

Why I came to Islam?



By Susie Brackenborough

Being a practicing Christian for almost 16 of my 22 years of life, it may seem strange as to why I have turned to Islam. Not so I say! I was asked one day to "prove Christianity and why you are a Christian and not a Muslim" by a Muslim friend at university. I thought that this was going to be an easy task, but I couldn't actually say why I was Christian, only this is the way that I had been brought up by my family. My research needed extensive reading and questioning. I would say to everyone who reads this whether Muslim or not - 'ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO.' If you can't answer this question then search long and hard until you have reached a satisfactory conclusion. It doesn't do anybody any harm just to sit down and think about what they believe in. If anything, it will strengthen people with sincere motives for believing what they do. For those who find they draw a blank I would ask them to read the Qur'an because this is where the truth will be found. With a good heart and a healthy mind you will be able to answer "WHY" with so much confidence that you will feel like a new person and as long as you never forget why we worship Allah (SWT) there shall be no confusion in your life and you will be at peace. However, we should not sit back at that, but we must strive to live the life that Allah (SWT) wants us to, with the thought that we are all going to be judged one day and we will all be held responsible for our lives on this earth.

Why not Christianity?

So why wasn't I satisfied with Christianity? Anybody who is going to really believe in something must know something about it. If I said to someone that a Porsche could go faster than a Skoda, for them to accept that fully they must have knowledge of what a Porsche and a Skoda are, otherwise if they accept what I say without knowledge they are living a life of ignorance and/or arrogance. Anybody who wanted to know the truth and why they agree to or follow a particular way would seek out why. So for me to accept Christianity I needed the knowledge about the fundamentals - the belief that Jesus (AS) was the son of God and that the Trinity existed are two fundamental points. It is not good enough just to accept this, as you believe what has been taught to you. For someone without knowledge about cars, the Porsche may indeed go faster than the Skoda in reality, but if I was a so called knowledgeable and respected person and I taught them that the Skoda is faster than the Porsche, then I would be believed by people who have not questioned what these two cars are really like and they take my word as they think that I have knowledge. But they would not be believing the truth.

So what about these fundamentals of Christianity?

I believe that religion is not here to confuse us in any way and the message of Allah (SWT) is very clear; so my first question is - if Jesus (AS) is the son of God and the Trinity was what Christian people believe it to be, why is it not made explicitly clear in the Bible? Firstly, the sonship of Jesus (AS). The word 'Son' should not be interpreted literally. We are all children of God. There are many quotes in the Bible saying that

others were sons of God. For example, Exodus 4:22 - to Moses, 'And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn..' Was Jesus (AS) the only begotten son of God? No, quite clearly not. Long before Jesus (AS) was born, David (AS) said in Psalm 2:7, 'I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.' So, David (AS) is also God's begotten son??!! What is this?!! Jesus (AS) himself made clear that he is not the son of God. For example, Matthew 5:48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.' So God is everyone's father. Luke 4:41, 'And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered not to speak for they knew that he was Christ.' Luke 9:20-21, Jesus (AS) said to his disciples, 'But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, "The Christ of God! And he straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing.' If Jesus (AS) was the son of God, then why should he tell his disciples not to tell anyone this if everyone is to know and learn and believe this? The only explanation is that they were wrong to call him this and he was telling them so.

A Canon (who kindly responded to the questions which I posed to him) answered as follows: 'The claim about his sonship was probably first made by the Early Church... The title "Son of God" is found in various Old Testament texts and refers to the king or to the people of Israel as a whole. Christians took over the phrase and applied it to Jesus as the most accurate title they could discover for him.' So, clearly not by Jesus (AS), his followers or anybody else living at the time of Jesus (AS). It was a man-made idea with no evidence to back it up, so why accept it? You may as well believe that a Skoda can go faster than a Porsche!!

