
Chapter 7

Growing in Faith

Before my conversion to Christianity, I studied the Gospels and asked numerous questions while participating in a Sunday school class at my wife's church, Calvary Baptist. I was in agreement with most of what I was reading in the Bible regarding God and His power. Therefore, when it said that Jesus was able to perform miracles, it was not difficult for me to accept that statement, for I was taught by my religious teachers in Iran while going to high school that Prophets of God were all holy and able to do the same.

Muslims believe: "In Islam, Prophets are men selected by God or "Allah", to be his messengers. Muslims believe that Prophets are human and not divine, though some are **able to perform miracles** to prove their claim. Islamic Prophets are considered to be the closest to perfection of all humans, and are uniquely the recipients of divine revelation either directly from God or through angels. The Prophet of Islam was given a number of miracles, but the best and lasting miracle is – the Quran. The Quran is lasting and permanent. Its guidance and inspiration did not fade and always animated people in their journey towards perfection!

Islamic theology says that all of God's messengers since Adam, preached the message of Islam — submission to the will of the one God.

Islam is described in the Quran as "the innocent nature upon which God created mankind", and the Quran states that the proper name "Muslim" was given by Abraham." (Fundamentals of Islamic beliefs by Ayatollah Noori)

Now, to justify my old faith as a Muslim and while in search of my new Christian faith, I came up with this answer using verse 3:84 from the Quran as my example: Allah theoretically saying this to Mohammad

QURAN SURA 3:84 Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)."

That is, Christians and Jews were considered as Muslims too, since they bowed down in submission to the same God. So when someone asks me if I am a Muslim, I immediately answer "yes" for I submit myself to the same God and trust Him as my Lord and Savior. But if you mean by the word "Muslim" as someone who follows in the footsteps of Muhammad, the answer is "no", because just as the Muslims claim, he died. But the LORD lives forever!

Now, as I continued my search for the "truth", I was faced with the next verse which created more questions in my mind and ultimately sheds a different light.

QURAN SURA 3:85 "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)."

This verse contradicts the previous one by rejecting other religions other than Islam. By that I mean that the Muslims understood and were taught this verse as meaning to follow in the footsteps of Muhammad. The answer to this assumption became clearer as I read other verses in the Quran, and the gap got wider between Islam and other religions and my questions turned to doubt.

Here is another example: As for the Christians and the Jews, the order is to subdue them and impose on them a penalty tax, after humiliating them and if they resist, kill them. (Sura 9:29)

This Sura got me disturbed. So, I decided to read other translations for more clarity. Sadly it did not get any better!

QURAN TRANSLATED BY YUSUF ALI SURA 9:29 “Fight those who believe not in Allah, nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the People of Book, until they pay the tax with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.”

QURAN TRANSLATED BY SHAKIR SURA 9:29: “Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.”

Many declarations from the Quran sounded good, but were they? As you see, this type of double talk does not match what is in the Bible, (Jewish Torah or Christian Injil “the gospel”). God does not suddenly change to new guidelines or laws in His holy book that are contrary to what He already sent down.

Quran says that the true Christians and Jews will go to paradise, then in another Sura expresses not to take them as friends! I suppose they call the true Christians and Jews by their new name, “Muslims”!

And, the statement (*Muslims believe that Prophets are human and not divine, though some are able to perform miracles to prove their claim*) could not be true as taught by Mullahs or Imams. As an example, Moses who is recognized as one of the great Prophets of God by Muslims, Jews, and Christians did not perform any miracles by his own power. He could not even speak well, much less perform miracles. Aaron his brother was his spokesman. Every miracle that happened was done precisely as God commanded Moses to say or do. In fact, in all cases, God is the One who causes miraculous events to happen.

Psalm 77:14 Says: “You are the God who does wonders; you have declared your strength among the people”.

In other words God is the One who does wonders or miracles. He is the One who can make something out of nothing; He is the One who can part the Red Sea by a single command; and He is the One who can walk on this earth in the form and appearance of a man if He chooses to do so! We cannot underestimate the power of God, His sovereignty and will is beyond human mind and logic. He does not have to report to or convince anyone, and we certainly cannot put Him in a “box” to fit our logic and limited understanding.

But because of my limited knowledge, and lack of wisdom about Christianity, my mind was rejecting two very important statements at that time:

*The first was why they called Jesus the “**Son of God**”?*

How could God have a Son? Moreover, why, with all His power, could he not save Himself from being crucified on the cross? Yet, he made blind men see, cured the sick and diseased, raised the dead, fed five thousand with a small boy’s lunch, walked on the water, calmed a storm on command, and much more.

*The second was why the preachers of the gospel call us “**sinners**”.*

I could not grasp whom they were referring to when they said that we are sinners, for I did not consider myself a bad person!

As a Muslim, we were taught that if we do more good deeds than bad we could go to heaven. (**But who could decide and measure that besides God?**)

Therefore, I considered myself a good person since so far in my life I had done more good deeds than bad. (*I measured it. Ha ha!*)

However later, I began to understand that even though I was not such a bad person in comparison to others, I was still a sinner compared to our Holy God. The Prophet Isaiah said:

“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 64:6)

While Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ echoes the same statement by saying:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23).

