islam and its truths that encounter wide walls preventing its arrival to Westerners. One of the handicaps facing the spread of Islamic faith is the stereotyped image about it. They call it the "religion of the sword." These thick curtains have been made -in the past- by the State and the Church to protect their interests and gain control. And for the same reason, the Orientalist enterprise, which is connected to colonialism, developed this concept. And with constant hammering, they succeeded in making tremendous breakthroughs into the occident psyche. Western mentality has been duped by Orientalist studies and research under pseudo-scientific claims of objectivity and impartiality.

Shukran doesn't deny the negative role of Muslims that undermine their religion. Their behavior cements this erroneous perception in western mind. The conducts of the whole Muslim society, as well as individuals have compelled others to believe that our actions in the East and in the West as true telling. No sooner an event happens in any Muslim country; it will be broadcasted worldwide fast. Media outlets will compete to show the wretched images and pictures about Muslims and their religion in a flash.

Shukran said that Orientalist studies had given the position of women in Islam great importance. They have used their tactics and tricks to put off people from Islam's legislation. They have meddled into a topic of women to which they have no inkling about. Social and cultural life in the west has been burdened with false claims about the alleged oppression of women in Islam. Their propaganda has been and still is the most significant barriers and obstacles that divided Westerners and Islam. How could a westerner

believe in Islam with a head filled with misconception about it? In his head has nestled images of Muslim women captive and humiliated the way they falsely claim. These images are based on the alleged denigration of women in Islam, and her marginalization vis-avis to man. It is an act of contempt to her being. Shukran has lived as both a Westerner and Muslim woman. She sees an inverse picture; say, if you like: She sees the proper image without enhancement or make-up. «The reality of the woman in the West is very sad. Her role has been deactivated at home, and her femininity destroyed. She has become a victim of Western society. This system is based on exploiting women's bodies for the purposes of advertising and publicity. It's, however, that such transformations and developments have been portrayed as steps toward progress and the emancipation of women... The woman, in contrast, has been deceived and exploited badly. Their calls are not for the liberation of women, but for their enslavement. Hence, what they claim is in total violation of their nature; they represent absolute independence and free rein to desire without questions and accountability. »

In contrast to this humiliating situation of women, Shukran sees the Qur'an taken into account-in its legislation and provisions-woman's femininity, mission and nature. Her house isn't jail. It's her kingdom where the education of her children takes place. She is the maker of a useful generation. Her decent Islamic clothing is her protective armor against insatiable men and their desire to exploit her as a toy of excitement and entertainment. Shukran considers this to be the vilest types of insult to women. It is an affront to her dignity and disrespect and trivialization of her role, and killing of her character. However, it is above all a gross violation of her privacy. Shukran has always been wondering, what the western woman has achieved with the freedom and dignity she has acquired. She has been bared and stripped of any decency; a vulgar sex object exhibited in galleries like shoes and furniture shown in a shopping center's window.

Furthermore, Shukran concludes that the West deals with human being, woman or man-away from his innate nature. Therefore, men and women have been carried away from this particular trait. They have involved women in affairs and issues contradictory to her nature. They have done so with man also, when they engaged him in issue contrary to his character. It is –so says Shukran- an abnormal, contradictory and temporary situation. It is a natural outcome; that after a journey of misery, man will undoubtedly return to the nature to which has Allah has prepared him for. Allah says in Sura Fatir, verse 43 the following: “**But no change wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing): no turning off wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing).**”

For these reasons, Shukran warns about plots hatched against women in the so-called (women's conferences and freedom). She sees in it as the «

poisoned cup. Pour it on the ground, and pour a pail of water over it. It's an evitable doom that man walks in the wasteland without a guiding compass», Distal and proximal knew that the liberalization of women means only in substance lawlessness and a search for pleasure that will destroy the meanings of life in its wake. It will include individuals, families and communities. At the end, it will become a senseless nihilistic thrill involving fallacy, folly, and deviation.

We congratulate our sister Shukran that God has given deep insight, a heart drenched in light and uprightness of thought. We implore Allah to grant her and us steadfastness on Islam.

Deacon Fawzi Assissi (Al-Mahdi)

Fawzi Assissi has been born to Catholic parents who live close to the "Mary Georges," church in the city of Zagazig Egypt. They were very hopeful that their son Fawzi would become a priest of the Church. The children will be honored to kiss his hand; and adults confess to him. The priest after all is God's representative on earth; whose forgiveness and pleasure are sought.

When Fawzi has reached the age of twelve, his parents took him to church for baptism. The Reverend has chastised them harshly for delaying their son's baptism until he has reached such advanced age. He told them: Haven't you known that your son has been a Muslim all these years?

Fawzi completes his baptism story by saying: I heard that once baptized, the Holy Spirit comes unto you. He exclaimed after his experience: Where is it? He hasn't come unto me. I don't feel any changes?! What would have my destiny be if I wasn't baptized? What would I have been if I was born non-Christian? To these questions and others, the baptizing pastor couldn't find answers. He ignored them and consoled the boy saying: "You ask many questions; you deserve to be a deacon in the Church."

If the baptizing pastor has omitted to answer some of Fawzi questions; then we refer him to the words of the great Christian scholar Augustine. He believes that man inherits the sin; the latter won't be redeemed unless saved by Christ. However, the proof of belief is baptism. So, whoever has been baptized, he has been ransomed and saved. And whoever hasn't received the sanctification won't be saved even if he was a child.

The world-famous Catholic scholar Thomas Aquinas asserts in his book "The Summa Theologica": the children who have died before baptism are deprived of enjoying the kingdom of the Lord; meaning paradise.

The boy Fawzi worked hard towards achieving his parent's expectations of him as pastor. He worked as a deacon in the church. He visited villages to instill faith in the people of the Church in Christ God, and the Holy Trinity.

During his work at the church, Fawzi faced tough questions that he didn't dare reveal. Simply whispering such questions will be sufficient to expel him from the church or imprison him in the monastery. That means shattering the dream of his parents. So he saw fit to lock up these questions deep in his bosom. Perhaps father time will take care of them, crack their riddles and solve their mysteries.

The young Fawzi didn't like the communion ritual a lot, where the pastor puts the crumbs of bread in the mouths of Christians. After dipping them in a wine vessel, the church claims that this bread is sacred. It turns into the body of Christ, while the wine turns into his blood. How will such a thing appeal to the mind of Fawzi? After all, he is unable to understand this secret transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

He wondered if this was true, why we have to eat the body of Christ and drink his blood. Don't we know where this food and drink will end up after leaving our bodies? Is it worthy to belittle Christ in this dirty and menial place? For all these reasons, Fawzi has performed this ritual only once in his life.

The third dilemma that faced Fawzi head on and refused to leave his mind is what they call the sacrament of confession. The Christian confesses what he basically doesn't want to remember or think about (his sins) to the priest. This action reveals what God has hidden away. However- under this canon- he is required to confess to the priest to receive forgiveness of a sinful chaplain who in turn needs the bishop's forgiveness. The latter will confess to the Pope to obtain God's forgiveness and mercy.

One day Fawzi entered the church's confession booth and asked the priest: I confess my sins to you; you confess them to the archbishop; the latter confesses to the Pope. To whom will the pope confess his sins? Who will forgive him? The priest replied: God!

With spontaneity and innate intelligence, Fawzi replied, wouldn't be enough for me also to confess directly to God? Why does the church force me to compromise myself and unveil my flaws to others?

Fawzi asked and questioned himself thoroughly: why do we need confessional rites? Hasn't Christ taken care of all our sins on the cross?

Furthermore, if Christ is God, how did humans succeed in crucifying him? Why? Wasn't God able to forgive our sins without subjecting him to crucifixion, suffering, and humiliation? Why was the blameless Christ crucified instead of the sinners? Is not one of the first requirements of justice and common sense that a person should not be punished for the sins committed by others? Allah mentions this fact in Sura An-Najm, verses 36-41: (Nay, is he not acquainted with what is in the Books of Moses- (36) And of Abraham who fulfilled his engagements?- (37) Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; (38) That man can have nothing but what he strives for; (39) That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight: (40) Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete; (41)). In addition to all this, if Christ couldn't save himself from crucifixion, how will he save us?

However, the big dilemma that has robbed Fawzi his sleep and added to his worries is the equation of the unified Trinity claimed by the Church. While Christianity says that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three different people in their existence and their attributes; it surprises the listener saying: The three are one God. This is contrary to the most basic axioms of mathematics, which says: $(1 + 1 + 1 = 3)$, while the church says: $(1 + 1 + 1 = 1)$.

