

People who chose Islam

Från Internet April-96

Läs mer om Islam på:
www.islamguiden.com

Index

Introduction	3
1 MUHAMMAD ALEXANDER RUSSEL WEBB (American)	3
2 Colonel DONALD ROCKWELL (American).....	4
3 SALAHADDIN BOART (American).....	5
4 THOMAS MUHAMMAD CLAYTON (American)	6
5 DEVIS WARRINGTON (Austrian)	7
6 Mrs. CECILLA CANNOLY [Rasheeda] (Austrian).....	8
7 MUHAMMAD AS'AD LEOPOLD WEISS (Austrian).....	9
8 Dr. 'UMAR ROLF FREIHERR VON EHRENFELS (Austrian)	11
9 THOMAS IRVING (Canadian)	12
10 Dr. BENOIST [ALI SALMAN] (French).....	13
11 CAPTAIN (JACQUES) COUSTEAU (French)	15
12 MUHAMMAD EMIN HOBOHN (German).....	15
13 Dr. HAMID MARCUS (German)	16
14 Mrs. AMINA MOSLER (German).....	17
15 Hadji LORD AL-FAR Q HEADLEY (G.B.).....	18
16 ABDULLAH ARCHIBALD HAMILTON (G.B.)	19
17 JALALEDDIN LAUDER BRUNTON (G.B.).....	20
18 Prof. Baron HAR N MUSTAFA LEON (G.B.).....	22
19 WILLIAM PICKHARD (G.B.).....	24
20 Mrs. MES' DA STEINMANN (G.B.)	25
21 Mrs. MAVISH B. JOLLY (G.B.)	27
22 LADY ZAYNAB EVELYN COMBOLD (G.B.)	30
23 MUHAMMAD JOHN WEBSTER (G.B.)	31
24 ABDULLAH BATTERSBY (G.B.)	32
25 HUSEYN ROFE (G.B.)	34
26 H.F. FELLOW (G.B.)	36
27 J.W. LOVEGROVE (G.B.).....	39
28 DAVIS (G.B.)	40
29 Dr. R.L. MELLEMA (Hollander)	41
30 FADL-UD-DIN AHMAD OVERING (Hollander)	43
31 Prof. Dr. ABD-UL-KERIM GERMANUS (Hungarian)	44

Introduction

There are a number of people who abandoned their former religion and accepted Islam. These people belong to various races, countries, nationalities, colors and professional groups. Forty-two [42] of these people were asked several questions, such as, "Why did you become a Muslim?" "What are the aspects of Islam that you like best?" by some magazines or societies, or by their own friends. Their answers were quite clear and sincere. These noble people decided to embrace Islam after thinking over the matter for a long time and studying the Islamic religion with meticulous attention. Each and every one of their answers, which we have compiled from various books and magazines and we will paraphrase in the following passages, is of documentary value. There are many lessons to be taken from these answers, and those who read them will once again feel in their hearts the sublime nature of our religion. These documents have been arranged in an alphabetical order of the initial letters of the nationalities to which our new Muslim brothers belong. These countries are: America, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Malaya, Poland, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Zanzibar.

1 MUHAMMAD ALEXANDER RUSSEL WEBB (American)

(Muhammad Alexander Russel Webb was born in 1262 [1846 C.E.], in Hudson, United States of America. He studied in the university of New York. In a short time he was a very much loved and admired writer and columnist. He published magazines named 'St. Joseph Gazette' and 'Missouri Republican'. In 1887 he was posted as the American consul in the Philippines. After embracing Islam, he thoroughly dedicated himself to the promulgation of Islam and presided over the organization in the United States. He passed away in 1335 [1916 C.E.].) I was asked by quite a number of people why I, as a person who was born in the United States, a country with an overwhelmingly numerous Christian population, and who listened to the preaches, or, rather, foolish talks, made by Christian priests throughout his growing years, changed my religion and became a Muslim. The brief account I gave them on why I had chosen Islam as my guide in life: I became a Muslim because the studies and observations I carried on indicated that men's spiritual needs could be filled only with the sound principles established by Islam. Even as a child I had never had a disposition to completely dedicate myself to Christianity. By the time I reached the adult age of twenty, I was completely defiant towards the mystical and annoying church culture which interdicted everything in the name of sin. Gradually I disengaged myself from the church, and finally abandoned it for good. I had an inquisitive and curious character. I would always search for causes and purposes for everything. I would anticipate logical explanations for them. On the other hand, the explanations provided by priests and other Christian men of religion did not satisfy me. Most of the time, instead of giving satisfactory answers to my questions, they would dismiss the matter with evasive prevarications such as, "We cannot understand these things. They are divine secrets," and "They are beyond the grasp of human mind." Upon this I decided to study, on the one hand, oriental religions, and on the other hand, books written by famous philosophers. I read various works on philosophy, such as those written by Mill[1], by Locke[2], by Kant[3], by Hegel[4], by Fichte[5], by Huxley[6], and others. The books written by these philosophers always dealt with such subjects as protoplasm, atoms, molecules, and particles, and did not even touch on reflections such as "What becomes of the human soul?" "Where does the soul go after death?" "How should we discipline our souls in this world?" The Islamic religion, on the other hand,

treated the human subject not only within the corporeal areas, but also along the spiritual extensions. Therefore, I chose Islam not because I had lost my way, or only because Christianity had incurred my displeasure, or as a result of sudden decision, but, on the contrary, after very minutely studying it and becoming thoroughly convinced about its greatness, singularity, solemnity and perfection. Islam is based on belief in the existence and the unity of Allahu ta'aalaa, entire submission to Him, which spontaneously entails worshiping Him and thanking Him for His blessings. Islam enjoins fraternity, goodness, and friendliness upon all the human race, and advises them to be cleanly, spiritually, physically, verbally, and practically. Definitely, the Islamic religion is the most perfect, the most superior and the most conclusive of all the religions known to humanity so far.

2 Colonel DONALD ROCKWELL (American)

Why did I accept Islam? For a long time I had been greatly impressed by Islam's clear logic and formal simplicity, by the magnetizing attraction felt towards its mosques, by the great solemnity and deep affection with which the adherents of that religion had devoted themselves to their faith, by the profound respect and pure sincerity in which Muslims all over the world had been prostrating themselves simultaneously five times daily. However, all these things were short of causing me to become a Muslim. Only after a thoroughgoing analysis of the Islamic religion, which resulted in my exploring a myriad of beautiful and useful aspects in it, did I become a Muslim. A solemn and, at the same time, sentimental, attachment to life, [which was Muhammad's 'alaihis-salaam' personal approach]; a mutually consultative method in doing daily chores; a habitually soft behavior flavored with mercy and compassion in social lives, indiscriminately; charity for the poor; property rights, which women had been given for the first time; all these things, which were only a few of the many other revolutions that could only be evaluated as 'the most tremendous', and how aphoristical and concise a language it is through which Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' expresses these concepts! By cautioning, "Place your trust in Allahu ta'aalaa; yet do not forget to tie your camel!", Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' conveys also that Allahu ta'aalaa commands His born slaves to put their trust in Him only after taking all sorts of necessary precautions. Then, contrary to Europeans' assertions, the Islamic religion is not a religion for those idlers who expect everything from Allahu ta'aalaa without doing anything for their part. The Islamic religion commands everybody first to do their best and only then to put their trust in Allahu ta'aalaa. The justice which Islam rendered to people of other religions was one of its aspects which had had a great impact on me. Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' commands Muslims to be benign towards Christians and Jews. Qur'aan al-kereem acknowledges the prophethoods of the other prophets as well, beginning with Adam 'alaihis-salaam' and including Musaa and Isaa 'alaihim-as-salaam'. This is an exalted sense of faith and a great model of justice, which other religions do not possess. While the believers of other religions are casting inconceivable aspersions on Islam, Muslims are answering them favorably. One of the most beautiful aspects of Islam is that it has completely purified itself of idols. Whereas pictures, icons and signs are still being worshiped in Christianity, things of this nature do not exist in Islam. This is an indication of how pure and unstained a religion Islam is. The facts stated and taught by Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam', the Messenger of Allahu ta'aalaa, have reached our time without any interpolation. And the Qur'aan al-kereem, which is the Word of Allah, has been preserved in its pristine purity, exactly as it was revealed, without losing anything from the limpidity it had in the time of Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam'. The fabricated

superstitions and legends with which Christians have defiled the religion of Isa 'alaihis-salaam' are not the case with Islam. Of the determinants that motivated me to become a Muslim, the last one was the fortitude and the will power that I observed in Islam. Islam induced an overall cleanliness, not only spiritually, but also physically. Examples of the features that make up this superior nature are not to overload the stomach when eating, to fast for one month every year, to be moderate in every respect, to be neither extravagant nor parsimonious in spending money, etc. In an exquisite style, facts that would guide humanity not only temporarily but also ever after were being inculcated into individuals. I visited almost all of the Muslim countries. I saw in person how all the Muslims in Istanbul, in Damascus, in Cairo, in Algeria, in Morocco, and in the other Muslim cities observed all these rules and thereby led a peaceful life. They did not need ornaments, pictures, icons, candles, music, or other trivialities of the same sort to initiate themselves into the life-style leading to the sympathy of Allahu ta'aalaa. The sense of awareness of the fact that they were the born slaves of Allahu ta'aalaa and their acts of supplication before Him afforded them the greatest source of spiritual peace, happiness and flavor. The qualities of freedom and equity inherent in the Islamic religion have always magnetized me towards it. Among Muslims, a person occupying the highest rank position and the poorest member of the society are equal before Allahu ta'aalaa, and they are merely two individuals in the general recognition of fraternity. Muslims perform their acts of worship side by side in mosques. There are not any special places allotted for the leadership. Muslims hold the belief that there is not a third person to act as an intermediary between Allahu ta'aalaa and His born slave. The Islamic acts of worship are performed between Allahu ta'aalaa and the slave. They do not appeal to men of religion for the forgiveness of their wrongdoings. Every Muslim is the only person responsible for his personal behavior. The mutual fraternity among Muslims has always been helpful in my personal life. This fraternity was one of the factors whereby I was charmed towards Islam. I know that, wherever I go, a Muslim brother of mine will help me and sympathize with me. All Muslims the world over, of different races, colors and political views as they may be, are brothers and they look on it as an obligation to help one another. These are the causes for my becoming a Muslim. I wonder if it could be possible to conceive of causes more beautiful or more exalted than these?

3 SALAHADDIN BOART (American)

In 1338 [1920 C.E.], I was in the waiting-room of a doctor's office where I had gone for a medical examination, when I saw two magazines printed in London, namely 'Orient Review' and 'African Times'. As I was skimming through them I read a statement that said, "There is only one God," which impressed me deeply. Christianity dictated three gods, which we were compelled to believe although we could never explain it to our own minds. From that time on, that statement, "There is only one God," never left my mind. This holy and sublime belief, which Muslims bear in their hearts, is an invaluable treasure. Now I grew more and more deeply interested in Islam. By and by, I decided to become a Muslim. After embracing Islam I assumed the name Salaahaddin. I believed in the truth that Islam is the truest religion. For Islam is based on the fact that Allahu ta'aalaa does not have a partner and that Allah, alone, has the authority to forgive sins. How compatible this law is with the laws of nature! In a field, on a farm, in a village, in a city, in a school, in a government, in a state and, in short, everywhere, there is one single ruler. Dualism has always brought about separatism. The second proof that

showed me the fact that Islam is the truest religion was that the Arabs, who had been leading a completely barbarous life before Islam, had developed into the world's most civilized and the most powerful state in a very short time and carried the most ideal concepts of love of mankind from the Arabian deserts all the way up to Spain, and all this was owing to Islam. The Muslim Arabs had found Arabia as a wilderness. And they cultivated it into a rose-garden. John W. Draper (1226 [1811 C.E.]-1299 [1882 C.E.]), an honest historian, in his book 'The Intellectual Development of Europe', enlarges on the extremely great and important part that Islam played in the development of contemporary civilization, and adds, "Christian historians, on account of the grudge they have been nursing against Islam, try to cloak this truth and cannot seem to get themselves to acknowledge how indebted Europeans are to Muslims." The following passage is (the paraphrase of) an excerpt from Draper's writings on how Muslims found Spain: "Europeans of that time were completely barbarians. Christianity had proved short of delivering them from barbarism. They would still be looked on as wild people. They lived in filth. Their heads were full with superstitions. They did not even have the ability to think properly. They lived in roughly-made huts. A rush mat laid on the floor or hanging on the wall was the sign of great wealth. Their food consisted of vegetables like wild beans and carrots, some oats and, sometimes, even barks. In the name of garments, they wore untanned animal hides because they lasted longer, and therefore they stank awfully." "Cleanliness was the very first thing that Muslims taught them. Muslims washed five times daily, which caused these people to wash at least once a day. Later on, they took the stinking, tattered, lice-infested animal hides off their backs, dumped them, and gave them their own garments, which had been made from textures woven with colored threads. They taught them how to cook, and how to eat. They built houses, mansions and palaces in Spain. They established schools and hospitals. They instituted universities, which in the course of time became sources of light illuminating the entire world. They improved horticulture everywhere. The country was soon awash with rose and flower gardens. Gaping in astonishment and admiration, the uncivilized Europeans watched all these developments, and gradually began to keep pace with the new civilization." Educating so wild a nation; imbuing them with sentiments of civilization; rescuing them from the depths of darkness, nescience and superstitions; all these inconceivably tremendous tasks were accomplished by the Arabs owing only and only to the Islamic religion. For the Islamic religion is the most genuine religion. Allahu ta'aalaa helped them for their success. The Islamic religion, commanded by Allahu ta'aalaa and taught and publicized by Muhammad 'alaaihis-salaam', and the Qur'aan al-kereem, which is the Word of Allahu ta'aalaa, changed the course of the world's history and freed it from the fetters of darkness. Had it not been for the Islamic religion, humanity would not have attained the present heights of civilization, nor would knowledge and science be in such advanced levels today. Muhammad 'alaaihis-salaam' states, "Even if knowledge is in China, (go and) acquire it." This is the Islamic religion which I accepted willingly.