You see God is holy, pure, and sinless while I am not. Therefore, in order for me to go to where He is, there must be a mediator, and that person is none other than Jesus Christ who is also holy, pure and sinless.

Again we read in the Bible: “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor. 5:21)

It was then when I realized that I was a sinner, and needed a Savior in my life. You may ask “why was God answering your prayers before you accepted the faith of Christianity?”

Although I did not understand everything yet about Christianity, a couple of things became very clear to me:

- 1) We are all under the dispensation of grace, therefore the whole world benefits. “He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”(Matthew 5:45)
- 2) God knows us before we are even born! He knows our hearts, attitudes, and motives. He provides many opportunities for us to accept Him and the gift of His grace. We are the ones who reject God by refusing to obey or accept the gift of His grace.

My Conversion

Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44)

Since the desire of finding the truth was in my heart, especially the truth about the Son of God, the Father was drawing me to Himself. I was so eager to know Him that I did not mind asking tough questions as they came to my mind. I must admit that sometimes the answers were neither clear nor satisfactory, yet I continued “searching” and “knocking”.

There were doubts at times and I was already beginning to have some concerns and thoughts pertaining to my family back home and the state of their faith. But, I needed to know for myself before I could even think of others. I knew Christianity had to be a good religion since they also were teaching about God and His laws. I agreed to a water baptism before our wedding but missed the meanings behind that ordinance.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new”.

As a result, the day after I was baptized I went to look for this new creation by looking into a mirror after my water baptism! Boy! I was wrong I just got wet, and failed to understand what really took place. But I did not let that to be

an obstacle in my path and continued to search and pray to know Jesus as God.

Another day as I was praying, I asked God to please help me understand the meaning of the Scripture when it refers to Jesus as the “Son of God”. I then asked Him that if Jesus was truly the “Son of God”, to please place Him in my heart so I would accept Him by faith.

A short while later after Ursa and I were married, an opportunity came my way. We were invited to go to Atlanta, Georgia with a group of three families to participate in a five-day seminar. The subject was “Basic Youth Conflicts” with Bill Gothard as our speaker. We were there to listen and learn those principals as the instructor used the Bible and God’s principles in the above subject. The auditorium was packed with thousands of men and women who loved the Lord Jesus so much, and who wanted to learn His principles and it’s applications in their daily life. Many came from far away cities. Some came in campers and RV’s and some flew in by plane. It was an awesome meeting! I loved every minute we spent there. At the end of the five days, Bill Gothard gave an invitation to anyone who wished to accept Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. I raised my hand and repeated the “sinner’s prayer”, asked Jesus to come into my heart. Suddenly my doubts about Jesus as the Son of God disappeared. Everything was clear to me, just as I could see the palm of my hand. As the scripture says:

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved”. (Acts 2:21)

Jesus answered the prayer I had offered up several weeks earlier and erased any reservation or question I had

about Him. My heart lit up with a clear understanding about who Jesus was, which the Holy Spirit revealed to me.

From that point on I pursued my new faith with much excitement and by participating in His church and reading His book, the Bible, the Word of God, and by daily prayers. I have included the “Plan of Salvation” at the end of this book for those who are seeking the **Truth**.



Back row: My wife (Ursa), my Mom, me (Saiid), my Dad
Front row: Alyson, Crystal, Elizabeth and Majid (Parviz's son)
Hamid is taking the picture

My parents made several trips to the USA to see me. On their third trip in August of 1985 they brought with them Hamid, my younger brother, to stay with me. This also proved their blessings and approval on my decision to stay here. But getting Hamid into the country was not easy. I made several phone calls and sent faxes to the late Senator Strom Thurman's office in South Carolina. After spending a week in Germany with some relatives and with the help of the Senator, Hamid arrived here in the U.S. He lived with us

for about two years, learning English and going to school until he found his way around and became self-sufficient. During that time he met a young lady by the name of Tina Glinski and got married in 1988. We lived in Florence S.C. at the time, and a few years later, they moved to Charlotte N.C. right after we moved to Asheville, N.C. Being very interested in theology and spirituality, he also converted to Christianity in 1992. God has blessed them with two Godly children Nicholas and Maggie and to this day all are very active in their church. Most recently Nicholas made a decision to become a priest!

A few years later God impressed upon my heart to go back and study the Quran as well as other resources to make sure I did not overlook anything. Part of my heart was still thinking back, wishing to find a common ground concerning salvation in both religions. But, if that was not going to be the case, I wanted to share the gospel with my family back home as well as other Muslim brothers or sisters who were still caught up in a religion of “**salvation by works**”.

On one occasion when my parents were here in the USA, we made a trip to Washington D.C. While there, we visited a mosque and I purchased a copy of the Quran in Arabic and English, translated by Yusuf Ali. I read the Quran throughout several times. I also listened to the audio version of the Quran over the Internet.