After he has been consumed by doubts and confusion for nine years, Fawzi has decided to give up his old dream of becoming a priest. He has always imagined people walking behind him asking his blessing and holiness. Dozens of sermons he had delivered in the church didn't intercede for this decision. They couldn't extinguish the fire of doubts raging in his inner depths. So he took the resolution to study Islam by reading the Qur'an and some religious pamphlets. His heart trembled, and his eyes welled with tears as he read the following words of Allah: *“(And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah'?" He will say: "Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, Thou I know not what is in Thine. For, Thou knowest in full all that is hidden. (116) "Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit, 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'; and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when Thou didst take me up Thou wast the Watcher over them, and Thou art a witness to all things. (117))”* The Quran has been able to utter the truth that lies within Fawzi conscience.

Fawzi has found in the Qur'an the answer to what the priests have been repeating in the Church about the divinity of Christ. They claim that he is the Son of God. That is through his immaculate conception without a biological a human father. God says in Sura Al-Imran, verse 59: *“(The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be". And he was.)”* Jesus was a creature of God. However, in an unusual way, he is like Adam peace be upon him, but he – is certainly - not the son of God.

Fawzi went to Ismailia to perform military service. The availability of extra time to think and read, led him gradually to Islam. This also has brought him to the doorstep, but decided before gaining access, to grant Christianity a last chance. He went to the church in Ismailia, and let the priest listen to many of his old questions. He even added newer ones about the difference between the cleanliness of the Muslims and the Christians. Then he asked the pastor: Why don't we wash from the impurity or make

ablution to pray like Muslims? In addition, fasting should not be limited to refraining from eating meat, and why don't we fast like them?

The Pastor replied: Are you reading the Qur'an Fawzi? That you may not do before becoming a priest, you are only a deacon!

Fawzi eyes welled with tears, and he found himself drawn to the ground. He found himself prostrating like the Muslims do. He began conversing with his Lord and asked him to show him the proper path and illuminate his heart. "Lord... you know my confusion and uncertainty; if the Christian faith is correct, make the Holy Spirit comes into me now. However, if Islam is the right one, open my heart to it." He didn't raise his head from prostration until he has determined to convert to Islam. The Lord answered his prayer; He is always near to those who call on Him.

Fawzi announced his conversion to Islam in 1991, and took the name Fawzi Mahdi. The news has not met with the church's liking. It has sent him an offer of marriage and assistance to immigrate to America. Such proposals will make young men drool. However, he kept fast to his faith, and rejected their offers. They spread the news of his conversion to Islam and rejection of Christian was because of his love for a Muslim girl. It was hard for them to admit the truth for which Fawzi has chosen Islam.

One of his old church's friends visited him, and they sparred long about religion and faith. Then the friend arrived at the antidote claiming that will restore Fawzi to Christianity; he said to him: The devil speaks on your tongue. Fawzi replied: Don't you exercise people? Then get this alleged devil out of my body.

His buddy put his hand on Fawzi's head, and spluttered and muttered everything he knows from the sacred texts and what's not holy. However, no trace to this alleged Satan has been found in the heart of the guided Fawzi. What has transpired from those readings added to his certainty in Islam and reassured him of the right decision taken?

Fawzi's sister embraced Islam followed by her father; he traveled to Saudi Arabia, to learn there his religion. He became a teacher of the Muslims; he led them in prayer in mosques and gave Friday sermons and instructed them. He has fulfilled his childhood dream preaching people and instructing them to do good. However, it is happening in the shade of Islam, not Christianity, and in the niches of mosques; away from the church bells.

We ask God to support him on the right path; He is the Most Generous.

Tanago Sami Qasdullah, (Ahmad Sami Abdullah)

It's a Cheap Price to Pay for Allah's Paradise.

In the mid-twentieth century, and in one of the villages of southern Egypt, Tanago Sami Qasdullah saw the light. It has been predestined that this young man's life will never exceed more than thirty years on this earth. He has been assassinated treacherously. He has become -God willing- a martyr for the sake of his chosen religion.

Since the child's mind has started to blossom, he refused intuitively the stories he has heard echoing in the church. He has come in contact with ambiguous teachings similar to intractable puzzles. The matter has become so difficult to fathom for a young mind. These have been called "the secrets of the Church." In contrast, the adolescent Tanago saw in the religion of his Muslim peers the clarity of the faith and splendor of worship. No sooner, his young head started to compare the Church rituals to the Muslims worship. He also compared the church mass to the recitation of the verses of the Qur'an.

Every day, Tanago and the village boys, Christians and Muslims used to take the trek to the next village where they frequent the intermediate school there. They spend the journey talking about religion and creed as much as their young minds allow them to understand. Tanago will keep silent, listening to their talk, recording notes in his mind and drawing conclusions.

Tanago has got rid of some of his (religious illiteracy); he has joined Sunday school. However, he has been shocked of what he has heard from the school supervisor telling them the story of the guests of Abraham (PBUH). He has already heard the story from his Muslim friends. Conversely, the supervisor was narrating it from the Bible point of view, in a manner strange to him. His heart has rejected the story outright. He has remembered the story in Genesis, that the guests of Abraham, peace and blessing of Allah be with him, were God himself and two of his angels. They have eaten, drank and rested at Abraham's.

Tanago's instinct denied, and his mind refused this assumption; he asked himself: is this possible? Would Allah come down from the lofty heavens to eat at Abraham's? Would Allah- the Exalted - embody himself into the image of a weak human being? What's the matter with the school supervisor?! What is babbling about? Is it possible that the Bible is saying this?

Tanago wanted to remove doubts with certainty. He bought a copy of the Holy Bible and rushed to read it. His readings caused hi deeper wounds and further pains. The pages of the Bible have sprung many surprises he has

never imagined existed in his holy scriptures. The Bible claims that Christ is the son of God. Furthermore, it surprises its readers by bestowing two earthly lineages on Christ. One starts with Joseph the carpenter, the alleged fiancé of the Virgin Mary. Tanago has been flabbergasted; he has asked incredulously: What has Joseph the carpenter to do with the Virgin Mary? At the opening of Mathew and Luke, the Bible has included a list of Christ's fathers. It's also strange that Luke's Gospel attributes to the Virgin Mary that she has said to her son: "Son, behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." [Luke 2/48]; when was Joseph the carpenter, Christ's father? How?

The life story of Christ (PBUH) in the Bible added insult to injuries to Tanago. The church says: he is the son of God, yet the Bible relates the story of Christ fleeing to Egypt in fear of King Herod. It also tells that the devil was harming Christ and trying to beguile him. If Christ was god-as, they claim- he wouldn't have fled from Herod. Furthermore, the devil wouldn't have dared to tempt him!

In contrast, Tanago noticed that the Bible speaks about the Messiah as a human being. He was a mere messenger sent by God no more. In his gospel, John tells about Jesus that he has informed the Jews about his humanity. In John (8/40), Jesus said: "But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have heard of God." In another chapter, he called to believe in his message: "Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him, and he sent me" (John7/28-29). Christ, the messenger man, according to the Holy Gospels, has never claimed divinity.

Following a fierce struggle between pure instinct and the teachings of the church, Tanago reached a compromise. He will distance himself of any matters his mind rejects. He will get rid of all polytheistic words that stained the liturgy and hymns he used to chant during mass. By coming to this conclusion; Tanago thought he would make peace with his mind. However, no sooner has this idea settled in his mind, that it was met with outright rejection. He rejected half-solutions. His conscience prodded him to re-think his decision. It encouraged him to do more study and apply more seriousness in the search for truth That Allah loves and accepts for His servants.

Throughout his studies of religions, the boy embarked on a mission to seek the truth. The boy recorded a number of observations on his faith comparing it to Islam. Among these, the difference between the congregational prayers the Muslims perform in their mosques, and that of the Christians in a church. Christians listen only to hymnals read in the

Coptic language. Tanago doesn't understand the language. It was similar to a person speaking in hieroglyphic or Sanskrit.

There are no men of religion in Islam. This is another advantage that made Tanago prefer Islam to Christianity. He despises the idea of a mediator between Allah and his servants. He asked himself: would Allah appoint these pastors sinners as His agents to forgive people's sins? Where are those of the morality and humility of Christ?

He felt disgusted and shocked at the scenes of the people of the church bowing to the monks and priests. These wouldn't be called except with the highest and fanciest titles. They have been called His Eminence the Prelate or His Holiness the Pope. According to many Biblical texts, however, the most common and well known title of the Christ (PBUH) among his disciples has been "teacher."

In 1968, Tanago Sami Qasdullah decided to embrace Islam secretly, and choose the name Ahmad Sami Abdullah. He wasn't yet fourteen years of age. He has been drawn to Islam through the accuracy of its followers in performing their faith. These have been restricted by time, space and manners. Hence, each act of worship has its proper time, the way it should be performed, and sometime the place where it should be performed. Such detailed accuracy covers all aspects of human life. Christianity, however, lacks such an order. Neither prayers nor fasting are regulated within the Church. Furthermore, its edicts have lost religious commitment. Here, Tanago was faced with an inescapable question: "If Mohammad (PBUH) was a liar the way they claim he is, then, from where has this illiterate man brought such detailed and accurate rulings, that those doubters themselves lack?!"