4 THOMAS MUHAMMAD CLAYTON (American)

It was almost noon time. Dazed with the sweltering heat of the day, we were trudging along a dusty road, when, from afar, a singularly mellifluous voice began to caress our auditory senses. So rich a voice it was that the entire space seemed to be sated with it. As we walked past a cluster of trees, a bewildering scene came into sight. It was such a scene that we hardly believed what we saw. Mounted on a small, wooden tower, an

elderly Arab in an extremely clean long robe and wearing a white turban was performing (calling) the azaan (or adhaan). As he performed the azaan, he was in a trance, almost completely isolated from the world, and in the presence of his Creator, Owner. As if hypnotized by this noble sight, we halted, and then, slowly, sat down on the ground. We did not know what the sounds and words reaching our ears meant, yet they somehow moved us and instilled a mood of elation, relief into our souls. Afterwards, we learned that the sweet words uttered by the Arab meant, "Allahu ta'aalaa is the greatest. There is no god to be worshiped other than Allahu ta'aalaa." All of a sudden, many people appeared around us. Till hardly a moment before, however, we had seen no one around us. We did not know whence these people came, and there was an expression of great deference and love on their faces. There were people of all age-groups and classes among them. They were different in their clothing, in their manners of walking, and in their appearances. Yet they all had the same expression of earnestness, great dignity and, at the same time, geniality on their faces. The number of comers increased incessantly, so that we felt as if the process of their increasing would never come to an end. At last the comers assembled. They all took off their shoes and clogs and stood in rows. To our great amazement, no segregation of any sort was observed in the formation of the lines. White people, yellow people, black people, rich people, poor people, tradesmen, civil servants, workers stood side by side without any discrimination between their races or ranks, and performed their worship together. I admired so many different people's brotherly coming together. It is three years now since I saw that sublime scene for the first time. In the meantime, I began to gather information about that lofty religion which brought people so closely together. The information that I collected about Islam brought me all the closer to this religion. Muslims believed in one Allah and professed that men were not sinful by birth, which was quite contrary to the Christian inculcation. They looked on them only as born slaves of Allahu ta'aalaa, displayed profound compassion towards them, and wished them to abide by the right path and thus lead a comfortable, peaceful and happy life. Whereas in Christianity even an evil thought was deemed as a sin, Muslims defined sin only as a result of disobeying Allahu ta'aalaa or violating the rights of born slaves, and acknowledged man free as to his thoughts. According to the Islamic religion, man was responsible "only for what he has done." For the reasons I have cited above, I accepted Islam willingly. Despite the three years' time since, I sometimes dream of the Arab muazzin's touching and effective voice and multifarious people's running from all directions and standing in lines. It is a doubtless fact that these people, who prostrate themselves altogether and indiscriminately, are doing so sincerely to worship Allahu ta'aalaa. Haqq ta'aalaa avenges Himself on the slave through the slave, In the ignorant's eyes the avenger is the poor slave. Everything belongs to the Creator, the slave's a mere tool, Without the Creator's command you cannot move a leaf!

5 DEVIS WARRINGTON (Austrian)

As the Spring's mellow, warm hand thaws out the earth after an awfully frigid winter, likewise Islam had a similar effect on me. It warmed my heart and clothed me with a new and lovely dress of knowledge. How beautiful, how true, and how logical Islam's teachings are! How clear, how genuine, and how charming a word it is to say that "Allahu ta'aalaa is one, and Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' is His Messenger." How could one ever compare it with the unbelievable, unintelligible Christian credo which imposes

the absurdity of "Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit"? In contrast with these formidable, fearful and never satisfactory tenets of Christianity, this simple and logical belief draws you towards itself. Islam is an undefiled heavenly religion. Despite the centuries that have elapsed since its advent, it answers all the material and immaterial needs of humanity, not only today, but also forever. For instance, Islam clearly states that men are equal and that before Allahu ta'aalaa there is no difference of rank and position among men, and it enforces this equality in actual life. The Christian churches profess the same equality, yet there are various echelons among them, such as priests of different ranks, archdeacons, deacons, bishops, and many other ecclesiastics. These people intervene between Allahu ta'aalaa and the slave and use the name of Allahu ta'aalaa for their personal advantages. In Islam, on the other hand, no one can intervene between Allahu ta'aalaa and the slave. Allahu ta'aalaa communicates His commandments through the Qur'aan al-kereem to His slaves. In the following lines, I will quote a commandment of Allahu ta'aalaa. It is only an example. This example shows very explicitly how simple and clear the commandments are. The two hundred and sixty-seventh aayat of Baqara sura purports: "O ye who believe! Give of the good things which ye have (honorably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that Allahu ta'aalaa is free of all wants, and worthy of all praise." (2-267) As I read and learned these profound and beautiful commandments of the Qur'aan al-kereem, my soul attained peace and I embraced Islam willingly.

6 Mrs. CECILLA CANNOLY [Rasheeda] (Austrian)

Why did I become a Muslim? Let me tell you sincerely that I became a Muslim without even noticing it myself. For, at a very young age I had already completely lost my confidence in Christianity and had begun to feel apathy towards the Christian religion. I was curious about many religious facts. I was disinclined to believe blindly the creed they were trying to teach me. Why were there three gods? Why had we all come to this world sinful, and why did we have to expiate it? Why could we invoke Allahu ta'aalaa only through a priest? And what were the meanings of all these various signs that we were being shown and the miracles that we were being told? Whenever I asked these questions to the teaching priests, they would become angry and answer, "You cannot inquire about the inner natures of the church's teachings. They are secret. All you have to do is to believe them." And this was another thing that I would never understand. How could one believe something whose essence one did not know? However, in those days I did not dare divulge these thoughts of mine. I am sure that many of today's so-called Christians are of the same opinion as I was; they do not believe most of the religious teachings imposed on them, yet they are afraid to disclose it. The older I became the farther away did I feel from Christianity, finally breaking away from the church once and for all and beginning to wonder whether there was a religion that taught "to worship one single God." My entire conscience and heart told me that there was only one God. Then, when I looked around, the events showed me how meaningless the unintelligible miracles that priests had been trying to teach us, and the absurd stories of saints they had been telling us, were. Didn't everything on the earth, human beings, beasts, forests, mountains, seas, trees, flowers indicate that a great Creator had created them? Wasn't a newly born baby a miracle in itself? On the other hand, the church was striving to indoctrinate the people with the preposterous belief that every newly born

baby was a wretched, sinful creature. No, this was impossible, a lie. Every newly born child was an innocent slave, a creature of Allahu ta'aalaa. It was a miracle, and I believed only in Allah and in the miracles He created. Nothing in the world was inherently sinful, dirty, or ugly. I was of this opinion, when one day my daughter came home with a book written about Islam. My daughter and I sat together and read the book with great attention. O my Allah, the book said exactly as I had been thinking. Islam announced that there is one Allah and informed that people are born as innocent creatures. Until that time I had been entirely ignorant of Islam. In schools Islam was an object of derision. We had been taught that that religion was false and absurd and infused one with sloth, and that Muslims would go to Hell. Upon reading the book, I was plunged into thoughts. To acquire more detailed information about Islam, I visited Muslims living in my town. The Muslims I found opened my eyes. The answers they gave to my questions were so logical that I began to believe that Islam was not a concocted religion as our priests had been asserting, but a true religion of Allahu ta'aalaa. My daughter and I read many other books written about Islam, were fully convinced as to its sublimeness and veracity, and eventually embraced Islam, both of us. I adopted the name 'Rasheeda', and my daughter chose 'Mahmuda' as her new name. As for the second question that you ask me: "What aspect of Islam do you like best?" Here is my answer: What I like best about Islam is the nature of its prayers. In Christianity prayers are said in order to ask for worldly blessings such as wealth, position and honor from Allahu ta'aalaa through Isaa 'alaihis-salaam'. Muslims, in contrast, express their gratitude to Allahu ta'aalaa and they know that as long as they abide by their religion and obey the commandments of Allahu ta'aalaa, Allahu ta'aalaa will give them whatever they need without them asking for it.

7 MUHAMMAD AS'AD LEOPOLD WEISS (Austrian)

(Weiss was born in 1318 [A.D. 1900] in the Lwow city of Austria [in Poland today], visited Arabic countries as a newspaper correspondent when he was twenty-two years old, admired and professed the Islamic religion, then visited all the Islamic countries, including India and Afghanistan, and published his impressions in 'Frankfurter Zeitung', one of the greatest newspapers world over. Weiss worked as the publication director for Frankfurter Zeitung for some time, then, after Pakistan's winning its struggle for liberation, he went to Pakistan with a view to cooperating with that country's government in the establishment of a system of a religious education, and later he was sent to the United States Center to represent Pakistan. He has two books, one entitled 'Islam at Cross-Roads', and the other 'The Way Leading to Mecca'. Recently he has rendered the Qur'aan al-kereem into English. His attempt to write a tafseer (translation of Qur'aan al-kereem) without the indispensably required background in the basic Islamic sciences indicates that he is not in the Madh-hab of Ahl as-sunna and that, consequently, his tafseers and other (religious) writings may be harmful. Wahhaabees and other groups outside (the right way guided by the four) Madh-habs present this ignorant heretic as an Islamic scholar.) The newspapers for which I worked as a correspondent and writer sent me to Asia and Africa in the capacity of 'special correspondent' in 1922. In the beginning, my relations with the Muslims were no more than ordinary relations between two parties of foreigners. However, my long stay in the Islamic countries enabled me to know the Muslims more closely, which in turn made me realize that they had been looking at the world and the events taking place in the world from angles quite dissimilar to those of Europeans. I must acknowledge that their

extremely dignified and composed attitude towards the events, and their approach that was much more humanistic than our own, began to stir up my interest. I was from a fanatical Catholic family. Throughout my childhood I had been inculcated with the belief that Muslims were irreligious people worshiping the devil. When I came into contact with Muslims I realized that they had been lying to me and I decided to study the Islamic religion. I acquired a number of books written on this subject. When I began to read these books with close attention, I saw in amazement how pure and how valuable a religion it was. Yet the manners and behaviors of some Muslims I had been in contact with did not conform to the Islamic principles that I was reading about. First of all, Islam dictated cleanliness, open heartedness, brotherhood, compassion, faithfulness, peace and salvation and, rejecting the Christian doctrine that "men are ever sinful," it substituted it with quite an opposite belief which tolerated "all sorts of worldly pleasures with the proviso that they should not cost someone else's harm and that they should not overflow the free area defined by Islam." But I also met some dirty and mendacious Muslims. To understand the matter better, I began to run an experiment on it, putting myself in the place of a Muslim and adapting myself to the principles I had been reading in the books, and thus examining Islam from within. I came up with the conclusion that the main reason for the increasing degeneration and decline of the Islamic world, which was already on the brink of a collapse, was Muslims' becoming increasingly indifferent towards their religion. As long as Muslims preserved their perfection as true Muslims, they always made progress; and a downfall began the very moment they relaxed their grips of Islam. In actual fact, Islam possesses all the qualifications required for a country's or a nation's progress. It contains all the essentials of civilization. The Islamic religion is both extremely scientific and very practical. The principles it lays down are completely logical, intelligible to everybody, and do not contain one single element that would run counter to knowledge, to science, or to human nature. There is nothing unnecessary in it. The grotesque passages, the sophistries, and the superstitious mysticisms, which are the common properties of other religious books, do not exist in Islam. I discussed these subjects with most Muslims and castigated them, saying, "Why don't you adhere more tightly to this beautiful religion of yours? Why don't you hold fast to it with both hands?" Eventually, in 1344 [A.D. 1926], as I was discussing these matters with a governor in Afghanistan, he said to me, "You have already become a Muslim without you yourself noticing it. Only a true Muslim would defend Islam as earnestly as you are doing now." Upon these words of the governor's a lightning flashed in my brain. When I was back home I plunged into deep thoughts, finally saying to myself, "Yes, I am a Muslim now." Presently I pronounced the statement called Kalima-i-sahaadat.[1] I have been a Muslim ever since. You ask me, "What aspect of Islam attracted you most?" I cannot answer this question, for Islam has penetrated and invaded my entire heart. There is not a specific aspect, therefore, which affected me more than the others did. Everything I had not found in Christianity I found in Islam. I cannot tell what principle of Islam I feel closer to me. I admire each and every one of its principles and essentials. Islam is a gorgeous monument. It is impossible to separate any of its parts from its entirety. All its parts are pivoted, clenched on one another in a certain order. There is a tremendous harmony among the parts. There is not a single part missing. Each and everyone of its parts is in its proper place. Perhaps it was this extremely admirable order which attached me to the Islamic religion. No. What attached me to the Islamic religion was the love I had for it. You know, love is composed of various things: Desire, loneliness, ambition, elevation, zeal for progress and improvement, our weaknesses mixed with our strength and power, the need for someone

to help and protect us, and the like. So I embraced Islam with all my heart and love, and it settled in my heart so as to never leave there again.

