

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)

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