Tanago has been drawn to Islam's lofty principles and its great structure. To this he has said: "Islam has won me over because of its recognition of the oneness of the Almighty Creator. Allah will not be compared to anything else, and full praise is due only to Him. This pure monotheism has been characterized by its clarity and convenience. It's far away from complexity and ambiguity and no effort is needed to substantiate it. Islam is for the Lord of the worlds means: docile obedience and submission to Allah alone. It's the surrender of the mind, the heart the soul, the existence, the senses and feelings, the wealth and actions are to the Almighty Allah."

Accepting Islam has been a new starting point in the life of the young Ahmad Sami. He started reading the Qur'an during his high school and university years. He would stop long at the verses speaking of the messiah (PBUH), that mention his humanity and his devotion to Allah. **"And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say unto men, worship**

me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah'?" He will say: "Glory to You! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, you would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Yours. For You know in full all that is hidden. "Never said I to them aught except what You did command me to say, to wit, 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'; and I was a witness over them, whilst I had dwelt among them; when You did take me up You were the Watcher over them, and You are a witness to all things". Sura Al-Maida, verses 116/117.

Ahmad Sami has also studied different Christian denominations and reflected their responses to each other. He realized that when "you ask any of these sects: Where is the evidence? None of them will utter a word the way they always do." He has been surprised at the protesters who support their beliefs and sayings with testimonies of monks and fathers. However, they do not attribute the texts to God or Christ. Furthermore, the sayings of these priests shouldn't be used as evidence, but must be subjected to scrutiny.

Ahmad never spared any effort to hide his reversion to Islam in fear of his family's retribution. He kept his prayer and fasting secret from his brothers' preying eyes. Indeed, he used to accompany them to the church to dispel their doubts. Ahmad's certainty about his good choice increases with every passing day. He has abandoned Christianity and its churches that are filled with pictures, images and icons. People jostle each other to kneel and prostrate to them. They seek the blessing of these stone and wooden idols, and fearing their curse. Watching this sight, Ahmad murmurs to himself: woes are unto to you, are there any harm to be feared or gains to be had from these deaf statues or paper images? In Sura Al-Anbiya, verses 66 and 67, the Qur'an states the following: "(Abraham) said, **"Do ye then worship, besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm?"**Fie upon you, and upon the things that ye worship besides Allah! Have ye no sense?"

With each passing day, Ahmad Sami's conviction about his religion grew stronger. He said, "The Qur'an has been the main factor in keeping steadfast on the faith. It organizes human life in such a unique way unlike any other in all the books and all other religions."

Ahmad received a Bachelor from the faculty of commerce, at Asyut University. Now, he longed to know more about the advantages of Islamic law. He went back to school and received a degree from the faculty of law. He was fed up hiding his conversion to Islam; he wanted to announce it openly. However, he knew that such step will cost him his life. Listen to what he has once said, as if he was reading the unseen of his destiny: "I wish they'll get from me what they are after; the most they could achieve

will be my assassination. It won't be a killing, but martyrdom for the sake of Allah. Only patient fighters will ever be granted such a wish. As much as I firmly believe in Allah, I know there is no power on earth that would shorten my predestined life one single moment.”

In 1984, and in the Al-Azhar mosque, Ahmad declared his conversion to Islam. Later, in February 1986, he announced it to his family. He tried to escape his folks abroad. However, a treacherous hand was faster. Eight months later, while going to work to Souhage, his brother shot him dead.

We ask Allah to grant him abode in paradise. We implore Him to count him among the martyrs, like Yasser and Sumaya, who have died for the sake of their religion. We supplicate Allah to please them and others among the Muslim believers' martyrs. Allah granted the martyrs in his sake the highest ranks. The verses 169 and 170 –among many others- are clear testimonies to such an honor. “Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord. They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah: And with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them (in their bliss), the (Martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve. They glory in the Grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact that Allah suffered not the reward of the Faithful to be lost (in the least).”

Wasif Arra'e

In Amman, the capital of Jordan, Wasif Arra'e was born to a Catholic couple. They have taught their child the love of Christianity and dedication to its rituals. When he reached school age, they enrolled him at the American mission school "Terra Sainte," whose main interest is religious education. Using their smart ways, teachers strengthen the attachment of Wasif and his school mates to Christianity.

Many times the religious education teachers presented pictures of Christ, his mother and also pictures of the so-called saints on the projector. Wasif and his friends enjoyed immensely these presentations.

However, this situation changed when one of the teachers showed them a picture of a very old man with long hair and bushy beard. He was sitting on the clouds. The teacher then asked them who this man was. Wasif expected many answers to the enquiry except one. Calmly, the teacher answered it is the picture of God. Glory be to Him; he has no partner and no equal.

"I have been shocked; I haven't known that people kept a picture of God." It was a defining moment added to the many questions in the mind of the intelligent boy. Ten years of cramming religious courses led Wasif to one conclusion. "Religion is mystery...as if faith has been revealed in a divine vernacular, hardly known to anyone, except God and his alleged vice-gerents on earth. They interpret it according to their whims and desires." They have transformed religion into mumble jumble similar to the murmur and grunt of charlatans and sorcerers.

On one occasion, seeking some clarification about a religious matter, someone told him: "You may not argue with me about the texts of the bible. Their meanings are ostensibly different, and their symbols to things are unfathomable by laymen." Thus, asking a question about religion could entail one of the following. Either it would be taboos, evidence of profanation; doubt or suspicion or what the infamous inquisition termed as (heresy).

Initiating conversations with Wasif and his class mates, teachers or priests usually impose axioms that must be considered dictums and must be obeyed. Even if one realizes that they are in absolute contradiction to reason and logic. One day, Wasif asked the priest: Why do we need an innocent man parading as God walking the earth to receive forgiveness from him yet this presumed "God" would be killed and crucified in his place? Is God unable to forgive us with a single word from him?

The priest raised his voice with what he considered it to be the axiom: forgiveness of a sin comes only with a price. The spilled Christ's blood on the cross is the ransom.

Wasif tried in vain to learn more about this wrong fallacy and a proof to this erroneous myth upon which Christianity is built. Who said this? Is this really true? Does God need a swap to grant us forgiveness?

As for Islam, the misunderstood religion, Wasif suckled its hate with his mother's milk. Then, his missionary school completed what his parents have started. They filled his head with various malicious stories about Islam. They fed him fabricated and not so fabricated stories. "I have never asked myself once whether this religion deserves mine or someone else's hatred and hostility. I swore resentment to a religion; I know nothing about. I only have done so obeying those whose hearts were filled with hatred towards Islam through sheer ignorance, deceit and blind imitation."

Wasif has not been a religious young man in the true sense of the word, despite his sparse visits to the church. He has tried to apply the Christian morality taught by the teachers or priest. They have told him Christianity was the religion of forgiveness and tolerance. He heard many times what Mathew has said about Jesus:

"But *I* say unto you, not to resist evil; but whoever shall strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and to him that would go to law with thee and take thy body coat, leave him thy cloak also. And whoever will compel thee to go one mile, go with him two. But *I* say unto you, Love your enemies, [bless those who curse you,] do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who [insult you and] persecute you, (5-39-44). "However, when matters become serious, who would turn his left cheek to someone who slapped him on the right? Who would give up his assets to someone who takes it forcibly through theft or coercion? Who would love his enemies or bless those who curse him? And who is among Christians apply these teachings today?"

Besides, such values are submerged in fantasy. They will put the foundation a society where injustice, corruption, subservience reign supreme.

It happened that Wasif's father had an argument with the missionary school's management. He moved his son from this school to a private one called "Al-Aqsa schools" known to be of good reputation. This decision will put Wasif side by side with the Muslims he hated. To avoid troubles, his parents advised him not to participate in any religious discussions.

The weekly Islamic education period hasn't been a compulsory subject on Wasif the Christian; he has been exempted from taking part in it. However, the nice manner of the teacher, (Mohammad Helail) has drawn Wasif to this course and stuck to it uninterrupted. He started memorizing verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunna. As a matter of fact, He was an excellent student. He surpassed his Muslim class mates in all subjects, including Islamic education.

He participated in many school excursions and field trips; he was also a member of the boys' scouts. He took part in symposia, lectures and camps with his Muslim school mates. He saw them praying and shared with them a day of fasting. Wasif observed his friends talk about religion; ask and get answers. Their religion has no secrets or specificities. "Islam has seemed to me a religion of reason and logic; a religion of strength and pride and realism. With strength and pride, you'll find kindness and mercy."