8 Dr. 'UMAR ROLF FREIHERR VON EHRENFELS (Austrian)

(Rolf Freiherr (baron) von Ehrenfels is the only son of Prof. Dr. Baron Christian Ehrenfels, who is known as the founder of Gestalt psychology all over the world. He belongs to a well-known family. He was only a small child when he felt a growing concern for the orient and began to study the Islamic religion. His sister Imma von Rodmesrhof writes about this inclination of her brother's in detail in a book of hers, which was published in Lahore in 1953. At a very young age, Rolf traveled in Turkey, in Albania, in Greece, and in Yugoslavia, and joined prayers in mosques although he was a Christian. Eventually, the warm feelings of closeness that he had been harboring towards Islam resulted in his embracing Islam in 1927, from then on he chose the name 'Umar for himself. In 1932 he visited India, and published a book entitled 'The Place of Woman in Islam'. When the Germans invaded Austria during the Second World War, Rolf fled to India. Accepted and supported by Akbar Haydar, he carried on anthropological studies in Assam, was appointed as a professor of anthropology for the University of Madras in 1949, and was awarded with a gold medal by the 'Royal Asiatic Society', which was located in Bengal. His books were also published in the Urdu language.) You ask me why I became a Muslim. In the following lines I shall give an account of the factors that formed the cause of my becoming a Muslim and realizing that Islam is a true religion: 1) Islam contains the good aspects of all the world's religions known to us. All religions are intended for men's living in peace and tranquility. Yet no other religion has managed to teach it to people as explicitly as Islam does. No other religion has been successful in imbuing with such deep love towards our Creator and towards brothers of the same faith. 2) Islam enjoins a perfect submission to Allahu ta'aalaa in a mood of peace and tranquility. 3) A retrospective look into history will automatically expose the fact that the Islamic religion is the final true, heavenly religion and that no other religion will appear. 4) Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam', who communicated the Qur'aan al-kereem, is the final prophet. 5) It is doubtless that a person who enters the Islamic religion will automatically have separated himself from his former religion. Yet this separation is not so big as it may be anticipated. The tenets of belief are the same in all the heavenly religions. Qur'aan al-kereem acknowledges the heavenly religions before itself. Yet it rectifies the wrong beliefs inserted into these religions afterwards, exposes the religion of Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' in its essential form, and declares that Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' is the final prophet and that no prophet will come after him. In other words, Islam is the true and perfect form of other religions. Various clashes of interests and contrasting ambitions have made men inimical towards one another. And this animosity, in its turn, has been exploited by other people, who have tried to change religions into rival camps and thus to build their worldly advantages on religions, which, in actual fact, are essentially paths guiding to knowing Allahu ta'aalaa. In fact, it takes a little alertness to see that the Islamic religion acknowledges the other heavenly religions and that it purifies them of the human interpolations that they had been subjected to in the course of time. To accept Islam, therefore, means to render a spiritual and material service which is needed by all people, men and women alike. 6) In no other religion has the concept of brotherhood among people been stated so expressly as it has been in Islam. All Muslims, regardless of their race, nation, color and language, are brothers of one another. Whatever their political

views are, they are brothers of one another. No other religion possesses this beauty. 7) Islam is a religion which gives women great rights. The Islamic religion has allotted women the most proper place. Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’ stated, ”Paradise is beneath a mothers’ feet.” The Islamic religion respected the works of art made by people of other religions, and did not demolish them like barbars. As they were building mosques like Fatih and Sultan Ahmad (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul, they did not feel averse to modeling some of their architecture after that of Saint Sophia. Throughout history, Muslims have displayed greatest justice and mercy towards people of other religions. For reasons such as these, I chose Islam for my faith.

9 THOMAS IRVING (Canadian)

To tell you why I became a Muslim, I have to explain what I felt before and after embracing Islam, my first contact with Islam and the faith that it inspired into me. First of all, let me tell you that thousands of Canadians and Americans think exactly as I used to think before becoming a Muslim; they have the same feeling of dissatisfaction; and they are awaiting the scholars of Ahl as-sunna who will teach them the essence of Islam. As I was a child, I held fast to my faith, Christianity, with both hands. For I needed a religion to feed my soul. However, as I grew older, I began to see a number of faults in Christianity. The stories told about the life of Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ and his being the son of God, -may Allahu ta’alaa protect us against saying so,- sounded like superstitious tales to me. My personal logic would never accept them. I began to ask myself questions, such as, ”If Christianity is the true religion, why are there so many non-Christians in the World?” ”Why do Jews and Christians share the same basic religious book and differ in other respects?” ”Why are non-Christians doomed to perdition though they have no other apparent faults?” ”Why do many nations choose not to become Christians?” It was in those days when I met a missionary who had been serving in India. He complained to me, ”Muslims are very obstinate. They insist that the true religion is Islam, and not Christianity. So all my efforts to Christianize them end up in failure.” These statements were at the same time the first definition I had heard of Islam. A sensation of curiosity towards Islam, seasoned with a high degree of admiration for Muslims who had been so staunchly attached to their religion, began to blossom in my heart. I felt that I should observe Islam more closely, and began to attend lectures on ‘Oriental Literature’ in the university. I saw that what the oriental people had been rejecting in our belief was the doctrine of ‘trinity’, and that they accepted the belief of ‘One God’, which was perfectly agreeable with common sense. It was certain that Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ had announced his religion as one based on belief in One God, and himself as a mere born slave and Messenger of that One God. The God he had mentioned should be a merciful God. Nevertheless, that beautiful and true belief had been smothered with meaningless legends, superstitions and heresies inserted into Christianity by idolaters, and the pure belief in the One Merciful, Compassionate God had been adulterated into a tripartite godhood, which was accessible only to priests and which, so to speak, created mankind with a share from the original sin. Then, a new religion with a new prophet was necessary to restore the humanity with that pure and intact belief in One God. Europe, on the other hand, was awash in semi-barbaric cruelty in those days. As savage tribes were invading countries, on the one hand, a small minority was perpetrating all sorts of vices under the mask of religion, on the other. The human race was moaning desperately under the talons of idolatry and irreligiousness, when, [according to historians], seven centuries after Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, in the

oriental horizons, there rose Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ‘alaihi wa sallam’, the final Prophet of Allahu ta’alaa, and he began to communicate to people the true religion of the true God, which was based on belief in One God. When I read and learned all these facts, I believed in the fact that Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ‘alaihi wa sallam’ was the final true Messenger of Allahu ta’alaa, because: 1) As I have said above, people needed a new prophet; 2) All my thoughts concerning Allahu ta’alaa conformed with the religion spread by that great Prophet ‘sall-Allahu ta’alaa ‘alaihi wa sallam’; 3) As soon as I read the Qur’aan al-kereem, I sensed that it was the Word of Allahu ta’alaa. The facts communicated by the Qur’aan al-kereem and the hadeeth-i-shereefs [utterances] of Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ta’alaa ‘alaihi wa sallam’ satisfied me in every respect and infused a sense of peace into my soul. And this is the reason why I became a Muslim. You can be sure that, as I have already said, thousands of Americans and Canadians sense the same deficiencies and errors in Christianity. Sad to say, though, they have not had the same chance I had to do a thorough research into the Islamic religion; they need a guide. After attaining that belief in Islam, I embarked on a study of the books published about Islam. I would like to touch upon a few of the works that I could recommend in this connection. An Indian well-wisher sent me a book captioned ‘What Is Islam?’, written by Q.A. Jairazby H.W. Lovlegrove. I would specially recommend the book. It is a book that describes Islam in the best way. Spreading the book world over would be a useful service for the promulgation of Islam. I read an English version of Qur’aan al-kereem rendered by Maulvi Muhammad Alee, and I liked it. In addition, I read some other books, and I did not neglect magazines publicizing Islam. In Montreal, I found many works published in French about Islam. Some of them praised Islam, while others were intended against it. But Islam’s greatness could not be buried even under books written for the purpose of reviling it. Instead, they were no more than other sources of evidence corroborating for me the fact that Islam is the true religion.

WARNING: We, Waqf Ikhlas Foundation, publishers of this book, have prepared books in English, in French, in German, and in other languages for the purpose of rendering a service to those virtuous people who wish to learn Islam correctly. Each and every one of these books is a compilation of knowledge borrowed from works written by great and true Islamic scholars. Names of those works are appended to some of our books. They are mailed out on request immediately by Hakikat Kitabevi, whose address is printed on the front page of this book. We believe that, if a reasonable person reads these books with due attention, no matter who he is, he will develop a sincere belief in the Islamic religion and will become a Muslim willingly. For the Islamic religion is a composition of credal and canonical principles that would receive a cordial welcome from people of common sense. People with a poor sense, psychotics, libertines and egoists cannot recognize or appreciate the Islamic religion.

10 Dr. BENOIST [ALI SALMAN] (French)

I am a doctor and I come from a fanatically Catholic family. Yet my vocational choice, medicine, provided me a career in positive, experimental, and natural sciences, which in turn caused me to develop a growing hatred against Christianity. With respect to religion, I was at complete loggerheads with the other members of my family. Yes, there was a great Creator, and I believed in Him, i.e. Allahu ta’alaa. Yet the absurdities concocted by Christians, especially by Catholics, various mysterious gods, sons, holy ghosts, the preposterous fibs fabricated for the purpose of proving that Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ is the son of God, a myriad of other superstitions, ceremonies and rites pushed

me away from Christianity, instead of attracting me towards it. Because I held the belief in one God, I would never accept trinity, nor would I by any means recognize Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ as the son of God. That means to say that, long before knowing of Islam, I had already accepted the initial half of the Kalima-i-Shahaadat, i.e. the part that says, ”Laa ilaaha il’l’Allah... (There is no God but Allah...)” When I began to study the Islamic religion and read the Ikhlas Sura of Qur’aan al-kereem, which purported, ”Lo; Allahu ta’alaa is One. He is not begotten, nor does He beget. There is no being bearing any likeness to Him,” I said, ”O my Allah. My belief is exactly the same.” I felt immense relief. I realized that it was of paramount importance to study Islam more deeply. And as I studied Islam I saw with admiration that this religion was completely agreeable with my ideas. Islam looked on religious men, and even on prophets ‘alaihim-us-salawaat’, as ordinary people like us; it did not divinize them. Giving a priest authority to forgive people’s sins was something which Islam would never accept. The Islamic religion did not contain any superstitions, any irrational rules, or any unintelligible subjects. The Islamic religion was a logical one, exactly as I wanted. Contrary to the Catholics, it did not smudge human beings with the consequences of the so-called original sin. It enjoined physical and spiritual cleanliness on human beings. Cleanliness, which is an essential principle in medicine, was in Islam a commandment of Allahu ta’alaa. Islam commanded to clean oneself before acts of worship, and that was a quality which I had never seen in any other religion. In some Christian rites, such as Baptism and the Eucharist, people consume the bread and wine offered by the priest in the name of the flesh and blood of Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, which is intended, so to speak, as a simulated unity with Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, i.e. with God, [may Allahu ta’alaa protect us from holding such beliefs!]. I saw the resemblance between these rites and those of the most primitive heathens, and hated them. My mind, which had improved under the guidance of positive science, vehemently rejected these puerile rites which did not suit to a true religion. Islam, on the other hand, did not accommodate any of those things. There was only truth, love, and cleanliness in Islam. Eventually, I made up my mind. I visited my Muslim friends and asked them what I should do to become a Muslim. They taught me the (statement called) Kalima-i-Shahaadat, how to say it and what it meant. As I have mentioned earlier, before becoming a Muslim, I had accepted its first half, i.e. the part that meant, ”There is no God but Allah,...” It was not difficult, therefore, to accept the remaining part, which said: ”... and Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’ is His (born slave and) Messenger.” I was now studying momentous books written about the Islamic religion. When I read one of them, namely, ‘Le Phene Coranique’, a very lovely book prepared by Malak Bannaabee, I saw with amazement and admiration what a tremendous book Qur’aan al-kereem was. The facts written in that book of Allah which was revealed fourteen centuries before now are in precise conformance with the results of today’s scientific and technological research. Both from scientific and technological points of view and with respect to sociological activities, the Qur’aan al-kereem is a guide book not only today, but also forever. On the twentieth day of February, 1953, I went to the Paris mosque and accepted Islam officially in the presence of Mufti Efendi and the witnesses, and I was given the name Alee Salmaan. I love this new religion of mine. I am very happy and I emphasize the firmness of my belief in Islam by frequently saying the (statement called) Kalima-i-Shahaadat and pondering over its meaning.