Secondly the concept of the Trinity. Associating others with God, i.e. to believe in the Trinity has no foundation whatsoever in Islam. In Mark 12:29 Jesus (AS) himself said, 'The first of all Commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.' 1 Corinthians 8:4 'there is none other God but one.' The truth about this matter is that the word 'Trinity' is not Biblical at all. The Canon's answer was as follows: 'The New Testament writers did not create the doctrine of the Trinity. It is an attempt, admittedly human (how could it be otherwise?), to express in words something of the inexpressible.' This just sums it up. A human attempt to describe something inexpressible because it doesn't exist!! Perhaps the clearest indication we have that Jesus (AS) and God are not equal, and therefore not one and the same, comes from John 14:28 when Jesus (AS) is quoted as saying: "My Father is greater than I." When someone referred to him as good master in Luke 18:19 Jesus (AS) responded, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." Furthermore, Jesus (AS) drew clear distinctions between himself and God when he is quoted to have said, John 8:42 "I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself but He sent me." Jesus (AS) gave clear evidence of his subordination to God, rather than his equality with God, when he said in Luke 22:42, "not my will but Thine be one" and in John 5:30, "I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which has sent me." That Jesus (AS) would admit that he did not come into the world on his own initiative but was directed to do so, that he would acknowledge another being as greater than himself, that he would negate his own will in deference to affirming the will of another gives clear proof that Jesus (AS) is not the Supreme One and therefore Jesus (AS) is not equal to or even God.

While Paul of Tarsus, the man who could rightfully be considered the true founder of Christianity, did formulate many of its doctrines, that of the Trinity was not among them. He did, however, lay the groundwork for such when he put forth the idea of Jesus (AS) being a "divine son". After all, a son does need a father, and what about a vehicle for God's revelation to man? Tertullian, a lawyer and presbyter of the third century Church in Carthage, was the first to use the word "Trinity" when he put forth the theory that the son and the spirit participate in the being of God, but all are of one being of substance with the father. Clearly he was mistaken. Mark 12:29, 'And Jesus

answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.' 1 Timothy 2:5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men.' Luke 4:8 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' Indeed, Jesus (AS) made prophesies that people would worship him uselessly and will believe in doctrines not made by God but by men. Matthew 15:9 'But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'

The Bible is a collection of 66 Books covering two thousand years of history written over nearly a thousand years. Inaccuracies and contradictions are likely to occur as it was not kept pure and the language changed. It could be said that the Bible is a book of 'Chinese Whispers' in that the message had been passed on, in some cases, from eyewitnesses to their associates. Original manuscripts can change as they are copied out. Existing original material is almost non-existent. No entire original documents have survived. The language is untranslatable as time has changed the language and so earlier languages of the Bible cannot fully be understood. All there are are copies of the Gospels written hundreds of years after the original writing.

From the next quote, the Canon admits that Christianity is very much a man-made religion, only embracing certain things which satisfied the doctrines that the Church, not as God or Jesus (AS) wanted people to believe: 'The Church took far longer than you can imagine to agree on the books which were to be included in the scripture. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church did not declare definitely until the 16th century at the Council of Trent, and even Luther held a dim view of some New Testament books. Apocryphal books were not "unauthorized" in the sense of being illicit: they were worthy books, which, however, did not satisfy one or more of the three criteria on which books were included in the New Testament (i.e. conformity to the theology of love of God revealed in Christ, apostolic authorship or inspiration and acceptance by the whole Church.'

Islam

So why does Islam deserve to be looked at? Firstly, it is misconceived by many, mainly because of the media and the lack of education in Western society. It is seen as an oppressive religion - it is not. There are millions of Muslims so content with life and millions more who have seen the beauty of Islam and revert to the religion to which they were born and lead a much better life and will be successful in the Hereafter, Allah (SWT) willing. You just have to look at the society that we live in today. Murders, violence, under-age sex, sexual relations before marriage, a high rate of divorce, single parenthood, abuse of children, and this list goes on and on to just mention a few of the evils of society. These are, unfortunately, all too common occurrences. It is frightening to see how society is changing. Record highs of these problems are recorded year on year. It is a vicious circle that has to stop because millions of innocent human beings are suffering every minute of the day unnecessarily. Millions are living a life of regret - 'If only I have been more careful...if only I didn't drink...' Why should you accept society and go with the flow? Why should you be a part of the suffering and/or regret? You don't have to be. IF YOU FOLLOW ISLAM and strive to follow the wonderful laws created by Allah (SWT) you can have a life of contentment, peace, love, kindness and a feeling of community and most importantly a closeness to our Creator (SWT) in this life and the next, Allah (SWT) willing.