What Wasif has seen during two years was sufficient enough to refute the erroneous image about Islam. For long years, his head has been crammed with misleading notions about Muslims and Islam. How dare anyone to accuse Islam of Injustice against non-Muslims. Even so, the Prophet (PBUH) said:"Whosoever does injustice to an ally (Mua'ahad); decrease his dues; overburdens him more than he can bear and takes away anything from him without consent; I will be his foe the Day of Judgment."

Furthermore, Wasif has been stunned by the Caliph Omar' Bin Al-Khattab's attitude towards the Jew when he saw him begging. He told the Exchequer:"By God, we haven't been fair to him. We have used him in his youth and neglected him in his old age. [The alms are meant only for the poor and the needy] (Sura, At-Tawba, verse 60). The poor are the Muslims, and this man is from the needy of the people of the book. He canceled his tribute, and that of the people like him."

Two years of education with Muslims have taught "Wasif" a lot about Islam. Gone are most of the falsehoods that burdened him; however, something most astonishing happened to him. He has become a refined thinker. Now, where would all this lead to? "It would be impossible for my mind-after the new knowledge I have acquired- to accept Christianity and its incantations, secrets and trinity. It would be difficult to be convinced of the "son of God" and the "mother of God." It would be hard to confess sins to the priest and swallow bread dipped in wine... there are also many other things that man transcends to accept unless it was locked in intolerance and transmitted blind imitation."

The idea of accepting Islam started to germinate in “Wasif’s” mind. Nevertheless, he rejected it because it collided with his Christian zeal. This step would open a gate of fear of what might come. “To accept Islam would mean leaving behind familiar principles and beliefs and lifestyle to unknown ones. This matter needs wisdom and courage.” However, he could no longer carry on being Christian after uncovering its invalidity. To face up to the struggle between his mind and his prejudice, he opted for atheism. He has decided to become an atheist. He couldn’t hold this decision for long. He soon changed. He reverted to the belief in God. It was clear to him the necessity to believe in the existence of Allah, and some of his attributes that supported the majestic splendor in His creations.

Wasif acknowledged many of God’s attributes, such as “The Creator; the all-knowing; the all-wise; the Omnipotent.” He decided to look for them in the books of the three monotheistic religions, (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Only in Islam did he find what he wanted. It also happened that he found a book titled “Muslim doctrine,” written by Sheikh Mohammad Al-Ghazali. Within its pages, he discovered that “Islam emphasizes that Allah is unparalleled in Himself; incomparable in His attributes; unique in His actions. Nothing equals him in Himself, in His attribute, and actions. I have found in this transcendence my long pursued aim. I knew then that what Islam says about Allah is acceptable to every reasonable person. Furthermore, the writing of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Ghazali about the doctrine of a Muslim was compatible with my own long research findings. With that, I have asserted that Islam is the only true religion that respects my intelligence. It’s indeed a religion from God.”

Fearing the future and the harm, hardship and tribulations expected, made Wasif tarry in accepting Islam. Then, to escape this dilemma a bizarre idea came to his mind. He decided to mix Islam and Christianity in a strange combination. He will leave out what contradicts Islam in Christianity and becomes a sort of “Muslim Catholic”!

Wasif carried on with his Bible readings. However, a text drew his attention in which Christ warns-according to Mathew- about false prophets. He gives a clear sign to tell them apart from true prophets. Their impact on earth and the consequences left among humans are the real measures and standards. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. [Mathew, 7/16-20].

Wasif compared this text that describes prophets to Islam. He said: “I have found in these expressions the conclusive evidence that Islam is a divine message and that Mohammad Bin Abdullah is the real and honest messenger of Allah. Furthermore, the expression”by their fruits ye shall know them” indeed distinguishes true to false among prophets. I reviewed Islam [in it; I have found advantages I haven’t found in other religions]. With this convincing proof, I have simply to say: Islam is a valid and excellent fruit. Only a good tree will bear such fruit. Then I said: I bear witness, that there is no God worthy of worshiping except Allah, and I bear witness, that Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

At the chemistry period, Wasif uttered the declaration of faith. It was a beautiful day of the year 1966; he was merely twenty years of age. He moved to Riyadh where he worked and had children. He told the story of his guidance to Islam in a book titled [I was a Christian.] “God has blessed me with Islam after a bitter psychological struggle. I hesitated many times to take the definite step. I have faced various trials and tribulations throughout my journey. However, Allah has been kind to me and saved me before it was too late.”

Yusha Evans

He is an American young man born into a Christian conservative family. They lived in North Carolina, in the south of the United States. He has been brought up by his grandparents in a religious environment. He attends Methodist-church regularly, and participates actively in youth Christian associations' programs. These include excursion, camping, and sports and preaching programs.

Yusha has built up a strong relationship with the young church preacher who studies theology at "Bob Johns" university. Yusha used to help him in his school works, especially in Biblical textual criticism. These dealt with scripture's manuscripts. These exercises have acquainted Yusha with the old languages of the Book, i.e. Hebrew and Greek.

Both Yusha and his friend the preacher agreed to read the Bible. After all, they considered it to be the message of God to humanity. Therefore, it is befitting for them, being religious, to read this message in its entirety. They didn't want to repeat or hear the sections read by the preachers in the church.

In his reading of the first book of the Bible, Yusha got this initial shock. Reading Genesis, he found that the prophet of God Noah-peace be upon him- was bibulous. (Refer to Genesis; 9-20/27). Evans sees that an alcoholic is not fit to sell hamburgers in a restaurant let alone save humanity from the deluge. Yusha asked himself, how God could select a drunkard as a conveyor of his divine revelation.

Every time Yusha turns a page of his Holy Bible, he gets another jolt. He has found that in the Holy Bible, every noble prophet of God has committed a faux pas; and what a faux pas it was! Biblical books see no compunction in attributing them disgraceful acts. These shameful acts would be shunned by the lowliest of people, let alone the decent ones. How would a wise person believe that the virtuous prophet Lot, (PBUH), has committed incest with his two daughters in a state of inebriety? (Refer to Genesis; 19-30/37). The stories told about his brothers the prophets in Genesis are unbelievable.

However, the story of David (PBUH) as narrated in Samuel (2) 11/2 was the worst. It has tasked Yusha Evans mind and emotion. You see. He was impressed with David's character and his heroism. Suddenly, all came to a standstill when he read that horrid story. It tells the story of David fornicating with his commander's wife Uriah the Hittite. Fearing a scandal, David killed him afterward. How can one reconcile a conniving adulterous killer be a messenger receiving revelation of justice and virtue and teach to people?!

Yusha knew that all the stories in the Bible about these many prophets cannot be true. He went to the priest of church and begged him to save what has left of his faith. The answer he received confounded him. The priest said: "Son, don't let trivial matters destroy your belief. Your salvation lays in your faith and not in knowledge... son, the stories of the Old Testament tell the stories of the people of Israel, they are hard hearted. It is better you moved to the New Testament. Things will be best."

Yusha devoured the pages of the Old Testament and moved to the new one. He thought things would be different. Alas, he met with a greater shock, and a harder blow. All the four books of the Bible are attributed unanimously to [Mathew, Mark, Luke and John]. However, no one on the face of this earth can provide documented information about these authors. People claim they are the writers of God's revelation; even so, they didn't own such a thing.

Among all this turmoil, Yusha discovered a positive touch. The gospels, as well as the Torah, ascertain the oneness of God Almighty. They also establish Christ's bondage to Him. Furthermore, they denounce polytheism and considered to be the greatest sin. Needless to say that this is completely contrary to what the priests used to parrot in the church. What consensus one would expect to reach between the doctrine of trinity and the words of Christ: "And this is the way to have eternal life; to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth" (John 17/3). The Church's trinity calls to worship three gods, while the Messiah invited people to worship one unique God.

Additionally, Yusha noted that Christ (PBUH) called the people repeatedly-according to the Gospels- to abide and apply the laws of the Torah. In this vein, he said: "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them" [Mathew 5-17].

This commandment contradicted what has been stated in Paul's evangelical letters. These, nullify the divine Law, because Christ became "By his death he ended the whole system of Jewish law" [Ephesians 2/15]. Therefore, Paul's letters consider Moses' law useless, because: "18 Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, and now a better hope has taken its place. And that is how we draw near to God" [Hebrew 7-18/19]. It is unable to save believers, because: "10 But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse... 11 Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law".

Faced with all these surprises, Yusha's faith began reeling under heavy blows. Even what has the priest told him was useless in saying:

“Josh, you are diving into deep waters... Now you started having doubts about the New Testament. You might be possessed.”

Yusha thought if the priest didn't have an answer, why don't I try the theology professor? So, together with his friend the preacher went to “Bob Johns” university. This time around, he got an ample answer, but it was shocking one. The professor specialized in teaching the Holy Bible has told him that this book is authored by humans. It has been subjected to distortion and changes through the years due to the scribes' interference and mistakes and religious backgrounds.