11 CAPTAIN (JACQUES) COUSTEAU (French)

[In France Islam has been spreading at a high velocity among people who have made fame in various areas. The number of people who have abandoned Christianity and chosen Islam have reached one hundred thousand already. This score has been confirmed by the Archbishop of Paris, the highest Catholic rank in France. It is noteworthy that people who have preferred Islam are not only from among workers and civil servants but also from among people renowned in every respect. Among people who have chosen Islam is Captain Cousteau, whom the whole world closely knows for his explorations about life under water. As the groundswell of embracing Islam was spreading among France's universal celebrities, Captain Cousteau, the world's most eminent undersea explorer, announced that by accepting Islam he had made the most correct decision of his life. Captain Cousteau, who has revealed the secrets of oceans one by one with the films that he made and which are being televised world over in a program sub-headed The Living Sea, said that what actually prompted him to choose the Islamic religion was, after observing that the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean did not mix with each other, his seeing that the same phenomenon was written in the Qur'aan al-kereem which had been revealed fourteen hundred years before.] Captain Cousteau told of the event that had caused him to become a Muslim, as follows: "In 1962 German scientists said that the waters of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean did not mix with each other in the Strait of Baab-ul-Mandab where the Aden Bay and the Red Sea join. So we began to examine whether the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean mixed with each other. First we analyzed the water in the Mediterranean to find out its natural salinity and density, and the life it contained. We repeated the same procedure in the Atlantic Ocean. The two masses of water had been meeting each other in the Gibraltar for thousands of years. Accordingly, the two masses of water must have been mixing with each other and they must have been sharing identical, or, at least, similar properties in salinity and density. On the contrary, even at places where the two seas were closest to each other, each mass of water preserved its properties. In other words, at the point where the two seas met, a curtain of water prevented the waters belonging to the two seas from mixing. When I told Professor Maurice Bucaille about this phenomenon, he said that it was no surprise and that it was written clearly in Islam's Holy Book, the Qur'aan al-kereem. Indeed, this fact was defined in a plain language in the Qur'aan al-kereem. When I knew this, I believed in the fact that the Qur'aan al-kereem was the 'Word of Allah'. I chose Islam, the true religion. The spiritual potency inherent in the Islamic religion gave me the strength to endure the pain I had been suffering for the loss of my son."

12 MUHAMMAD EMIN HOBOHN (German)

(Muhammad Emin Hobohn is both a diplomat and a missionary. He is a man of knowledge and religion with a social career:) Why are Europeans abandoning their religion and becoming Muslims? It has various reasons. Among them is the 'Haqq=Truth; Right; Reality'. The principles that Islam is based on are so logical, so true and honest that it is out of the question for a wise and educated person seeking for truth and reality in a religion not to accept them. For instance, the Islamic religion professes the existence of one god. It appeals to the human common sense, and never descends to inculcating people with superstitions. The Islamic religion states that people all over the world, regardless of their races, are the born slaves of Allahu ta'aalaa, equal and similar. We German people essentially believe in the fact that Allahu ta'aalaa is a

great creator who gives us power and energy and who guides our souls to perfection. The concept of Allah infuses security and peace into us. Yet the Christian religion falls short of giving us this sense of peace. It is the Islamic religion, alone, that teaches us the greatness of Allahu ta'aalaa and which, at the same time, guides us in regard to where the human soul will go after death. The Islamic religion guides us not only in the world, but also in the Hereafter. It teaches in a plain and logical manner what should be done in the world in preparation for a comfortable life in the Hereafter. An awareness of the fact that Allahu ta'aalaa will subject human beings to an equitable interrogation in the Hereafter on what they have done in the world, will urge them that they should abide by justice and integrity in the world. For this reason, true Muslims never attempt to do something before thinking well and being firmly convinced that what they are going to do is really something useful. Thereby this great religion establishes control over human beings in such a degree as could be managed by no worldly police organization, and permanently keeps them on the right way. Another aspect that makes Islam an attractive choice in the eyes of Europeans is its norms of worship. The namaaz (the five daily ritual prayers) teaches punctuality to people, and fasting drills a strong sense of will power into them. What other factor could be as essential to success in life as punctuality and determination? Great men owe their accomplishments only to these two determinants. Now I come to a most beautiful aspect of the Islamic religion: While educating people in the ethical and humanistic areas in the most logical styles, the Islamic religion never compels them beyond their capacities. On the contrary, it offers them many opportunities to lead a prosperous and comfortable life. Allahu ta'aalaa wishes people to live in comfort and happiness. To this end, He commands people not to commit sins. Muslims believe that they are perpetually in the presence of Allahu ta'aalaa. They avoid committing sins. Neither in the other religions nor in any of the systems established in Europe is there another arrangement as lovely or as useful as this. I have been to many places and districts of the world on diplomatic and religious missions. I have studied other religions and social systems minutely. I have seen neither a religion nor a social system as faultless or as immaculate as Islam. At first sight, communism may seem to be a correct system of thoughts. Likewise, the western-born democracy, which has been looked on as the most capacious administration system in worldly matters, and Nazism may contain some factual aspects. And then none of these aspects is complete in itself. All of them have a number of deficiencies. The one and only perfect and faultless system is Islam. It is for this reason that many a person with common sense and perfect reasoning accepts Islam without any hesitation. And so did I. Islam is a practical religion, not a theoretical one. Islam means submission to Allahu ta'aalaa, who is compassionate and forgiving and who always shows the right way. What on earth could be more beautiful?

13 Dr. HAMID MARCUS (German)

(Dr. Marcus is a renowned man of ideas, a writer, and the founder of a magazine, i.e. the magazine entitled Berlind Moslemische Revue.) I was only a child when I took an interest in Islam and began to collect information about Islam. In the library of my hometown I came across an old translation of Qur'aan al-kereem that had been printed in 1164 [1750 C.E.]. According to a narrative, Goethe had read the same translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem during his research on the Islamic religion and had expressed his admiration for the book. As I read the Qur'aan al-kereem, I was deeply impressed by its

exceedingly logical and fascinating style of expression that penetrated deep into the soul. How genuine and useful the principles formulated by Islam were, was manifest in the fact that nations honored with Islam had been attaining the zenith of civilization in a very short time. When I left my hometown and went to Berlin, I made friends with all the Muslims living there, joined them and attended with rapt attention the interesting and instructive conferences held by the members of the Islamic Mission. The more friendly I became with the members of the Islamic Mission, the more closely was I able to examine Islam. After a while I reached the conclusion that Islam was the true religion I had been aspiring after, believed in it, and accepted Islam. According to Islam, Allah is One, and belief in One Creator is Islam's most sacred credal tenet. The Islamic religion does not contain any irrational or unbelievable tenet. There is not a creator besides Allahu ta'aalaa. In Islam you cannot find a single dot disagreeable with or contradictory to modern sciences. All its commandments and inculcations are entirely logical and useful. In Islam, belief and logic do not contradict each other, which is the common blemish of other religions. Consequently, for a person like me who has dedicated all his life-time to natural sciences, what could be more natural than preferring Islam, which is in full conformity with the scientific results that he obtained from his lucubrations, to the other religions that are quite the other way round? Another reason I feel compelled to add is that the other religions are awash in a score of grotesque and ridiculous ideas that suggest only a far-fetched mood of spirituality. They have nothing to do with real life situations. Islam, on the other hand, is a practical religion which guides man also in his trek of life. Commandments of the Islamic religion lead a person to the right way not only in the Hereafter, but also in the world, and, in the meanwhile, they never restrict his freedom. As a Muslim I have been studying my religion for many years. In every new situation I see even more clearly how perfect a religion it is, and this in its turn gives me all the more mental peace. How exquisite a passageway it is that Islam lays between the individual and the social life! Islam arranges these two lives. Islam is a religion of perfect justice and its sole aim is to guide people to the good end. Islam embodies all the good aspects of all the world's social trends.

14 Mrs. AMINA MOSLER (German)

Why did I become a Muslim? My son was asking me various questions, and I was unable to answer them. When he asked me, for instance, "Mummy, why are there three gods?" I was at a loss as to what to say because I myself did not believe in trinity, and yet I could not find another answer to convince him. Eventually, it was sometime during the year 1346 [C.E. 1928], and my son had reached a maturer age, when, one day, my son came to me, his eyes welling up with tears. He begged, "Mummy, I have been studying Islam. They believe in one creator. Their religion is the truest one. So I have decided to become a Muslim. Join me!" Upon his request, I, too, began to study the Islamic religion. I went to the Berlin mosque. The imaam of the mosque gave me a cordial welcome and told me the essentials of Islam. As he spoke, I saw how right and logical his words were. Like my son, I, too, began to believe in the fact that Islam was the truest religion. First of all, Islam rejected trinity, which I had never been able to understand or accept since my youth. After examining Islam thoroughly, I realized the absurdity of such things as redemption, looking on the pope as an innocent being never prone to sin, baptism and many other rites of the same sort, I rejected all these falsities and embraced Islam. All my ancestors were fanatical Catholics. I was raised in a

Catholic monastery. I grew up totally under Christian education. Yet this sheer religious education that I had received helped me to choose the true religion that would guide me to Allahu ta'aalaa. For, all the good things that I had been taught throughout my education I found not in Christianity, but in Islam. I am so lucky to have accepted Islam. Today I am a grandmother. I am so happy because my grandchild has been born as a Muslim. I know that Allahu ta'aalaa will always guide those people whom He has brought to the right way.