Because Islam is about peace, love and ultimately worship of Allah (SWT) there is no chance to do wrong. For example, we don't drink alcohol for the good reason that it brings out a character in many people that they can't control and only evil is the result. Family is so important in day-to-day life and because of this there are very few family problems and children are brought up in a warm and loving environment and learn to respect their elders, when guidance sent down by Allah (SWT) is followed.

People misconceive cultural issues for religious issues. They are very often totally unrelated and when people use cultural factors before the word of Allah (SWT), this is wrong. One must understand that any oppression caused by culture being important to a particular tribe or race is from mankind and not Allah (SWT). Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said, to what can be translated to: 'He who hurts a covenanted subject hurts me and he who hurts me hurts God.' A Muslim should be kind, helpful and charitable to all people regardless of their color, race, or creed. Islam does not allow prejudice for or against a tribe, a color or a race. No race is superior to other races. No colors are superior to other colors. Racial discrimination and color discrimination are absolutely prohibited in Islam. Islam is for everyone. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) also said to what can be translated to: 'O people! Your Lord is one. No Arab is superior to a Persian; no Persian is superior to an Arab; no red man is superior to a black man; no black man is superior to a red man - except in piety. The most honored unto God are the most pious.' So, clearly, by following the word of Allah (SWT) no oppression can exist and therefore any conflicting cultural issues with his word should be displaced for the sake of Allah (SWT), the Most Gracious the Most Merciful.

A sound basis for marriage is a belief in and a pursuit of His (SWT)'s Path by both people. Marriage to gain social class, money or ethnic group cannot be regarded as a sound basis. Allah (SWT) said to what can be translated to, ' Those who love each other in My glory, they will be under the shadow of My protection on the Day of Judgement, at a time when there will be no protection but Mine.' Being Muslim one believes in one God and Jesus (AS) is revered as a Prophet, not the son of Allah (SWT). Where do we get the evidence for this? The answers are to be found in the Book that Allah (SWT) had sent to us, his people, the Holy Qur'an. Allah (SWT) revealed His book to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) who was an illiterate man. He (SAWS) got his followers, who were capable scribes, to write down what was revealed to him. They recited and committed to memory what was said so that there was no confusion about Allah (SWT)'s word and the preservation that existed then still exists today, meaning that the Qur'an is today and forever going to be, in its original state. Today, there are thousands of Muslims who can recite the whole book without mistake. How can this be you may ask? 'Qur'an' is Arabic for 'to recite.' The language was chosen for its beautiful sound and flow in a rhythmic way that makes it easy to remember and recite. There has and never will be a book written like it.

Why should we believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAWS)?

If you read accounts of his life by his contemporaries (Still extant) you will undoubtedly conclude that he was renowned for his good character, honesty and trustworthiness even by the staunchest of his enemies. If this is not good enough, then I prompt you to read the Qur'an and seek out the 'mysteries' of the life that were revealed to him (SAWS) then. These 'miracles' have been discovered by scientists (such as the study of embryology) and explorers (such as the world is indeed round and not flat) many years after the revelation and many more miracles are still to be found as our society develops and progresses. Jesus (AS) at the last supper is quoted to have said, John 16:7-14 'Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement, of sin, because they believe not in me; Of righteousness, because I go to my father, and ye see me no more; Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' Prophet Muhammed (SAWS) did all the things that Jesus (SAWS) mentioned. He heard the message of Allah (SWT) and that is indeed what he spoke to his literate followers. He

did show to us the things to come such as the day of Judgement. He did glorify Jesus (AS).

Nobody can ever say they have enough knowledge. There are many areas that I have not touched upon. I encourage you to keep searching for knowledge of this Glorious religion. Come out of the darkness and into the light, accept Islam today. There is a saying: 'Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life.' I have given you this little insight into why I came to Islam, so there is the fish for the day if you like. However, if you pick up and read the Qur'an you will never go hungry and your appetite for the truth will be satisfied for life.