At the end of their meeting, the professor didn't forget to provide him with some guidance. Yusha has already heard such banal expressions so often from priests in the church. “Son, keep faith, the mind cannot deal with these matters.”

These hackneyed words whirled into Yusha's mind, who decided to leave Christianity and its doctored book. He embarked on a journey to look for the true religion; he started studying diverse religious books and tests their veracity. He decided that only holy books are the real barometer to judge religions. Yusha studied Hindu, Buddhist, Confucius, Taoist books, and other religions, and came to the conclusion that these books do not represent the religion he's looking for. Eventually, Yusha embraced atheism as a way of life. He was angered by the “God” who hasn't helped him in his arduous search in finding Him. Finally, Yusha embarked on a life of fun; frivolity and wild parties.

One religion Yusha didn't read about, because he found no desire whatsoever to do so. He has always thought that he knew everything about it. During his studies, he has read a book titled “Why I do not want to become a Muslim.” It is quite obvious from the book's title that the person who authored it hates Islam. The volume is filled with erroneous ideas and information on Islam. The author claims that Islam is the religion for Arabs only. They worship a black box in the middle of the desert. They persecute women, and would kill anyone whose is different from theirs. The book is similar to all other books written by biased westerners is full of exaggerations and aberrations.

Yusha befriended a Muslim who invited him to visit the mosque on Friday. He answered the call and went. He was apprehensive and suspicious of what goes on around him. The Imam is delivering a sermon in Arabic. Perhaps, he was telling the congregation to kill him. He thought about fleeing the premises and started-in his mind- planning his escape route. He started counting the people between him and the door, and how to overcome them. However, before putting his plan into action, the preacher started speaking in English. He told his listeners about a unique Almighty God,

creator of heavens and earth. He listened riveted to what is being said. The sermon made him feel that he was, during all these years, a victim of a lying and conniving author that wasn't sincere in his writings.

Worshippers gathered around Yusha after Friday's sermon. Everyone was vying for a reward. Everyone wanted to tell him about Islam. In reply, he merely said: have you got a book that you believe in? They handed him the Qur'an, and wanted to explain things to him. "Please, let your book speak for itself" he said.

Yusha returned home, and started reading the Qur'an from the first page. Describing that night, Yusha said: "I gave my heart to the Qur'an on that memorable night in my room. I cried and cried, because I was looking for the truth all this time." It's a book that speaks about the Almighty God and His noble prophets (Abraham, Lot, Moses, David, and Jesus); names, known too well to Yusha. They are the same names abused in the Old Testament. The Qur'an, however, gives them a distinguished position as role models and best examples to emulate. This is something rather different than in the Torah. Allah says in Sura Al-An'am, verses 89 and 90:

["These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and authority, and Prophethood: if these \(their descendants\) reject them, Behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not. \(89\) Those were the \(prophets\) who received Allah's guidance: Copy the guidance they received; Say: "No reward for this do I ask of you: This is no less than a message for the nations. \(90\)"](#)

Yusha liked the story of the Messiah (PBUH) in the Qur'an very much. It was "the best story I have ever heard in my life." He saw in the talking of Jesus in the cradle an exoneration of his mother and clear proof of her innocence of the horrible accusations of the Jews to her. This proof is totally absent in the Holy Book. The reader cannot find anything that would exonerate the Virgin Mariam and refute the lies of the Jews against her.

It took Yusha three days to finish reading the entire Qur'an. He saw in it the true signs of virtue and the real facts of guidance. On the next Friday, and in December 1998, Yusha declared embracing Islam. He testified to the oneness of God, and to His prophet as the final and seal of the prophets. Finally, Yusha joined the convoys of the faithful (believers).

I have often asked myself: Why am I a Muslim?

Am I a Muslim because I have been born to Muslim parents only? Could it be that the truth has been hidden away from me? Could it be that my faith is among those whose followers have been born non-Muslims?

The question rang in my chest for many years. However, every day I witnessed yet another evidence of God's favors upon me. The greatest of which has been, I have opened my eyes to Islam. And God has guided me to it since the first breath of life has been blown into me as a fetus in my mother's womb. Allah says in Sura Al-A'raf, verse 43: "(and they shall say: 'Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah: indeed it was the truth, that the messengers of our Lord brought unto us.' And they shall hear the cry: 'Behold! The garden before you! Ye have been made its inheritors, for your deeds (of righteousness).'"

Doubtless many of those who have been born into faiths other than Islam genuinely maintain that the truth is enshrined in their faith and their beliefs. However, given the opportunity to know the facts about it; make a serious review of their beliefs and rituals, I firmly think they would have reached a similar conclusion as mine. Unfortunately, they have remained captive to convenient systems. They have preferred this status-quo on contemplation and reflection... Allah says in Sura Al-Baqara: ("When it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed:' They say: 'Nay! We shall follow the ways of our fathers.' What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance? (170) the parable of those who reject Faith is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd, to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries: Deaf, dumb, and blind, they are void of wisdom. (171)).

The Qur'an has reproved the unbelievers for shutting their minds. They have simply followed the steps of their parents and ancestors in adhering to obsolete beliefs. Allah Almighty said in Sura Al-Maida, verse, 104: ("When it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has revealed; come to the Messenger': They say: 'Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following.' what! Even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance?")

Ignorance and disabling the mind are an intrinsic character of unbelievers: To this Allah says in Sura Al-Baqara, verse 171: ("The parable of those who reject Faith is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd, to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries: Deaf, dumb, and blind, they are void of wisdom"). They do not understand, despite the availability of evidence calling to the faith. Alas, it won't save them from the utter ignorance crippling their minds. Again Allah says in Sura Al-An'am, verse 111("Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto

them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah's plan. But most of them ignore (the truth)").

The Holy Qur'an always affirms the mind's role to reach the truth. It is still exhorting us to make use of our thought and mind: ("Will you not understand"). This is mentioned in Sura Al-Baqara, verse 65. And in another position in Sura Al-An'am, verse 165: ("Perchance you may understand"). In Sura Ash-Shu'ara, verse 28 Allah reminds us the use of our mental capabilities ("if ye only had sense"). The mind is God's gift to man; with it, he has favored him above the animal kingdom. Hence, whoever excludes the use of it properly will be worse than a beast. The Qur'an states in Sura Al-Anfal, v. 22: ("For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, - those who understand not").

I have found that religions totally fear the power of science. Faced with the influence of the mind, faith will dwindle to nothingness and wither to oblivion. Perhaps some theorists will provide silly talk and nonsense stating that: "reason and faith do not mix." They claim them to be an antithesis. Then they have given people the option between two natural tendencies (science and faith). The fact is that these two are parallel not opposite. A reasonable religion doesn't oppose science. Furthermore, Religion doesn't fear the mind which it considered to be one of the most important tools and means of acquiring knowledge.

There's no such thing in Islam to prove what the ancients have said: "shut your mind and follow me." The verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) teem with the commands of using the mind and reviving the sub-conscious. The two sources endeavor at liberating the intellect from the bondage of superstition and fallacies. Indeed, they have given the mind a free rein to prove the origins of religion and the most important of its structures. Once proven to be certain without a shade of doubt and supported by evidence and corroboration, a Muslim is required to accept detailed and sub-secondary matters.

The Prophet (pbuh) used intellectual argument to prove the origins of religion. Once, he has met with Husayn Al- Khuzai, said to him: "O Husayn how many gods will you worship today? He said, seven, six on earth, and one in the sky." He said: "which one of them will you call for your desires and your fear? He said, "The one in the sky." Then the prophet said to him. "O Husayn you rely on Allah in matters you desire and others you fear; and when the time to worship, you associate others with Him. These man-made gods do neither harm nor good." Allah says in Sura Al-Haj, verses 12 & 13: ("They call on such deities, besides Allah, as can neither hurt nor profit them: that is straying far indeed (from the Way)! (12) (Perhaps) they call on

one whose hurt is nearer than his profit: evil, indeed, is the patron, and evil the companion (or help)! (13)”)

Now, one must realize that the divinity, the Oneness and the uniqueness of Allah are the most important pillars of faith. Hence, the clear proof thereof is plainly evidenced in the Qur’an and the Sunnah. This proof will defy the understanding of those who don’t believe in the revelation of the Qur’an. Allah says in Sura Al-Mu’minun, verse 91: (“No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him”). Divinity requires that God will be complete in His will, ability and behavior. Diversity, on the other hand, requires the presence of several absolute wills and capabilities. So, if we wanted to gather this willpower and fuse it in the power and the ability of one, their multiplicity would be in vain. Thus, one of these gods will be sufficient to act on behalf of the others.