15 Hadji LORD AL-FAR Q HEADLEY (G.B.)

(Lord Headley possessed the title of excellency. Sir George Allanson was born in 1855 and descended from the oldest British family. He occupied very important political positions in Britain, and at the same time made fame as an editor. He graduated from Cambridge University. In 1877 he won the title of Lord. He served as a lieutenant colonel in the British army. He was an engineer by vocation, but a powerful writer by avocation. Among his publications, his work entitled ‘A European’s Eyes Are Being Opened And He Is Becoming A Muslim’. Lord Headley became a Muslim in 1913, performed Hajj (the Islamic pilgrimage), and adopted the name Shaikh Rahmatullah Faaruq. In 1928 he visited India.) Why did I become a Muslim? Perhaps, some of my friends and acquaintances are of the opinion that I became a Muslim as a result of persuasion on the part of my friends and acquaintances. But it is not the fact. My accepting Islam was the result of long-time research and contemplation. It was after a meticulous examination and forming an opinion about Islam that I made contact with Muslims and, seeing that their belief in their own religion was in conformity with mine, I realized and became happy that I had entered into a good religion. The Qur'aan al-kareem commands that a person should accept Islam after his heart's full confirmation, rejects a conversion under coercion. Likewise, Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ said to his Apostles, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. ...” (Mark: 6-11) During my former life-time, I had seen many bigoted Protestants. They would go to Catholic student hostels and try to force the Catholic students. These unwanted efforts and coercive attempts would cause various fights, offenses and controversies and would sow discord among people. The same meaningless methods Christian missionaries used with Muslims. They ran all sorts of risks for the purpose of Christianizing Muslims. They resorted to all sorts of stratagems to trap Muslims. They promised them money, work, and posts. Those poor ignoramuses did not know that Islam was the religion where the commandments of Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ found the best practice and confirmation. Christianity has been defiled, to the extent that the real Nazarene religion communicated by Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ has been lost completely, and the tenets of humanity he preached have been forgotten. These things exist in Islam today. Then, by becoming a Muslim, I have also attained the Nazarene religion in its pristine purity. Principles commanded by Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, such as brotherhood, solidarity, good will, generosity and others, are observed not by Christians, but by Muslims today. Let me give you an example; The Christian sect of Athanasians insistently inculcates the tenet that Christianity is based on a belief in three gods (trinity), that a slightest doubt as to this belief will lead one to immediate perdition, and that a person who wishes to attain salvation in this world and the next should definitely hold a belief in the three gods, i.e. ‘God, the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost’. Another example: When I became a

Muslim, I received a letter. It said, "By becoming a Muslim you have damned yourself to perdition. No one can save you. For you deny the divinity of God." The poor man thought that I no longer believed in Allahu ta'aalaa. According to his belief, the divinity of Allahu ta'aalaa depended on trinity. The idiot did not know that when Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' had begun to preach the pure Nazarene religion, he had stated the unity of Allahu ta'aalaa, and he had never claimed to be His son. Islam, by expressing that "There is only one Allah," rediscovered the original essence of Nazarene religion. Today, nothing could be as logical as a sane person's believing in the existence of one Allah. By becoming a Muslim, I believe in one real Allah and reject all the fibs that were inserted into the pure religion of Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' afterwards. The person who wrote me that letter and the other people who share his ideas are only pitiable. Day by day Christians are abandoning their religion and becoming atheists. For today's Christianity is no longer satisfactory for a normal and cultured person. People refuse a blind belief in superstitions and entertain doubts about the Christian creeds. On the other hand, all through my life-time so far, I have never heard of a Muslim feeling doubts about his faith. For the Islamic religion satisfies all the spiritual and physical needs of human beings in the most perfect and rational manner. A fact I am positive about is that thousands of Christians, men and women alike, have examined Islam and have already identified themselves with Islam intrinsically. However, for the fear that they might lose their jobs or posts in case they officially announced their choice of Islam, or lest they should arouse derision on the part of their friends, they do not dare to become Muslims. In our schools Islam is still being taught as the religion of people who do not believe in Allahu ta'aalaa. Running the risk of being cursed as 'a man with a damned soul' by all my friends and acquaintances, I embraced Islam, and for twenty years I have been holding fast to Islam with both hands. After giving this brief account of why I chose Islam, let me add that by becoming a Muslim I managed also to become a more true and pure follower of Isaa 'alaihis-salaam'. I wish to be an example for other Christians. Choosing Islam will not make them enemies of Christianity, but, on the contrary, it will teach them the true Isaawee religion, and it will raise them to a higher level.

16 ABDULLAH ARCHIBALD HAMILTON (G.B.)

(Sir Archibald Hamilton, a well-known British diplomat, served as a naval officer during the First World War. Coming from a widely known family, he possesses the title of baronet, (which means a candidate baron). He was honored with becoming a Muslim in 1923.) Since reaching the age of puberty, I had been allured by Islam's simplicity and crystalline limpidity. I had been born as a Christian and I had been given a Christian education. Yet I had never believed in wrong credal tenets, and I had always preferred truth, right and reason to blind beliefs. I had been aspiring to worship one Allah sincerely and with a peaceful heart. Yet, both the Roman Catholic Church and the English Protestant Church had been short of serving this pure intention of mine. It was for these reasons that I answered the call of my conscience and accepted Islam, which satisfied me fully, and only after that did I begin to feel myself as a true and better born slave of Allahu ta'aalaa. Sad to say, various Christians and ignorant people have misrepresented Islam as a religion of falsities and concoctions that are intended to induce torpor into the humanity. But the fact is that it is the only true religion in the sight of Allahu ta'aalaa. Islam is a perfect religion which brings about unity between the powerful and the weak as well as between the rich and the poor. Economically, there are two main classes of people. The first class contains people whom Allahu ta'aalaa has

blessed with worldly riches. The second class is made up of those who have to work for a living. There is yet another class. People in this class live in utter destitution because they cannot earn enough, because they have lost their jobs, or because they can no longer work, none of which cases is their fault. Islam enables all these three classes to come together in a harmonized society. It commands the rich to help the poor. It provides a social setting where humiliations and afflictions are extirpated. The Islamic religion lays emphasis also on personal abilities, efforts and skills. According to the Islamic jurisprudence, if a poor peasant, for instance, cultivates an ownerless piece of land on his own for a certain length of time, the land becomes his personal property. The Islamic religion is not destructive, but it is restorative. The Islamic religion prohibits gambling and all the other vicious and deleterious games. The Islamic religion prohibits also all sorts of intoxicants. Indeed, the majority of afflictions people suffer in the world are caused by gambling or alcohol. We Muslims are not people who hold the belief that everything is a slave in the hands of destiny. Destiny in the Islamic sense does not mean to sit idly with your mouth opened in the celestial direction and to expect that Allahu ta'aalaa will give you everything. On the contrary, Allahu ta'aalaa enjoins work in the Qur'aan al-kereem. Man should do his best and hold fast to all the apparent causes; only after that will he put his trust in Allahu ta'aalaa. Not without working, but while working, should he beg Allahu ta'aalaa to help him for success and earning. The Islamic credal tenet which says that "Good and evil come from Allahu ta'aalaa" means, "Allahu ta'aalaa is the Creator of all." Islam does not contain a tenet encouraging people to idle away their time. Destiny means Allahu ta'aalaa's knowing in the eternal past all the events that will take place and His creating everything when the time in His knowledge comes. Islam never accepts a credo based on the belief that human beings are originally sinful, that they are born with sins, or that they have to expiate their sins throughout their lives. Islam states that human beings are the born slaves of Allahu ta'aalaa, men and women alike, and that with respect to mental and moral qualities the two sexes are not very different from each other. Only, because men are more powerful and stronger by creation, onerous and tiresome duties such as supporting the family have been given to them, while women have been blessed with a more comfortable, more cheerful and happier life. I do not want to say much on how Islam establishes brotherhood among all Muslims. For the entire world knows how Muslims love and help one another. In Islam all people, the rich, the poor, the nobles, villagers, civil servants, workers, merchants, are equal in the presence of Allahu ta'aalaa, and they are brothers. Throughout my travels in the Muslim countries, I felt as if I had been in my own home and among my brothers, wherever I went. A final remark I would like to add is this: Islam invites people both to work honestly all the day long and to carry on his acts of worship, his duties as a born slave to Allahu ta'aalaa. Today's Christianity, on the other hand, induces into people a life style consisting in Masses in the name of worship only on Sundays and a complete oblivion of Allahu ta'aalaa covered with worldly occupations and sins throughout the rest of the week. It was for these reasons that I became a Muslim, and I am proud of having become a Muslim.

17 JALALEDDIN LAUDER BRUNTON (G.B.)

(Sir Brunton, who comes from an eminent family and who possesses the title of Baronet, graduated from the Oxford University and made fame with his publications.) I am grateful to you for giving me the chance to explain why I became a Muslim. I grew up under the influence of Christian parents. Theology was one of the subjects that I was

interested in when I was young. I met some missionaries and closely concerned myself with the activities they had been carrying on in foreign countries. My heart felt like helping them. Without being officially appointed, I joined them in their journeys. To say the truth, although I had taken religious lessons, the Christian theory that "People come to this world in a sinful state and they therefore must be sure to expiate," sounded bizarre to me. For this reason, I was gradually developing hatred against Christianity. I could not tolerate the idea that Allahu ta'aalaa, with all His infinite power to create anything He wished, would have to create only sinful creatures, which would run counter to His almighty and compassion, and I therefore harbored doubts as to the genuineness of a religion that described Allahu ta'aalaa as such. These doubts developed into curiosity about the instructions that the other religions gave in this respect, and consequently I decided to examine the other religions as well. My heart was innerly craving for a just, merciful and compassionate god, and I was looking for such a creator, i.e. Allah. I was wondering whether that was the real Nazarene religion that Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' had brought. Or had the pure religion preached by him been polluted in the process of time? The more I thought about these, the stronger did the doubts in my heart become, so much so that more often than not I would pick up today's current Holy Bible, delve into the book, and at each time find more deficiencies and unintelligible discourses. Eventually, I reached the conclusion that that book was not the genuine Holy Book revealed to Isaa 'alaihis-salaam'. People had made a myriad of wrong accessions into the Bible, thus turning the pure heavenly book into an irreparable mixture of facts and fictions. Having reached an absolute conviction as to this fact, I substituted Bible-reading with other sorts of preaching to the people that I met during the journeys I was making with the missionaries. Instead of mentioning their fictitious theory of 'God, the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost', for instance, I would inculcate the facts such as that when man died his soul would not die, that human beings were created by a great creator, that this great creator would punish men both in this world and in the next on account of their sins, and that this great creator, being extremely compassionate, would forgive men their sins in case they repented for their wrongdoings. As days went by, my belief in the unity of Allah developed into an absolute conviction. In order to penetrate into the inner nature of truth, I tried to dive deeper and deeper into the subject. It was sometime during these efforts that I began to study the Islamic religion. This religion magnetized me so strongly that I dedicated my entire day to studying it. I happened to domicile myself in a forlorn Indian village, called Ichra, which was rather far from the urban areas and whose name almost no one knew. The inhabitants of this village belonged to a very poor and destitute caste. Only for the sake of Allahu ta'aalaa, I was trying to teach them the existence of a single and compassionate creator and the right way they ought to follow in this worldly life. I was also striving to inculcate into them such notions as religious brotherhood and cleanliness. So strange to say, all these notions I was doing my best to teach them existed in Islam, not in Christianity, and I was preaching them not as a Christian missionary, but like a Muslim religious man. I am not going to enlarge on the details of the great efforts I made, the degree of self-sacrifice I achieved, or the severe difficulties I faced in that lonely and desolate village, among those unenlightened people. My only concern was to guide them to spiritual and physical cleanliness and to teach them the existence of a great creator. Whenever I was on my own, I would study the life of Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam'. Very few books had been written in English to reflect the facts about his life, yet no effort had been spared on the part of Christians to criticize and vilify that great Prophet and to incriminate him with lying. However, I was now able to study Islam fairly, without being influenced by

those books that had been written under inimical motives. During the course of my studies, I came to the full realization that it was a definite fact that Islam was a true religion in which the concept of Allah and reality became manifest in its clearest identity. Once you had been informed on the services which the great Prophet Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ta’alaa ‘alaihi wa sallam’ had rendered for the good of humanity, it would be impossible for you to deny his prophethood. Definitely, he was the Messenger of Allahu ta’alaa. As a blessing of Allahu ta’alaa, he, alone, and in a very short time, transformed the Arabs from a mass of heathens who had been living in utter savagery and nescience, worshiping many idols, believing in superstitions, leading a bestial, semi-naked, and overwhelmingly polygamous life, into a civilized, morally upright and clean nation whose members were now believing in Allahu ta’alaa, observing women’s rights, and always trying to be good-natured and genial. A person never could have managed such a job without the blessing or help of Allahu ta’alaa. As I thought about the strenuous efforts I put forth in that tiny village whose population was only one or two hundred, and how I still could not bring those wretched people to the right course, my admiration for the work accomplished by Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ta’alaa ‘alaihi wa sallam’ grew all the greater. No. Something as great as that could be accomplished only by the Messenger of Allahu ta’alaa. One ought to believe in his prophethood with all one’s heart. I do not want to make mention of all the other so many even much more beautiful facts about the Islamic religion. For, by acknowledging the existence of Allahu ta’alaa and the prophethood of Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’, a person has already become a Muslim. One of those days an Indian Muslim visited me. That polite person’s name was Mian Amiruddeen. We had a long conversation on the Islamic religion. That conversation was the decisive encouragement, and I accepted Islam. I believe in the fact that Islam is the true religion of Allah, in its simplicity, forgivingness, compassionateness and sincerity, in that it establishes brotherhood among people, and in that one day it will unite the entire world. I have reached the last stage of my life, and from now on I have dedicated myself to the service of Islam.

