

Sana, Ex-Christian, Egypt (part 1 of 2): Questions of Childhood

Description: A traditional Christian girl starts to question aspects of her faith and reads the Quran.

By Sana (translated by Samy Akl)

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Sana is an Egyptian Christian young lady whom God guided to the true religion after a long journey of doubt and fatigue. She narrated her own story as follows:

I grew up like any other young Egyptian Christian girl... a fanatic Christian. My parents cared a lot about my religious life. They used to take me with them every Sunday morning to the church to kiss the priest's hand and perform prayers with him. I often heard him teach the congregation the creed of trinity and assure them in every way that whatever a person be other than a Christian, it would never be accepted by God; because he, as claimed by the priest, is considered an infidel and atheist.

Like many other children, I used to listen to the priest without complete comprehension, and as soon as I got out of church, I would rush back to play with my Muslim friend. Childhood doesn't know such hatred priests implant in people's hearts. After I had grown a little more, I joined Primary School. I began to make more friends amongst my classmates. At school, I closely watched the good merits of my Muslim classmates. They treated me as a sister. They never considered the difference between us in religion. Later on, I understood that the Noble Quran urges Muslims to treat Non-Muslims who do not fight them, kindly so they may convert to Islam and be saved from infidelity. God, the Almighty, stated in the Holy Quran:

"God does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, God loves those who deal with equity." (Quran 60:8)

I had a particularly strong friendship with one of my Muslim female friends. We were together all the time except at religion class, when I and the other Christian pupils went to study the principles of Christianity. I wanted to ask my teacher this question: How could Muslims, according to the Christian belief, be considered nonbelievers whereas they enjoy such great and good characters and are easy going? But I didn't dare ask her so as not to evoke her anger. One day until I eventually did. My question surprised her but she tried to suppress her anger, smiling a false smile and said, "You are still young. You haven't understood life yet. You shouldn't be deceived by such simple matters that hide the genuine wicked nature of Muslims. We elders know them best." I unwillingly kept silent but was not convinced with her answer which was neither subjective nor

logical.

Time passed, and my dearest Muslim friend's family had to move from our home city, Suez, to Cairo. On that day, we cried a lot on leaving each other and exchanged presents and gifts. My friend couldn't find a present to express me her strong feelings better than a copy of the Noble Quran kept in a lavishly decorated box. She said, "I thought of a precious present as a symbol of our friendship and a reminder of our days together. I found nothing better than this Holy Quran which contains God's words." I accepted her present gratefully and cheerfully. I hid it away from my family which would not accept their daughter to keep such a book. After my Muslim friend had left me, I would take out the Holy Quran and kiss it every time I heard the caller for Muslims' prayers. I used to do so while looking around me afraid of being watched by any member of my family and consequently face troubles.

More time passed, and I got married a deacon who worked at Virgin Mary Church. I took my belongings with me, including the Holy Quran of course. I kept it hidden from my husband's eyes. I lived with him as any other loyal sincere wife of the East. I had three children and a job at the General Office of the Governorate. There, I met some veiled Muslim colleagues who reminded me of my best friend. Every time I heard the voice of the caller for the prayers from the near by mosque, I felt an unexplainable feeling deep in my heart at a time I was still a Non- Muslim and a wife of a person who works at church.

Days passed, and as a neighbor and colleague of pious female Muslims of superb character, I began to think about the truth of Islam. I compared what I heard in church about Islam and Muslims with what I saw and felt myself. I began to recognize the truth of Islam. I made use of my husband's absence to listen to some radio and TV programs about Islam in an attempt to find answers to the many questions which tired my mind. I was fascinated by the recitation of the Noble Quran by Sheikhs Mohammed Rifat and Abdul Basit Abdul-Samad. When I heard their recitation, I felt that this could not be the speech of a human being; rather, it must be Divine revelation.

One day when my husband was at work, I opened my closet and with shaking hands I got out my precious treasure, the Noble Quran. As soon as I opened it, my eyes were caught by the verse in which the Almighty God says:

"Verily, the likeness of `Isa (Jesus) before God is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be" - and he was." (Quran 3:59)

Sana, Ex-Christian, Egypt (part 2 of 2): The Power of the Quran

Description: A traditional Christian girl finds answers to her questions in the Quran, but faces

much hardship from friends and family after conversion.