If these wills and numerous of those capabilities were to differ - as it should be - then, it would be inevitable that the alleged gods will share spheres of influence and control. No one God will rule other parts around the world because it is not in his jurisdiction. Gods won’t fight and wrestle each other, as in the religion of the Hindus. These believe in the multiplicity of gods; their holy books are filled with the stories of gods fighting each other. The Greek, however, solved this dilemma peacefully. They have made each one of them a lord of something. This one is the god among the stars, that one the god of the wind, and another for love, and a fourth for hatred. They have devised this clever ploy to avoid gods fighting each other. Multitude of gods and competition among them would not have given rise to civilization or the establishment of civilian society. Allah says in Sura Al-Anbiya, verses 21-22: (“Or have they taken (for worship) gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)?(21) If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! but glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him”)

Furthermore, Islam has called for people to use their brains to verify the second issue of faith, which is the prophecy of the Prophet (PBUH). The unbelievers were denying his prophecy, and they said: he was a magician, poet, priest, and a mad man. Here God invited them to use their minds to check their claim. Allah states in Sura Saba, verses 46-47 the following: (“Say: “I do admonish you on one point: that ye do stand up before Allah, - (It may be) in pairs, or (it may be) singly, - and reflect (within yourselves): your Companion is not possessed: he is no less than a warner to you, in face of a terrible Penalty.” Say: "No reward do I ask of you: it is (all) in your

interest: my reward is only due from Allah: And He is witness to all things.”)

Al-Qurtuby said: “Allah said in (pairs or singly), because the mind is a proof from God upon people. It’s the intellect that has differentiated human from the beast. Therefore, who is more endowed with intellect will be highly favored by Allah. So, if they have been singly, the idea will be one, but if they were pairs, they may be in agreement. Hence, they will both agree about what has seemed difficult to the single person.”

The Zamakhshari makes an additional explanation to the above issue. He says, “two types of men would deal with such claims: a mad man who wouldn't care if he has been caught in a lie when asked to provide evidence. The other, a sapient who doesn't pretend to know it all, yet he will prove it with sound argument. What would a wise person gain by claiming something he has no proof of? You know full well that Muhammad (pbuh) is not a mad man. He is indeed the most levelheaded person in Quraish, as well as the kindest person. He was magnanimous and endowed with the sharpest mind in addition to being the sincerest in his discourse. Mohammad has gathered all qualities worthy of praise in a man. Hence, positive should outweigh negative thoughts about him, and the side of honesty to lie.” In Sura Yunus, verse 16 Allah states: (Say: "If Allah had so willed, I should not have rehearsed it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. A whole life-time before this have I tarried amongst you: will ye not then understand?").

It must be also stated that resurrection after death has been the most difficult issue faced by the prophets; peace be upon them. Unbelievers are indolent in this matter, they used to repeat what Allah has revealed in Sura Qaf, verses 2/3: (“So the Unbelievers say: "This is a wonderful thing! (2) "What! When we die and become dust, (shall we live again?) That is a (sort of) return far (from our understanding).”) The fools of previous nations have also preceded them in repeating a similar claim. The argument they have put forward hasn't changed since. Here again, Allah ascertains their claims in Sura Al-Mu'minun: (“On the contrary they say things similar to what the ancients said. (81) They say: "What! When we die and become dust and bones, could we really be raised up again? (82) "Such things have been promised to us and to our fathers before! They are nothing but tales of the ancients (83)”).

The issue of resurrection after death is a metaphysical issue. It has eluded and defied those who believe in tangible matters only. They see the corpse fall to decomposition and decay as time goes by. Day after day, the state of the cadaver takes it further away from the possibility of returning to

life. Thus, the unbelievers' denial of resurrection is based solely on their limited senses, which is beyond their comprehension.

The Qur'an, however, resorted to awaken their minds with irrefutable evidence. The mere sight of scattered bones of the dead denuded of their flesh rendered them helpless. Here, the Qur'an reminds them that the one who has created heavens and earth, and all the bodies that float in space won't be able to create a human? Indeed, he can. He is the creator of this tiny creature that lives in a small planet on the edge of our vast universe. Again, here is a testimony to the might and ability of Allah in Sura Ghafir, verse, 57 ("Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater (matter) than the creation of men: Yet most men understand not").

Furthermore, the One who has created humanity from nothing the first time is definitely capable of re-creating it from decomposed remains. ("Doth not man see that it is We Who created him from sperm? Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open adversary! (77) And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) Creation: He says, "Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?" (78) Say, "He will give them life Who created them for the first time! for He is Well-versed in every kind of creation!- (79) "The same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! Ye kindle therewith (your own fires)! (80) "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?" - Yea, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)! (81)").

When quoting the signs of resurrection, the Qur'an, constantly, reminds the reader of Allah's attributes. These traits have always been omitted or forgotten by those who deny resurrection. Had they learned to remember the greatness of the Lord and full ability; the matter of reviving dead bones will seem an easy matter. In Sura Al-Ahqaf, verse 33 Allah asks them the following question: ("See they not that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never wearied with their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yea, verily He has power over all things.") Furthermore, Allah has refuted their erroneous claim. For the unbelievers claimed, once dead, they will never be resurrected. This fact is quite evident in the following Sura, At-Taghabun verse 7: ("The Unbelievers think that they will not be raised up (for Judgment). Say: "Yea, By my Lord, Ye shall surely be raised up: then shall ye be told (the truth) of all that ye did. And that is easy for Allah."(7)"); and in Sura Al-Qiyama, verses 3/4: ("Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?(3) Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.(4)").

Science tells us about the single-cell organism that carries the entire owner's DNA and personal and accurate genes, and their properties. These, have enabled scientists to clone a creature from a single cell. It's God who

has deposited all information about this individual into that tiny cell. The Qur'an and Sunnah indicated the issue of resurrection; they have pointed to the perfection of God's knowledge. Furthermore, Allah keeps a book where He preserves the work of His creation and their appointed time. He records their characteristics as well as their and where will be their abode after their re-creation. (We already know how much of them the earth takes away: With Us is a record guarding (the full account)). The following hadith explains some of this book of records. The Prophet (PBUH) has said: "Allah will send water from the sky. People will sprout as herbs. Nothing will be left from a man everything will disintegrate. One single bone will remain; the tailbone. From that, Allah will assemble the creation on the Day of Judgment."

Allah and His prophet (PBUH) have given a paradigm to the people on how life will be given again to the dead. This example has been taken from their own environment. They have witnessed it repeatedly. Rain comes down on parched, barren and arid land after a lengthy drought spell; suddenly, life gushes forth through it. Thus Allah also revives the dead.

Once Abu Razeen al-Aqili asked the prophet (PBUH): O! Messenger of Allah, how does God revive the dead? What is the sign in His creation thereof? He answered him by giving an example he sees every day around him: "Have you ever passed by a barren valley? Have you gone by it vibrating with life after rain? Have you seen it in a state of drought? Well, God revives the dead, and that his sign in his creation." Allah supports this in Sura Al-Hajj, verses 5-7: ("you see the earth barren and lifeless, but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs). (5) This is so, because Allah is the Reality: it is He Who gives life to the dead, and it is He Who has power over all things. (6) And verily the Hour will come: there can be no doubt about it, or about (the fact) that Allah will raise up all who are in the graves. (7)").

Unlike other religions, there is no such thing in Islam that faith is outside the sphere of understanding and intellect. These faiths claim that everything, including principles and branches must be recognized or accepted blindly. They don't have any compunction if matters have been in total contradiction to evidence, and have been rejected by sound mind.

Whoever carefully inspects the doctrines of Islam and its basics, even its branches, will not miss the guidance and light God has set down in this faith. Additionally, Allah has invited us to believe in them in a manner not found in other religions of the world. For instance, Islam provides the only notion that venerates the Almighty God as befits His Majesty and His Glory. Furthermore, such system establishes the proper relationship between a person and God.

To start with, the acknowledgment and recognition of the existence of God are a matter anchored deeply into man's psych. The evidence is that all human nations approve of the reality of this Lord. Nobody denies his existence except atypical people. Strange as it may seem, even current atheist schools now believe in the existence of God. However, they deny him the rightful attribute of divinity. To these, He is an ancient God, who has created the universe and abandoned it.

Once a Bedouin has been asked: how have known Allah? He replied with honest spontaneity: The droppings show a camel, and donkey's dung indicates its presence; and footprints indicate man's tracks. Wouldn't a sky adorned with stars and constellations, and oceans with furling waves signify a Mighty creator?

Hidden matters may infer apparent meanings.

Where there's smoke, there's fire.

If the subject of Allah's existence has been shared by people of other religions, what unique advantage has Islam over them?

Islam is the only religion that has exalted God and absolved him of any partner, counterpart or equal. The Qur'an states the following in Sura Ash-Shura, verse 11: (there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)) He is the only One and Only, the Eternal and the Absolute. Here is another statement from Sura Al-Ikhlâs, verse 3: (He begetteth not, nor is He begotten).