18 Prof. Baron HAR N MUSTAFA LEON (G.B.)

(Prof. Baron Leon comes from a prominent British family and possesses the title of Baron. He owns a Ph. D. and other scientific titles. He became a Muslim in 1882. He had memberships in numerous scientific societies in Europe and America. Prof. Leon, who was a great authority especially in the linguistic and literary sciences, sprang into the universal limelight with his publication that was called ‘Ethimology of the Human Lexion’. Upon this publication, the Potomac University of America gave him the degree of M.S. Prof. Leon is at the same time an expert geologist. He was invited by many famous institutions and gave conferences of these areas. He was elected as the Secretary General for the Societe Internationale de Philologie=International Society of Philology, Science and Fine Arts, which had been founded in 1875. He began to publish a magazine titled (The Philomeths). He was awarded with various medals by the Ottoman Sultan Abd-ul-hameed II, by the Shah of Iran, and by the Emperor of Austria.) One of the most perfect essentials of the Islamic religion is that it never demands of Muslims to act against reason. Islam is a religion whose teachings are quite reasonable and perfectly logical. The other religions, on the other hand, force people to accept the tenets of creed that they can never understand, believe or find logical. In Christianity the church is the only authority in this respect. Contrariwise, Muslims are commanded to believe in anything only after mentally examining it (and finding it logical). Muhammad ‘alaihis-

salaam' states, "Allahu ta'aalaa has not created anything irrational or illogical." He states in another hadeeth-i-shereef, "I tell you with certainty that even if a person performs (his daily prayers of) namaaz (regularly), fasts, pays (the prescribed alms called) zakaat, goes on hajj (Muslim's pilgrimage to Mekka), and carries out all the other commandments of Islam, he shall be rewarded in proportion to the degree of his using the mind and logic Allahu ta'aalaa has endowed on him." The pure religion preached by Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' also contained similar rules. For instance, 'First try everything! Accept only the good one.' Yet, these rules were forgotten in the course of time. The fifth aayat-i-kereema of Sura-t-ul-Jum'a of Qur'aan al-kereem purports, "Those people who have been enjoined to learn the Torah and to adapt themselves to it, and yet who do not obey it, are reminiscent of an ass with a load of books on its back." Alee 'radiy-Allahu 'anh' states, "The world is dark. Knowledge is a nur (light)! However, knowledge which is not correct is obscurity." Muslims hold the belief that "Islam is the very truth itself," and they state that Islam's light shines only with the energy it gets from knowledge and logic, that this knowledge ensues only from truth, and that truth, in its turn, is discovered by men owing to the common sense, which is a blessing Allahu ta'aalaa has conferred upon them. The last Prophet of Allahu ta'aalaa, Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam', who is the greatest blessing Allahu ta'aalaa has sent to humanity, showed them the path that they were to follow. It was during his final days (in this world), when the following incident took place: It was a couple of days before Muhammad's 'alaihis-salaam' passing away, and he was resting, half conscious, his head on the knees of Aisha 'radiy-Allahu ta'aalaa 'anhah', his beloved wife. All the people of Medina were desperately sad about Rasulullah's illness, which enervated him day by day and against which they were helpless. Men, women, children were crying loudly. Among those who were crying were gray-haired, sallow-complexioned, aged warriors. Muhammad Mustafaa al-ameen 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wasallam' was their commander, guide, leader, companion, shepherd, an intimate friend with whom they exchanged confidences, and, the most important of all, their great Prophet who had rescued them from darkness and guided them to the light of truth owing to the Islamic religion which he preached. This great Prophet 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wa sallam', who had brought them peace and security by means of Islam, was now bidding 'Farewell' to them. The lamentable thought that their Prophet was dying was gripping their hearts like an iron clamp, bringing tears into their eyes, and causing them to despair deeply. At last, they risked losing everything, and entered into his presence in that mood of hopelessness. In tears they asked, "O the Messenger of Allah 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam'! You are gravely ill. Perhaps Allahu ta'aalaa will invite you to His presence and you will no longer be with us. Then, what can we do without you?" Our Prophet Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' stated, "You have the Qur'aan al-kereem to consult." Then they asked, "O the Messenger of Allah 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam'! It is certain that the Qur'aan al-kereem will be our guide in many respects. Yet if we cannot find what we are seeking by looking up in it, and if you have already left us, who will be our guide?" Upon this, our Prophet 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam' stated, "Act in accordance with what I have told you." This time they asked, "O the Messenger of Allah 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam'! Since you will no longer be among us, what should we do if we encounter altogether new matters and cannot find anything about those matters in your hadeeths?" Our Prophet 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam' raised his blessed head slowly from the pillow, and said, "Allahu ta'aalaa has given a personal guide to each and every one of His born slaves. This guide is the common sense, and his heart, which embodies a conscience. If you use this guide well and properly, you will

never deviate from the right path, and in the end you will attain to Allahu ta'aalaa." "Istafti qalbek, Fe-innahaa teskunu bi-l-halaal." Here is the Islamic religion which I boast of having chosen. This religion is the true religion of Allah, which is entirely based on reason and logic. Beware boasting of wealth, nor say, "Who's there like me!" Harvest-like, a cruel wind winnows all that belongs to thee.

19 WILLIAM PICKHARD (G.B.)

It is stated in a hadeeth-i-shereef: "Every newly-born baby is suitable for and agreeable with Islam. Afterwards they are made Jews, Christians or Magians by their parents." Likewise, I had been born as a Muslim. Yet it was only many years later that I realized this fact. Since my childhood I had been deeply interested in the past. When I graduated from the university, I began to work as a writer. I was not a well-known writer yet. Nor could one tell what I was going to be. As a Christian, I had been given some teaching on the concept of Allah and on how to worship Allah. Yet my adoration was not confined to their teachings; I felt the same worship-like attachment towards all paragons of chivalry and valor that I had read about in history. Eventually, I was given an office in Uganda, which was under the British sway in those days. When I went to Africa, I saw that life was entirely different there. Lifestyles of people living there, the sentiments that they displayed concerning various worldly events, their behaviors towards one another amazingly defied the expectations and imaginations that I had harbored about them when I had been in London. People living in this place faced the very primitive and onerous life-styles and all sorts of difficulty they encountered in a sense of absolute trust, did not lose their jollity at times when one would normally feel quite despondent, and no degree of poverty could inhibit them from helping one another. A sacred glue composed of love and compassion had attached them to one another, which was well beyond the narrow mental grasp of people of our sort. In fact, I had taken an interest in the orient during my school days. In Cambridge, for instance, I had tasted the pleasure of reading the stories of Arabian Nights. And now, being in Africa, and so close to the Orient; I resumed reading the book. The difficult and unaccommodating life I was now leading in Uganda was making me feel closer and closer to the oriental people. As I was reading the stories of Arabian Nights now, I was comparing them with the people of Uganda and, as it were, I was living with them. I was completely accustomed to life here, when the First World War broke out. When I applied for military service, they would not admit me into the military on account of my poor health. When I felt better I applied again. This time they admitted me, and sent me to the German front in France. In 1917 I joined the terrible Somme battles. I was wounded in these battles, and I was captured by the Germans. They took me to Germany, where I was put in a hospital. I saw extremely horrendous events in the hospital. Because of those battles, mankind suffered such horrible afflictions. Many Russian prisoners of war were brought to the hospital. They were suffering from dysentery, which had already exhausted them. Food provisions were extremely poor in Germany. They did not give enough food to the prisoners of war or to the other patients. I was writhing with hunger. The wound on my right arm never seemed to be recovering, nor did the one on my right leg. I was already crippled and paralyzed. I applied to the Germans and requested them to repatriate me to my country through the Prisoners of War Exchange Commission in Switzerland. My request was approved by the Germans. I was sent to Switzerland, where they hospitalized me again. My arm and leg were entirely out of service. What would become of me now? How would I earn my living? These thoughts drove me to infinite

despair. As I was in this mood of utter hopelessness, I somehow remembered the consolatory Koranic statements that I had read in a book which I had bought in Uganda. In those days I had read them again and again with deep interest and adoration; I had even memorized them. I began to pass these statements through my heart and to repeat them a number of times daily. It gave my heart a sense of relief and opened the gates of hope. And my hopes came true, too. The Swiss doctors operated on my leg once again, and my leg began to feel better. I owed this to the Qur'aan al-kereem. As soon as I began to walk, the first thing I did was to go to a bookstore and buy a translation of Qur'aan al-kereem by Savary. [This book is still my most cherished companion.] This time I began to read the entire Qur'aan al-kereem. The more I read, the more relief did my heart feel, the higher did my soul ascend, the deeper into my essence did a tremendous mass of light penetrate. My leg was completely well now. Yet my right arm was still motionless. Upon this, I obeyed the command of the Qur'aan al-kereem, surrendered myself to the Will of Allahu ta'aalaa, and drilled myself in writing with my left hand. The first thing I did after learning to write with my left hand was to embark on writing a copy of Qur'aan al-kereem with my left hand. At one time, I had been deeply impressed by an episode in an Islamic book that I had been reading. The episode was about a young man who was reading the Qur'aan al-kereem quite oblivious of his surroundings and without even knowing that he was in a graveyard where he had come accidentally. I put myself in his place, delivered my essence to the Grace of Allahu ta'aalaa, and carried on my reading the Qur'aan al-kereem. In other words, I was a Muslim now. In 1918 I went back to London. In 1921 I began to attend Arabic lessons in the University of London. One day my Arabic teacher, Mr. Belshah of Iraq, told us about the Qur'aan al-kereem. He said, "You are free to believe or not. Yet you will find that it is a very interesting book and that it is worth studying." When I said, "I know the Qur'aan al-kereem. I have read it, and many times, too. I believe in it," he was bewildered. A couple of days later he took me to the London mosque at Notting Hill Gate. I joined the daily prayers in that mosque for about a year. In 1922 I became a Muslim officially. We are in 1950 now. So far, I have held fast to all the commandments of Qur'aan al-kereem with both hands, and this has given me a great pleasure. Allahu ta'aalaa's power, compassion and grace are boundless. The only personal treasure that we can carry on this trek of life and which we can take to the world to come is to offer hamd-u-thenaa [gratitude and glorification] to Allahu ta'aalaa, to surrender ourselves with love to that Almighty Being, and to worship Him.

20 Mrs. MES' DA STEINMANN (G.B.)

There is not a single other religion to equal Islam in its simple comprehensibility or in its reassuring smoothness. Islam is the one and only one religion which infuses a sense of peace and tranquillity into the human soul, blesses man with a life of contentment, and guides him to eternal happiness and salvation after death. Man is one of the various creatures of Allahu ta'aalaa. Naturally, there is some connection between him and the other creatures. Allahu ta'aalaa created man in the most perfect form. What gives him this singular virtue is the soul that he possesses. Man's soul continuously endeavors to take him up to higher and higher levels. And the only source to feed the soul is religion. What kind of a connection is there between man and the Almighty Being who creates him? No doubt, religion explains this. I studied the statements made about religion by various scholars. The following are a few examples: (Paraphrased) from Carlyle's work

'On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History': "A person's religion is his heart's belief, and it is, therefore, his most prominent characteristic. Religion is such that it goes directly into one's heart. It adjusts one's activities in the world. It shows the way one should follow and determines one's destination." (Paraphrased) from Chesterton's book 'If One Should Think': "Religion expresses the most sublime fact which a person obtains concerning his and others' existence." (Paraphrased) from Ambrose Bierce's work 'The Satan's Dictionary': "Religion is a source that teach people what they do not know and which infuses both fear and hope into them." (Paraphrased) from Edmunde Burke's book 'The French Revolution': "The common commandment of all true religions is to obey the commandments of Allahu ta'aalaa, to be respectful of his canon, and thereby to be closer to His love." (Paraphrased) from Swedenborg's work 'Doctrine of Life':

"Religion means doing good. The essence of religion is goodness." (Paraphrased) from James Harrington's book 'The Ocean': "Everybody has more or less some connection with religion, whether as a source of fear or as a means of consolation." Everybody in the world encounters various situations which they do not know, cannot understand, and cannot explain. It is only religion that explains to them and which infuses into them a sense of definite belief and trust. Why do I believe that Islam is the most perfect of the world's religions and that it is the true religion? Let me explain:

First of all, the Islamic religion states that there is no god besides the one Allah, who is great, that He is not begotten and does not beget, either, and that there is not another creator like Him. There is not another religion to explain the existence, the unity, and the grandeur of Allahu ta'aalaa in the magnificence worthy of Him. The fourth aayat of Hud sura purports, "[O my born slaves], your return shall be to Me, alone. Allah is Almighty." The fifty-fifth aayat of Israa Sura purports, "Allahu ta'aalaa has the best knowledge of the celestial and the terrestrial creatures." Moreover, many chapters of Qur'aan al-kereem state that "He is the only creator," that "He is everlasting," that "He is eternal," that "He is omniscient," that "He is the absolute judge who makes the truest decision," that "He is the greatest helper," that "He is the Creator, who is the most compassionate," and that "He is the most magnanimous forgiver." I could not explain how strongly a person is attracted towards Allahu ta'aalaa, how he melts before Him, and how he surrenders himself to His Grace, as he reads these lines. Allahu ta'aalaa declares, as is purported in the seventeenth aayat of Hadeed Sura, "Know ye (all) that Allahu ta'aalaa giveth life to the earth [with rains] after its death [with drought]. [Likewise, He gives life to dead hearts with dhikr and tilaawat]. Already We have shown the signs plainly to you, that ye may learn wisdom." The Naas Sura purports, "[O Muhammad 'sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam'] Say: I seek refuge with my Owner, the Cherisher of mankind, the King (or Ruler) of mankind, the Judge of mankind, (who sends them what they need and protects them against horrors), from the mischief of the whisperer (of evil), who withdraws after his whisper), -(the same) who whispers into the hearts of mankind,- among Jinns and among Men." When a person reads these exalted statements, how could it ever be possible for him not to believe in that great Creator and not to seek refuge in Him? Aren't all these enough for a person to bask in the consciousness of a merciful creator who will protect him as long as he lives, and thus to abide by the right way? Islam plainly states that it is the most genuine religion and that it has accumulated in itself all the correct aspects of those religions previous to it. It says that all the rules written in the Qur'aan al-kereem, Islam's Holy Book, are plain, clear, logical principles intelligible to everyone. These are extremely true facts. Indeed, if we

really wish to establish a consistent relationship between Allahu ta'aalaa and the born slave, to unite the corporeal and spiritual components in harmony with each other, and to maintain peace both in this world and in the Hereafter, it is indispensably incumbent on us to accept the Islamic religion. Our spiritual and physical progress depends only and only on Islam's support. Christianity busies itself only with spirituality and conscience and overloads every individual Christian with spiritual and conscientious burdens far beyond the human capacity. Christianity prejudgets man as a sinful creature and demands from him preposterous expiations he could never understand. The Islamic religion, on the other hand, is based on mere love. A very deep research into Christianity carried on by a group of highly competent scientists might finally find a tiny particle of love of Allah among the plethora of heavy burdens only after an arduous ransack in the people's various moods. And then the group would sit and lament over the fact that that tiny particle of love has been lost for good in today's Christianity, which is awash in superstitions. Coleridge states in one of his books, "It is a reality that a person who loves Christianity very much becomes gradually alienated from Christianity and begins to love the church more, and at the end he loves himself the best." On the other hand, Islam commands us to respect and love Allahu ta'aalaa, to obey His commandments only, and at the same time to use our own reason and logic. Christianity still contains some truth. In Islam, on the other hand, everything rests on truth. In the Qur'aan al-kereem, Allahu ta'aalaa addresses to all His born slaves, regardless of their races and colors, as is purported in the hundred and eighth aayat of Yunus Sura, "Say, O mankind! Truth hath come to you from your Rabb (Allah). He who hath taken the right path hath done so only for his own good, and he who hath lapsed into aberration hath inflicted a loss only on himself. I am not your guardian." After reading all these facts and fully comprehending the tenor of the Qur'aan al-kereem, I saw that Islam contained the truest answers to my queries, and I willingly became a Muslim. Islam showed me the right way and heartened me. The only way of attaining peace and comfort in the world and salvation in the Hereafter is to embrace Islam.

21 Mrs. MAVISH B. JOLLY (G.B.)

I was born as a Christian in Britain. I was baptized, and I was raised with an education based on learning what is written in today's copies of the Bible. As I was a child, whenever I went to the church I was deeply impressed by the various lights, the candles burning on the pulpit, the music, the smells of incense, and the monks in magnificent attirements. The prayers that I listened to without understanding their meanings would make me shiver. I think I was a devoted Christian. In the course of time, however, as I reached higher levels of education, some questions began to rise in my mind. I began to find some faults in Christianity, in which I had held a full belief until that time. As days went by, I noticed an increase in my doubts. I developed a gradual apathy towards Christianity. Eventually I ended up in a state of denial of all religions. That splendid sight of the church, which had been at one time the center of my infantile admiration, was now gone, like a phantom. By the time I graduated from the school, I was an atheist in the full sense of the term. It did not take me long, however, to realize that believing nothing would hollow the human soul, leaving perpetual mood of despair and weakness. The human being definitely needed some power that would provide him refuge. Consequently, I began to study other religions. I began with Buddhism. I minutely examined the essentials which they called 'Eight Paths'. These eight essentials

contained deep philosophy and beautiful pieces of advice. Yet there was not a certain right way that they showed, nor did they provide the information that would help you choose the right way. This time I began to examine Magianism. While running away from trinity, I encountered a religion of many deities. Furthermore, that religion was too full with myths and superstitions to be accepted as a religion. Then I began to study Judaism. It was not an entirely new religion for me, for the former section of the Bible, the Old Testament, was at the same time a part of the Judaic book Torah. Judaism could not satisfy me, either. Yes, Jews believed in one God, which I approved entirely. But it was all that; they denied all the other religious facts, and the Judaic religion, let alone being a guide, had been turned into a cult of various complicated forms of worship and rites. One of my friends recommended that I practice spiritualism. "Taking messages from the spirits of the dead will stand for a religion," he said. That would not satisfy me at all. For it took me only a short while to realize that spiritualism consisted in a manner of self-hypnotism and could therefore by no means be nutritive to the human soul. The Second World War had ended, and I was working in an office. Yet my soul was still yearning for a religion. One day I saw an ad in a newspaper. It announced a "Conference on the divinity of Jesus (Isaa 'alaihis-salaam')," and added that people from other religions would be admitted. The conference revived my deeply-rooted interest. For in that conference they were going to discuss Isaa's 'alaihis-salaam' being the son of God. I attended the conference, and met a Muslim there. The answers that that Muslim gave to my questions were so beautiful and so logical that I decided to study Islam, which had never occurred to me before. I began to read the Qur'aan al-kereem, the Holy Book of Muslims. To my astonishment, the rules stated in this book were by far superior to the statements made by most of the well-known statesmen of the twentieth century, which aroused strong feelings of admiration and adulation in me. These statements were quite above the human linguistic capacity. So I would no longer believe the lies that "the Islamic religion is a concoction. The Qur'aan al-kereem is a fable," with which they had been dosing us for years. The Qur'aan al-kereem could not be a concocted book. Statements in that acme of perfection could be made only by a being above the human race. I was still hesitant, though. I spoke with some British women who had embraced Islam. I asked them to help me. They recommended some books to me. Among those books were 'Mohammad and Christ', which compared Muhammad 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wa sallam' with Isaa 'alaihis-salaam', and 'The Religion of Islam', which described the Islamic religion. Another book, namely 'The Sources of Christianity', explained in an extremely clear manner that most of the Christian acts of worship were the continuation of the rites that had been performed by primitive people, and that today's Christianity is in actual fact an idolatrous religion. I should avow that I felt bored when I read the Qur'aan al-kereem for the first time. For it contained so many reiterations. It should be known that the Qur'aan al-kereem is a book that impresses and penetrates the human soul slowly. To understand the Qur'aan al-kereem well and to attach yourself to it, you have to read it a number of times. So, the more I read this holy book, the more strongly did I become attached to it, so much so that I could not go to sleep without reading it every night. What impressed me most was the fact that the Qur'aan al-kereem was a perfect guide for mankind. The Qur'aan al-kereem did not contain anything that a person could not understand. Muslims looked on their Prophet as a human being like themselves. According to Muslims, the only aspect that made prophets different from other people was that their intellectual and moral levels were very high, they were sinless and faultless. They had by no means any proximity to divinity. The Islamic religion declared that no prophet would come after

Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’. I objected to that. ”Why should there be no other prophet,” I asked. My Muslim friend’s explanation was as follows: ”The Qur’aan al-kereem, the Holy Book of Muslims, teaches people all the elements of beautiful moral quality that a person should need, all the religious essentials, the path that will guide one to the approval of Allahu ta’ala, and all the necessities required for attaining peace and salvation in this world and the next.” The veracity of these statements gets demonstrative evidence from the fact that the essentials in the Qur’aan al-kereem, which are still the same as they were fourteen centuries ago, are perfectly consistent with today’s life-styles and today’s scientific levels. Yet I was still demurring. For we were now in 1954; fourteen centuries later, that is. I wondered if there was not an iota of obsolescence in Islam that would make at least one of the principles communicated by Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’, who was born in 571, inconsistent with today’s conditions? I embarked on an assiduous quest for mistakes in Islam. My efforts to find fault in Islam despite the fact that my soul had already attained a complete belief in Islam, -so much so that the verity of the Islamic religion was like a live picture in front of my eyes-, should no doubt have been rooted in the vilifications of Islam iterated by priests for the purpose of imposing into our infant minds the idea that Islam was a very defective, inferior and heretical religion. The first file to rake around in was polygamy. Here, I had found an important loophole. How come a man could marry four women (at the same time)? When I asked about that, my Muslim friend, whom I have mentioned earlier, explained the matter as follows: ”The Islamic religion appeared in a society where a man could cohabit with as many women as he liked without any official responsibility towards them. With a view to restoring the woman into her proper place in society, the Islamic religion pared down the number of women that a man could marry, and stipulated that he should support the women, mete out justice among them, and pay them (the canonically prescribed) alimony in the event of a divorce. Furthermore, if a woman had no one to support her, she could join a family as a member, not as a slave, of the family. Moreover, marrying four women was not a religious commandment enjoined on men. It was a permission with provisos. Marrying more than one women was forbidden for men who would not be able to fulfill the stipulations. It was for this reason that many a man had only one wife. Marrying up to four women was a kind of tolerance.” On the other hand, the Mormons in America compelled every male member to marry several women. My Muslim friend asked, ”I wonder if the British men cohabit with only one woman?” I confessed in embarrassment, ”Today all European men enter into relations with various women both before marriage and even after they get married.” Then the words of my Muslim friend reminded me of the story of a young woman who had lost her husband in the war and had been looking for a man to entrust herself to. The Second World War had ended, and a programme called ‘Dear Sir’ on a British radio announced the following request of poor young woman: ”I am a young woman. I lost my husband in the war. I have no one to care for me now. I need protection. I am ready to be the second wife of a good natured man and to carry his first wife on my head. All I want is to put an end to this loneliness.” This shows that the Islamic polygamy is intended to satisfy a need. It is only a permission, not a commandment. And today, when unemployment and poverty are making the rounds over the entire world, there is next to no place left where it is practiced. These thoughts completely eradicated the possibility that I would any longer look on polygamy as a fault in Islam. Then, with the presumption of having found another defect, I asked my Muslim friend, ”How can the five daily prayers be adjusted to our life-styles today? Wouldn’t so many prayers be too much?” He smiled, and asked

me, "Sometimes I hear you playing the piano. Are you interested in music?" "Very much," was my answer. "All right. Do you practice daily?" "Of course. As soon as I am back home from work, I play the piano at least two hours every day." Upon this, my Muslim friend said, "Why do you find it too much to pray five times daily, which would take you only half an hour or forty-five minutes in all? As you might lose your proficiency in playing the piano if you did not have practice, likewise the less one thinks of Allahu or thanks Him for His blessings by prostrating himself, the farther away will the way leading to Him become. On the other hand, praying daily means making progress step by step in the right way of Allahu ta'aalaa." He was so right! There was no obstacle to my accepting Islam now. I embraced the Islamic religion with all my soul and conscience. As you see I did not choose it at first sight and without thinking at all; on the contrary, I became a Muslim after examining Islam minutely, looking for the possible faults in it and finding their answers, and reaching the conclusion that it is an immaculate religion. Now I boast about being a Muslim.