I also listened and read the transcript of several sermons by Sheikh Ahmad Deedad, a well-known and outspoken Sheikh who spoke against Christianity as it exist today. But the more I read the Quran and other resources (Books from Ayatollah Noori, Ahmad Deedad and others) the more I became disappointed about what I was reading in

comparison to what the Bible teaches. I also found several profound verses in the Quran that I will discuss here as well.

My initial reaction was that in many verses, the Quran claimed to know everything about the merciful Allah, yet at the same time it was putting down all other religions outside of Islam.

Second: If anyone pointed to the errors and the contradictions in the Quran (which, there are many), Mullahs or Ayatollahs alike quickly pointed to the lack of understanding of the Arabic language and its interpretations. Then why did they translate the Quran to other languages if they were going to question it?

Third: Muslim communities as a whole were still holding to the traditions of Muhammad. Everyone I met always used the ‘hadith’ or sayings of Muhammad as their motives. Their Islamic laws for the most part are drawn from the Quran and the life of Muhammad even though it does not agree with today’s social system and standards.

One example is this, “If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four reliable witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some other way such as 100 flogging. But if two men among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both, but if they repent leave them alone; for Allah is Oft-returning, Most Merciful!” Sura 2:15-16 (two rules for the same crime!)

At the end of a movie called (The Message), which was about the life of Muhammad, the announcer in the movie said: “If anyone worshipped Muhammad, let it be known that he is dead, but whoever worshipped God, let it be

known that He is alive forever.” Unfortunately in my opinion, the Islamic community as a whole put more emphasis on Muhammad than God! That’s why they get so upset when someone draws a picture and calls it the picture of Muhammad, knowing that is not a true picture since they have not seen him. The message of Islam should have been only one thing; “**God is One**”. Worship Him only with all your heart, mind and soul and the right path to Him is Jesus Christ as you see in the next verses. This is the same message that has been given to the early fathers. As the Quran confirms the same in these verses:

Sura 3:50 And I (Jesus) have come confirming that which was before me of the Taurat (Torah), and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you. I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to Allah and obey me.

3:51 Truly! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is the Straight Path.

Jesus said that His life verified or confirmed what the Prophets had spoken about Him in the previous scriptures. The old Prophets spoke much about Jesus Christ. There are over three hundred prophesies (foretelling) about Jesus.

Jesus told us that our duty to God is to obey him (Jesus)! To show your highest respect to God, you must obey Jesus. The only command of Jesus that we find in the Quran is here in 3:50.

The command is clear, “Obey me”. Later you will see an amazing promise of a blessing given to those who obey Jesus. Where do we find the commands of Jesus? They are found in the Injil (Gospel of Jesus Christ). How can you do your duty to God and obey Jesus unless you know what he

has commanded you to do? You must find out what the Injil says so that you can know how to obey Jesus? The same Injil that Mohammed used is available today. When you find an Injil, be sure to check to see if it was translated from the original language written from manuscripts from the 1st century.

A road or path always leads us to something or someone. The Straight Path mentioned in this ayah (verse) is the road that leads us to God. It is a straight and direct road to God. There are no bypasses or turns. It is a direct path, which means that it does not stop short of its intended goal, which is heaven. So, who can travel on this path to God?

The answer is those who obey Jesus!”

(A complete Muslim by Kevin Greeson and Quran)

Just as some of those Pharisees or teachers of the law missed the mission and purpose of Jesus, many Ayatollahs or the teachers of the Quran misinterpret the message of Jesus today. But, they do claim that it is the same message as the one in the hands of ‘the people of the book’ that is the Jews and Christians.

Fourth: they all sin so naturally yet they sweep it under the rug as though it never happened, claiming that Allah will forgive them since they were Muslims.

Fifth: Islam as I know it is not the religion of peace and tolerance as they claim it to be, though there are many good people among them. Islam will not produce salvation, only obligation!

Sixth: Getting anywhere, especially in government profession in Iran belong to those who claim Islam as their religion. I was listening to an interview of a young

Christian lady who just graduated from a university in Iran, and wanted to continue her education. This is what she said in her interview: When she applied to a school of Law in Iran, she was rejected. She was told that we do not need you for two reasons: Number one, you are a woman and number two, you are a Christian. We do not need either one as a lawyer in Iran!

Again I saw another news clip when a group of Islamic radicals using threats and painting remarks to retaliate against Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian Muslim lawyer, human rights activist and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. They wanted to shut down her law office in Iran while police stayed at a distance and watched, because she was an outspoken woman lawyer, defending Iran's minority.

In so many instances Muhammad taught that if you do good deeds as small as giving water to a thirsty dog, you could gain paradise, yet at the same time he claimed that no one is assured of the paradise. Only Allah will decide who will go to heaven or who will not "insha-allah" meaning, God willing! And he is right to say that. No one is going to heaven unless their sin is wiped away, because where God is there is no sin. And that's why and for that very reason, Jesus who is called the 'Christ' came to this world to redeem mankind. This is why that is so important for us to put our trust in Jesus, our Lord and King and Redeemer. **Because, Muhammad is not able to save anyone! He is a man just like the rest of us, in need of a savior.**