As for the belief of others, it hasn't been devoid of any form of polytheism. In this vein Allah (SWT) says in Sura Yusuf, verse 106: (And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (other as partners) with Him!). They have associated stones, trees, and humans, Angels or Jinns in their worship. However, these do not have any proof of God's approval on the suitability of their worship. These acts have been the result of their own desires, and inspired by their demons. Allah says in Sura Al-Hajj verse 71: (Yet they worship, besides Allah, things for which no authority has been sent down to them, and of which they have (really) no knowledge: for those that do wrong there is no helper). Allah (SWT) hasn't revealed such nonsense at all. He has sent all his messengers with the message of pure monotheism, and to disavow any association with Him. Here what Allah says in this issue, Sura Az-Zukhruf, verse 45: (And question thou our messengers whom We sent before thee; did We appoint any deities other than (Allah) Most Gracious, to be worshipped?).

Islam, except other religions, has refused all manifestations of polytheism. It has fought against all its forms, even of those deceitful pretenders of monotheism. Clear evidence in pure monotheism is mentioned

in Sura Az-Zumur, verse 3: (But those who take for protectors other than Allah (say): "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah). Allah, according to these people, is indeed worthy of worship. However, they associate with Him something else that will bring them closer to Him. Sura Ar-Ra'd; verses 33/34 describe them clearly: (And yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say: "But name them! Is it that ye will inform Him of something he knoweth not on earth, or is it (just) a show of words?" Nay! to those who believe not, their pretence seems pleasing, but they are kept back (thereby) from the path. And those whom Allah leaves to stray, no one can guide. (33) For them is a penalty in the life of this world, but harder, truly, is the penalty of the Hereafter: and defender have they none against Allah).

Islam has rejected some simple aspects of polytheism to protect monotheism. The Prophet (PBUH) describes it as: "It's the duty of mankind towards God to worship Him without associating anything with Him," However, with the satisfaction of the Muslim's heart with polytheism; Islam does not accept the usage of paradoxes that might affect pure belief. A man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said: With the will God and your will! He said to him: "You have equated me with God; it's His will alone." The prophet disliked the idea that his will would be mentioned. He is after all a weak servant compared to the will of God (SWT) that doesn't know any limit.

To protect and safeguard the sanctity of monotheism further, the prophet (PBUH) forbade praying in cemeteries. This prohibition comes as a measure to prevent people from believing that prayer is an act of worship to its dead. Furthermore, he has strongly forbidden people to pray at his tomb. At the time when he was at the throes of death, he has uncovered his face and said: "God has cursed the Jews for taking the graves of their Prophets as places of worship." The narrator of this hadith said: a severe warning against what they have done.

Aisha, the messenger's wife, Allah be please with her, has said: "otherwise, his tomb would have been raised; he has been fearful it would be taken as a mosque."

I have reflected about all religions. I haven't found in them honest and true worship to God similar to that in Islam. Everyone else has elevated his prophet or scholar to the level of divinity. They have gone even further as to make this mortal human being Saint or deity. These are the two characteristics of the true God. In Sura AT-Tawba, verses 30 and 31, the Qur'an clearly chronicles their claims over 1400 years ago. "(The Jews call 'Uzair a son of Allah and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from

the Truth! (30) They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (Far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him) (31)”

If these are the cases of religions that call themselves monotheistic such as Judaism and Christianity, what would be the state of those who explicitly believe in the multiplicity of gods? They admit there are gods of love, winds, and the seas. This is a multitude of gods whose counts are known only to the Almighty God.

Islam is also completely distinct from other religions in keeping Allah above everything that would disgrace His Majesty in nouns, adjectives and actions. It is the religion of Allah and his revelation. Hence, the believers will not call God names, except what he has called Himself with: the beautiful names that describe His perfection and Majesty. He has indeed described Himself to us saying in Sura Al-Hashr, verses: 22-24: “(Allah is He, than whom there is no other god; - Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (22) Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. (23) He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colors). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (24))”

It is improper at all what we read in the books of non-Muslims about God. They attribute remorse, forgetfulness, fatigue, poverty and other inappropriate weakness to Allah. The Qur'an disapproves such things. In Sura Al-Imran, verse 181, Allah draws their attention to this fact: (Allah hath heard the taunt of those who say: "Truly, Allah is indigent and we are rich!"- We shall certainly record their word and (their act) of slaying the prophets in defiance of right, and We shall say: "Taste ye the penalty of the Scorching Fire!). And here again in Sura Al-Maida, verse 64, Allah refutes their claims: (The Jews say: "Allah's hand is tied up." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched: He gives and spends (of His bounty) as He pleases).

We find in the books of others what horrify readers of the characteristics attributed to God. The case is in the words of the Torah, the Jews and the Christians believe in. God wanted to punish the Egyptians; however, the Israelites were living with them. So, he ordered them to smear their doorsteps with blood to distinguish them from the houses of the

Egyptians: “⁽¹²⁾ On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” (Exodus 13, verses 12-13).

Furthermore, we read that God was afraid of the decision of the people of Babel to build (what is known in modern term as) a “sky scraper.” The book of Genesis mentions that The Lord said the following:

⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. ⁶ And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. ⁷ Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. (Genesis 11, verses 5-7). Such misunderstanding of one another has put a halt to the completion of the tower.

Thus, dear reader, Islam is distinct from other faiths in its veneration of God. It has described Him with what's biffing His Divinity. This is what has appealed to me and encouraged me to become a Muslim. Praise be to Allah for much of his bounties.

There is another important issue not found in any other religion but Islam. The veneration and respect of the prophets of God are non-existent in other faiths. Thus, a sane mind will be conscious that a Prophet sent by God must be a reflection of the sender. When Allah selects some humans to carry his message; he will choose them among the pious, honest and the consummate of the society. Allah says in Sura Al-Hajj, verse 75: (Allah chooses messengers from angels and from men for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things))

However, all religions disregard the position of prophecy. The non-revealed religions and unbelieving nations share a common trait, and that is the denial of prophecy and the prophets. They even reach of the levels of murder and cruelty. Sura Al-Qamar, verses 23-25 give evidence to this claim: (The Thamud (also) rejected (their) Warners. (23) For they said: "What! a man! a Solitary one from among ourselves! shall we follow such a one? Truly should we then be straying in mind, and mad! (24) "Is it that the Message is sent to him, of all people amongst us? Nay, he is a liar, an insolent one!)

The abjurers have always held the belief that prophets are human beings like the rest of the prophets. They say that God's messengers should be of the genus' Angels. The reply to this denial and claim are found in Sura

Al-Isra, verses 94-95. “(What kept men back from belief when Guidance came to them, was nothing but this: they said, "Has Allah sent a man (like us) to be (His) Messenger?"(94) Say, "If there were settled, on earth, angels walking about in peace and quiet, We should certainly have sent them down from the heavens an angel for a messenger. (95)”

As for the followers of Christianity and Judaism, they have believed in the principle of prophecy. They have also acknowledged the Prophethood of many of the prophets. Nevertheless, they attributed vice and immorality to them that lay men wouldn't dare to do, let alone noble and notable people. Christian and Jews' books have sometimes gone further in their contempt of the messengers of God. This is something that even ragtag and bobtail wouldn't dare to do. Incest cannot be perpetrated today by the lowest of the worst of people? However, the Torah of the Jews and Christians attributed such heinous acts to the prophet Lot, a man of virtue and purity.

The mystery of the horror and brutality the Nazi Hitler has used when ordering the burning of his enemies in the gas ovens boggles the mind. Any man wouldn't understand how such heinous crimes have been attributed to such a noble prophet like David? They accused him of gruesomely dismembering people with saws. This Prophet who has been sent with goodness, mercy and compassion, the Torah, in the book of Samuel, accuses him (PBUH) – perish their thoughts- of similar ghastly crimes. They claim when David conquered some cities in Palestine, he has (and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brick making. David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.) (2) Samuel 12/31). These atrocities will be the deeds of a man whose heart is filled with criminality and brutality.

David is the Prophet (PBUH) whom Allah has praised in Sura Sad verses 17-20; saying: (Have patience at what they say, and remember our servant David, the man of strength: for he ever turned (to Allah). (17) It was We that made the hills declare, in unison with him, Our Praises, at eventide and at break of day, (18) And the birds gathered (in assemblies): all with him did turn (to Allah). (19) We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and sound judgment in speech and decision.).

The Qur'and has commended all of God's prophets and messengers. It has described them in the best of terms, worthy of their positions as herald of good and beautiful news. Allah says in Sura Al-An'am, verse 84-90: (We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: (84) And Zakariya and John,

and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: (85) And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: and to all We gave favour above the nations: (86) (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and we guided them to a straight way. (87) This is the guidance of Allah: He giveth that guidance to whom He pleaseth, of His worshippers. If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would be vain for them. (88) These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and authority, and Prophethood: if these (their descendants) reject them, Behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not. (89) Those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance: Copy the guidance they received; Say: "No reward for this do I ask of you: This is no less than a message for the nations."(90)).