By Sana (translated by Samy Akl)

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My hands shook more and more and my face sweated. I felt a chill in every part of my body. I was amazed by this sensation. I had listened to the Noble Quran often in the streets, on TV and radio and at my Muslim friends' houses, but I had never felt such a feeling before. I wanted to go on reading but stopped on hearing the sound of my husband's key opening the door of the apartment. I quickly hid the Holy Quran and hastened to meet my husband. The next day, I went to work with a huge number of questions in my mind. The verse which I read put an end to the disturbing doubt about the nature of Jesus, peace be upon him. Is he God's son, as claimed by priests?! - Glorified is God (High be He) above all that (evil) they associate with Him! - or a dignified prophet as described in the Quran? The verse came to lift the fog declaring that Jesus, peace be upon him, is a human being. Therefore, he is not God's son; because the Almighty God:

"He begets not, nor He was begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable to him." (Quran 12:3-4)

I thought deeply about the out let after knowing the eternal truth that there is no God worthy of worship except God and that Mohammed is His messenger. Could I declare my adoption of Islam? What would be the reaction and attitude of my relatives and husband? Furthermore, what would be the future of my children?! These questions preoccupied my mind so much that I could hardly do my work. Taking the first step would perhaps expose me to great dangers, the least of them being killed by my relatives, husband or church.

For weeks, I kept away from the people. My colleagues used to see me as an active employee. Since the day in which I opened the Noble Quran, I could hardly do my work. Eventually, the anticipated day came. On that day, I got rid of all doubts and fears and went from the darkness of disbelief to the light of faith. While I was sitting at work that day thinking about what I had determined to do, I heard the caller for the prayer inviting Muslims to meet their Lord and perform the Dhuhr prayer. The caller's voice penetrated my soul thoroughly. I felt the spiritual relief I was searching for. At that moment, I realized the gravity of my sin of disbelief, ignoring the great call of Iman (faith) inside me. And so without hesitation, I stood up declaring: "I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except God and that Mohammed is His messenger".

Completely astonished, my colleagues rushed to me with tears of happiness on their cheeks to congratulate me. My response was to burst into tears, asking God to forgive me and to be pleased with me. The news spread everywhere in the General Office of the Governorate. When my Christian colleagues heard the news, they voluntarily informed my family and husband. They also began to spread rumors around me concerning the direct reasons of my decision. I paid no attention to this. The most important thing for

me was to announce my Islam officially. I went to the Headquarters of the Police and finished the matter officially (as one who converts to Islam does in Egypt). I went back home to find out that as soon as my husband heard the news, he gathered his relatives and burnt all my clothes and seized whatever money, jewelry and furniture I had. That hurt me. But what hurt me more was him keeping my children away from me. He did so to force me back to the darkness of infidelity. I felt really sorry about my children and feared that if they were going to be brought up inside churches believing in trinity, they would end up in the Hellfire with their father.

I made a supplication for God to get my children back to me so that I could bring them up Islamically. God answered me. A Muslim gentleman showed me how to claim custody of my children. I went to the court putting the case in front of the judge and introduced my certification of declaring Islam. The court supported the truth. The judge officially invited my husband and gave him these two choices: Either to accept Islam or the marital status between us would end up according to the Islamic legislation: It is not allowed for a Muslim female to get married to a Non-Muslim male. My husband arrogantly chose not to accept the true religion. As a result, the judge made his statement to separate us and gave me the right to the custody of my children. In such case when the children are under the age of reason, the law appoints the Muslim parent as a custodian.

I thought that my problems came to an end. Yet, I was annoyed by the maltreatment of my ex-husband and relatives. They began to spread rumors to destroy my self-confidence and defame me. They also tried to convince other Muslim families not to help or socialize with me. Despite all these annoying circumstances, I remained strong, adhering to my faith and overcoming every trial to move from the true religion. I raised my hands in supplication to God, The Owner of the Earth and the Heaven, to grant me the power to face this hardship and to ease my life. God, The Near, the most Generous, answered me. A Muslim widow who had four daughters and a son sympathized with me and admired my brave attitude. Although she was poor, she had a great character and offered me her only son, Mohammed, who became a widow after his wife's death in marriage.

I live happily today with my Muslim husband, his family and my children. In spite of the hard life we lead, we feel content, satisfied and happy. My ex-husband's grudge and the hostility of my Christian family didn't prevent me from making continual supplication to God to guide them to the right religion and to shower them with His mercy as He, The Almighty, did with me.

"And for God that is not hard or difficult." (Quran 14:20)

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