

COLONEL DONALD S. ROCKWELL, POET AND CRITIC, USA

Rating: 4.7

Description: Poet, literary critic, author, editor-in-chief of Radio Personalities, and author of the books "Beyond the Brim" and "Bazar of Dreams" tells the reasons he embraced Islam.

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The simple, dignified, serene, the power, the appeal, and the calm atmosphere of its mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer - these factors attracted me from the first. But after I had determined to become a follower of Islam, I found many deeper reasons for confirming my decision. The mellow concept of life - the fruit of the Prophet's combined course of action and contemplation - the wise counsel, the admonitions to charity and mercy, the broad humanitarianism, the pioneer declaration of woman's property rights - these and other factors of the teachings of the man of Mecca were to me among the most obvious evidence of a practical religion so tersely and so aptly epitomized in the cryptic words of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, "Trust in God and tie your camel." He gave us a religious system of normal action, not blind faith in the protection of an unseen force in spite of our own neglect, but confidence that if we do all things rightly and to the best of our ability, we may trust in what comes as the Will of God.

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

The total freedom from idolatry ... is a sign of the salubrious strength and purity of the Muslim faith.

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

Moderation and temperance in all things, the keynotes of Islam, won my unqualified approbation. The health of his people was cherished by the Prophet, who enjoined them to observe strict cleanliness and specified fasts and to subordinate carnal appetites ... when I stood in the inspiring mosques of Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Algiers, Tangier, Fez and other cities, I was conscious of a powerful reaction [to]

the potent uplift of Islam's simple appeal to the sense of higher things, unaided by elaborate trappings, ornamentations, figures, pictures, music and ceremonial ritual. The mosque is a place of quiet contemplation and self-effacement in the greater reality of the One God.

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

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

The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless of race, politics, color or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in my life and this is another feature which drew me towards the Faith.

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