I have also believed in Islam as a religion, because it's consistent in its principles and its branches with the inherent nature of Allah's creation. In Sura Ar-Rum, verse 30, Allah ascertained this: (So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not.).

Images of this harmony with instinct are innumerable and diversified. It is the religion that combines this world and the Hereafter for its followers. It does not give them the choice between them. The Lord Almighty has promised the happiness in this world and the Hereafter for the believers. Such guarantee comes despite what may punctuate it from a lack of money, children or health or other life's pleasures. Allah will certainly shield people from trials and test if they are true believers. A further comforting guaranty to this is in Sura An-Nahl, verse 97: (Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.).

Other religions have given their followers the option between this world and the hereafter. They have dealt with this issue as if life, and the hereafter are sworn enemies. The New Testament-the Christians believe in-claims that Christ said to one of his followers: (Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God). (Matthew 19/24 - 25). According to this Christian text, a wealthy person will not be able to enter the kingdom-paradise- unless he rids himself of his money, and shifts from the state of being rich to poverty and destitution.

In another text, the Bible adds another reason to enter the kingdom of God: (...and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the

sake of the kingdom of heaven. He, who is able to accept this, let him accept it.). (Matthew 19/12). How can faith be logic if the religion fights human instinct and needs that God has instilled into man? However, Christianity makes it the only condition to enter Paradise.

Now, compare this with the wide-ranging system in Islam. It hasn't separated life and the hereafter; nay, they are all inclusive together. Here what Allah says in Sura Al-Qasas, verse 77: (But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief.). The above quoted verse makes both life and afterlife a sought-after aim all Muslims strive for. Furthermore, our Lord Allah has taught us to seek these worlds. Once more, Allah Almighty encourages the faithful to ask for the good of this ephemeral existence and the everlasting abode. We read in Sura Al-Baqara, verses 201/202: (And there are men who say: "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!" (201) To these will be allotted what they have earned; and Allah is quick in account. (202)).

Allah has promised the believers the finer things of this life. He has also promised them the reward of the afterlife, which is greater and better. In Sura An-Nahl, verse 41, we read: (To those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression, - We will assuredly give a goodly home in this world; but truly the reward of the Hereafter will be greater. If they only realized (this)!). Allah in His glorious wisdom has granted our father Abraham this favor. Allah says in Sura An-Nahl, verse 122: (And We gave him Good in this world, and he will be, in the Hereafter, in the ranks of the Righteous.)

Islam's harmony with human instinct has led to a balance between the needs of the soul and the body. Allah has created man composed of both elements spiritual and carnal. Human will never achieve happiness without this combination. Unlike the allegations of eastern religions followed by the Christian faith, these have compromised the right of the body. Their claim: the Spirit does not transcend or elevate unless through the torture of the body and the denial of its pleasures and needs. They also assert that (The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.) (Romans 8/7). They consider eating, drinking, sleeping, and marriage, and other innate human needs will cast man outside the fold of religion. Such a person has provoked the anger of Allah Almighty and antagonized Him! Does all this make sense?

In the New Testament, there are texts devoted to this false divide between the soul and the body. We see this clearly in the words of Paul:

(For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these things are opposed one to the other, that ye should not do those things which ye desire). (Galatians 5/17). This simulated conflict between spirit and body distorts human life. Henceforth, happiness will never be achieved until the desires of the Spirit, and the needs of the body have been met.

In exchange for this injustice done to the spirit; we find that Islam makes a fair balance between the requirements of spirit and body. It doesn't allow any one of them to take over the other. The prophet (PBUH) warned Othman bin Madh'oon, who wanted to torture his body by abandoning sleep, women, and keep on fasting: "O Othman, are you abandoning my Sunna? I sleep and pray, and I fast and break the fast, and I marry women. Fear Allah, Othman, your family, your guest and yourself all have rights over you. Fast and break the fast pray and sleep."

Three of the companions came to the houses of the Prophet (PBUH) asking how he worships Allah. One of them said: I always pray the night long. The other one said: I fast the entire year, and not break it. The third said: I keep away from women and will never get married. Then, came the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to them and said: "By Allah, I am very fearful of Him and most pious. However, I fast and I eat; I pray and sleep, and marry women, whoever forsakes my Sunna; he is not from me." Islam does not accept this abhorrent schism between the soul and the body, or between this life and the hereafter.

Among the aspect of harmony of Islam to human instinct, it has come up with a great and upright law suitable to life. It's a Sharia that preserves the five essentials around which revolve worldly and otherworldly interests of the people. These are: religion and the self, the progeny and money. Ibn al-Qayyim said: "The law is based on governance and the interests of people in living and after death. The whole of it is justice and mercy, benefits and wisdom. If any of these elements will be destabilized it won't be part of Shari'a. Sharia is therefore, God's justice among his servants, and His mercy among his creation. It is His shadow on His earth; it is also His wisdom, a sign to His singularity and the sincerity of His messenger. It is the defensive shield to the people, and the foundation of the world. With it Allah holds heaven and earth to cease to exist. When Allah Almighty wants to destroy the world and fold the creation, He would raise the remains of its ruins. The Sharia that Allah has sent His Messenger with, is the mast of the world and pole of success. It is the happiness in this world and the Hereafter."

The magnificence of this law and its validity is manifest at any time and place. Allah has inscribed in it good things, and has prohibited all evils. Hence, the Prophet (PBUH) has been sent fitting the description of his Lord. Allah says in Sura Al-A'raf, verse 157: (for he commands them what is just

and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him, - it is they who will prosper). Again Allah mentions good and evil in Sura Al-A'raf, verse 32: (Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand).

Allah Almighty has prohibited bad manners and deeds; polytheism, injustice and oppression; greed, debauchery and immorality; disobedience and murder without right. In Sura Al-An'am, verses 151/152 Allah says: (Say: "Come, I will rehearse what Allah hath (really) prohibited you from": Join not anything as equal with Him; be good to your parents; kill not your children on a plea of want;- We provide sustenance for you and for them;- come not nigh to shameful deeds. Whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom. (151) And come not nigh to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he attain the age of full strength; give measure and weight with (full) justice;- no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear;- whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill the covenant of Allah: thus doth He command you, that ye may remember.(152)).

In Sura Al-A'raf, verse 33, Allah says: (Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge).

Allah has prohibited us the acts of immorality and evil. He has permitted us all the good things that He has created for us, and we have also been created to enjoy them. Allah invites us as well to do noble deeds and cultivate virtues such as honesty and fairness, bashfulness and modesty and chastity. Allah gives us in Sura An-Nahl, verses 89/90 the following advice: (We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims. (89) Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition (90)).

Islamic divine law has been also characterized by combining idealism and realism. In its laws, Shari'a did not intend to create the perfect world. This world exists only in the minds of dreamers' imagination. This notion has been conceived in Plato's mind in his virtuous City. However, it has remained confined to his mind and his notes.

While the law of Islam has rejected unrestrained phantasmagoric ideas, it hasn't neither come to terms nor recognized the miserable reality crippling society. Nay, it has worked to correct this fact in a perfectly realistic way. If we were to give an example, we would take what has been said in the Bible and the Qur'an. Let's take, for instance, how both religions deal with the transgressor and the unjust. The Gospel of Luke tells us in the words of Christ: (bless those who curse you and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him, who takes away your cloak; do not withhold *your* tunic either) (Luke 6/28 - 29). The Evangelical text tells about an ideal that would entice aggressors to perpetrate more aggression. Let us imagine for a moment; if every good person exposes his face to slaps, and home furniture and clothes for thieves, the world will become a breeding ground for wanton and oppressors. The old adage will remain vivid in the minds of people: «whoever feels secure from punishment, will misbehave».

In return Islam's Shari'a hasn't made revenge the only way to respond to transgressor and establish justice. It has decreed enough punishment and retribution that would deter the offender and prevent him from going too far. Furthermore, it has made pardon and forgiveness a desirable course of action. In Sura Ash-Shura, verses 40/43, Allah Almighty says: (The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah: for (Allah) loves not those who do wrong. (40) But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong (done) to them, against such there is no cause of blame. (41) The blame is only against those who oppress men and wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a penalty grievous. (42) But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs. (43)).

What I have written is merely a part of my feelings that have convinced me of the advantage of Islam over all other religions. Allah doesn't accept a religion other than Islam. Read what Allah says in Sura Al-Imran, verse 85: (If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good). After all, it is the religion that Allah desires for His creatures. In Sura Al-Maida, verse 3

states: (This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful).

I have submitted willingly to Allah Lord of the worlds for these and other reasons. I give thanks to Him alone for the constant blessing He has showered me with.

Dr. Munqidh Ben Mahmoud Assaqar

Makkah

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