22 LADY ZAYNAB EVELYN COMBOLD (G.B.)

I am frequently asked why I became a Muslim. I am the daughter of a renowned family, and my husband also is well-known and rich. To those who ask me why I became a Muslim, I reply that I do not know for certain when the light of Islam rose in my soul. It seems to me as if I have been a Muslim forever. This is not something strange at all. For Islam is a natural and true religion. Every child is born as a Muslim. If it is left to itself, it will choose Islam, none else. As a European writer observes, "Islam is the religion of people with common sense." If you made a comparative study of all religions, you would immediately see that Islam is the most perfect, the most natural, and the most logical. Owing to Islam, many complicated problems of the world are solved easily and mankind attains peace and tranquility. Islam always rejects the dogma that human beings are born sinful and that they have to expiate for it in the world. Muslims believe in Allah, who is one. In their eyes, Musaa (Moses), Isaa (Jesus), and Muhammad Mustafaa 'salawaatullaahi ta'aalaa 'alaihim ajma'een' are human beings like us. Allahu ta'aalaa has chosen them as Prophets to guide people to the right way. For doing penance, for asking for forgiveness, or for praying, there is no one between Allahu ta'aalaa and the born slave. We can supplicate Allahu ta'aalaa on our own any time, and we are responsible only for what we have done. The word 'Islam' means both 'to surrender oneself to Allahu ta'aalaa' and 'to have belief in Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam'. 'Muslim' means 'a person who lives in peace and happiness with all beings.' Islam is based on two fundamental facts: 1) That Allahu ta'aalaa is one, and that Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' is the final Prophet He has sent. 2) That humanity should be entirely freed from superstitions and unfounded dogmas. The Hajj, one of the (five) tenets of Islam, has a great impact on people. What other religion contains a form of worship as sublime as Islam's pilgrimage, which brings together hundreds of thousands of Muslims from all four corners of the world regardless of their classes, races, countries, colors and rank positions, and makes them put on the (uniformal garb called) Ihraam and prostrate themselves with one accord before Allahu ta'aalaa? It is a certain fact that Muslims' worshiping together at these blessed places where the great Prophet 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wa sallam' announced Islam, struggled against Islam's enemies, exerted himself with great determination and firmness, will attach them to one another with stronger affections, whereby they will try to find solutions for one another's problems, and they will once again take an oath to cooperate along the way

shown by Allahu ta'aalaa. Another use of the Hajj is that thereby Muslims all over the world meet one another, know one another's problems, and teach their personal experiences to one another. All Muslims assemble at the place whereto they turn their faces during their worships at home, and, all in one mass, one body in the presence of Allahu ta'aalaa, they surrender themselves to Him. Seeing the Hajj once would suffice as an evidence to prove the greatness of Islam. Here is Islam, and I have been enjoying the pleasure and satisfaction of having entered this great religion. The philomel of soul is ever-desirous of the rose; Don't you ever presume fighting others is its real cause! Ceaselessly it hovers round it, like a moth, Looking for a shelter where they could enjoy some repose. I now know that the lovely rose has told none of its secret, It always yearns for the philomel, like a budding rose. From strangers that nymph has hidden her cheeks; Unrequited love puts up with the thorn, never gets the rose. Infatuated, the poor lover paces the road to his beloved; Craving for the sweetheart, the lover himself dissolves.

23 MUHAMMAD JOHN WEBSTER (G.B.)

I was raised with sheer Christian education in London. In 1930, being a young student, I encountered some events like other youngsters, and tried to understand them. One of them was to establish some relation between the religion and the world, or, in other words, to think over how I could utilize the religion for the accomplishment of a more peaceful and more comfortable life. Then, for the first time in my life, I came to the realization that my religion, Christianity, was too insufficient and too short for that purpose. For Christianity defined the world as a place of torture whose mere contents are evils and vices, and men as creatures sinful from birth. Let alone showing people how to lead a peaceful life in the world, it imposed on them a concept of life like an area mined with sins, left them on the horns of dilemma by saying that there was nothing they could do on their own to get out of this state of sinfulness, and then degenerated them by saying that on behalf of them priests could invoke Allahu ta'aalaa. Christianity left people entirely to themselves, and confined their worships to unsatisfactory Sunday masses, which they perform in the perfunctory air of the church service. In those years Britain was in a great economic depression and poverty. People were very unhappy and therefore totally displeased with the government. Christianity gave them no help in those days of destitution, nor did they find any sort of heartening quality in it to help them endure. This shortcoming had a considerably ruinous impact on me. Indulging in the rationalizing relaxation of my emotions instead of judging things with the impersonal justice of reason, I reached the conclusion that religion was something meaningless. Rejecting Christianity, I, like many other young people, took to atheism and communism. From a certain distance, Communism appealed to the young people. Depressed under economic straits and totally hopeless of their future life, the younger generation looked on Communism as a savior because it was being propagated with the promise that it would extirpate differences of wealth and rank. It did not take me long to realize, however, that the communist claims consisted of sheer propaganda and hollow words. Communism was the very abode of segregation, both of rank and of wealth. Everything was the same in every country. Upon this I gave up Communism and dived into philosophy. Thus I began to specialize as a pantheist in the creed of Wahdat-i wujud. It is very difficult to get in touch with Muslims in Western countries. For in those countries there is a deep-seated rancor against Islam, which dates back to the crusading expeditions. Europeans reject Islam with hatred, though they know nothing of it. They raise their children with an education dressed with a strong feeling of animus

towards Islam. So much so that talking about Islam means a violation of the established rules of decorum in their society. If someone should bring up this subject in a social gathering, the others will protest with a mute frown. In the meantime, I was sent on an official mission to Australia. Despite the ‘hatred towards Islam’ which had been engraved on my subconscious in the name of education, one day I somehow succumbed to my curiosity and got a translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem. Yet, I had hardly finished the introduction of the book, when I immediately closed the book. For the translator of the book used such an abusive and defamatory language about the Qur'aan al-kereem right in the introduction that it meant there was no sense in reading a book of that sort. Afterwards, I pondered on the matter. Since Christians hated Muslims and the translator was a Christian, it was very well possible that he could have misunderstood some of its parts under the influence of his predisposition and made that blasphemous translation. And there was my curiosity. I took the matter more seriously, and when I went to the city of Perth in western Australia a couple of weeks later, I visited the grand library of the city and queried whether there was a translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem rendered by Muslims. They found a translation of that sort and gave it to me. No words could define the emotions that began to stir in the depths of my soul when I opened it and read the first chapter in it, the chapter (sura) called Fatiha-i-shreefa, which began with the phrase, “Hamd (thanks and praise) be to the Rabb (Lord, Creator, Allah) of aalams (classes of beings).” The first chapter ended with the invocations that purported, “Guide us to the right path.” How beautiful it was! I read the Fatiha-i-shreefa a number of times. The creator mentioned here was “Rahmaan and Raheem,” which meant “Very Merciful and Compassionate.” Contrary to the Christian dogma, He had not created men sinful. I began to read the Qur'aan al-kereem, and the more I read the more ecstatic did I become. Whatsoever I had desired and imagined I found in this holy book. Hours elapsed, and I was completely oblivious of where I was, of the time, and of everything. In addition to that translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem, they had brought me some books about the life of Muhammad ‘sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wa sallam'. I was reading them in utter rapture, when at last the librarian came to me and said, “It's time we closed the library, sir.” I came back to myself, and left the library. On my way home I was soliloquizing and repeating: “I have now attained my goal. I am a Muslim now.” With the guidance of Allahu ta'aalaa, I had eventually attained the hidaaya (the right way). As I was going back home, I looked for a convenient place to have some coffee. As I walked down the street I had only the Qur'aan al-kereem, Islam, and Allahu ta'aalaa in my mind. I was quite unaware of where I was going. All of a sudden my legs stopped on their own. When I raised my head I found myself in front of an entrance built with red bricks. My legs had brought me here on their own. I read the sign hanging on the wall. It was a mosque in Australia. I said to myself: “Allahu ta'aalaa has blessed you with the right way and taught you what you should do. You know Islam now. Allahu ta'aalaa has brought you up to the entrance of the mosque. Go inside right away and embrace this religion.” I walked in, and became a Muslim. Until that time I had not known one single Muslim. I found Islam by myself and accepted it by myself. No one guided me in this respect. My only guide was my common sense.

24 ABDULLAH BATTERSBY (G.B.)

Approximately twenty-five years ago, during my stay in Burma[1], I took boat trips along the river on a Chinese boat daily for recreation. The oarsman who rowed my boat was a Muslim named Shaikh Alee from East Pakistan. He would spare no effort in

carrying out all the religious practices commanded by Islam. His fastidiously diligent punctuality in his religious practices made me admire that man, while in the meantime I began to develop some curiosity about Islam. I decided to find out what was in Islam that kept such a simpleton continuously under the effect of a firm belief and staunch feelings of obedience. Most of the people around us were Burmese Buddhists. They, too, were extremely devoted to their religion. I think the Burmese people are the most pious people of the world. However, the Buddhist system of worships had some conspicuous shortcomings. The Buddhists would assemble in their temples called pagoda and repeat the following prayer:

"Buddha-karana-Ghachkami-Dama-karana-Ghachkami-sanga-karana-Ghachkami." Its meaning was, as some people told me, "O Buddha, be our guide! Be our canon! Exalt our souls!" That prayer was simple enough, yet it consisted of a few unsatisfactory words which had no effect on the human soul. And there was no mention of the great Creator. On the other hand, the acts of worship practiced by my Muslim boatman were only exquisite! This time, I began to discuss Islam with my boatman. During the hours I spent with him, I asked him numerous questions. The extremely elegant and logical answers that that unsophisticated man gave me urged me into reading books written about Islam. When I read those books, I learned with amazement and admiration all the accomplishments that Muhammad 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaahi wa sallam' realized in a short time in Arabia. I found myself some Muslim friends. I entered into Islamic deliberations and chats with them. It was in those days when the First World War broke out. I was commanded to immediately join the war on the Arabian front. I did so. There were no Buddhists here. There were Muslims all around me. The Arabs were the earliest Muslims. The Qur'aan al-kereem, the Holy Book of Allahu ta'aalaa, had been revealed in the Arabic language. My contacts with the Arabs increased my interest in Islam. When the war was over, I began to study Arabic. In the meanwhile I continued to read books about Islam. The greatest attraction I found in Islam was Muslims' belief in one Allah. On the other hand, as a Christian, I had to believe in three gods, which was quite illogical to me. As I deliberated over it, I gradually realized that Islam was a much more genuine religion. I began to accept the fact that a religion that contained belief in one creator should be a true religion. Eventually, after doing ten years' service in Palestine, i.e. between 1932 and 1942, I decided to become a Muslim. So I officially became a Muslim in 1942. I have been a thorough Muslim ever since. I officially professed Islam in Jerusalem, which the Arabs called 'Sacred City'. At that time I was a staff major in the British army. When I professed Islam, I had to undergo some unpleasant situations. My government would not approve of my becoming a Muslim. I had to leave the army. Upon this, I went to Egypt first, and then to Pakistan, and began to live among my Muslim brothers there. I wrote some articles about Islam. There are more than five hundred million Muslims living on the earth today, and they are one another's brothers. To become a Muslim means to have belief in Allahu ta'aalaa, the very being who is worthy of being worshiped, and to attach oneself to Him. And attaching oneself to Him, in its turn, requires adapting oneself to the norms described by His great Prophet, Muhammad 'alaahis-salaam'. Now, whenever I remember that modest boatman, who showed me Islam's lightsome way and the true forms of worship and guided me to my Allah, though in the beginning I had thought he was a mere simpleton, I feel deep respect for him. I am trying to lead a life of a true Muslim, like him. And I see that doing so protects a person from harmful things. Now, among Muslims, I am, alhamdu-lil-lah' (thanks and praise be to Allah), another Muslim. And after performing each prayer, I never forget to invoke a blessing on my Murshid, Shaikh Alee Efendi the

boatman, to recite the Fatiha Sura and send the blessings to his already blessed soul, for by now he might have attained the eternal compassion of Allahu ta'aalaa.

25 HUSEYN ROFE (G.B.)

When a person decides to abandon a religion that has been infused into him since his childhood and choose another religion, there should be some reasons, which are either emotional or philosophical or social. The zealous aspirations I had been feeling were impelling me towards a belief that would satisfy at least two of the above-mentioned needs. Consequently, as soon as the educational period of my life was over, I embarked on a comparative study of all the world's existing religions with a view to determining the one that deserved a true belief in it. Both of my parents were devotedly religious, one of them a Catholic and the other a Jew formerly. Later, they both abandoned their religions and became Protestants and began to attend the Anglican Church. When I was in school I regularly attended the rites performed in the Anglican Church and listened to the lessons given by the priests. Yet the Christian credal tenets that they were trying to teach me contained a number of elements that I did not understand and which seemed quite irrational to me. First of all, the tripartite godhead which consisted of Father, Son and the Holy Ghost sounded so silly to me that it was impossible to accept it. My conscience rejected it vehemently. Moreover, the ecclesiastical credo that attaining God would require expiation was altogether meaningless too. In my idealization, the great being who was (and always is) the only being worthy of being worshiped would not demand compulsory expiation from His born slaves. Upon this, I began to examine the Judaic religion. I saw that their approach to the unity and grandeur of Allahu ta'aalaa was much more reasonable and that they did not attribute a partner to Him. Perhaps Judaism was not so badly interpolated as today's Christianity. However, that religion also contained some grotesque tenets which I could not understand and would never accept. There were so many rites, prayers and compulsory religious practices in the Judaic religion that a pious Jew would have no time left for worldly occupations if he were to observe all those religious obligations. I knew that most of those rites were stupid parodies that had been inserted into the religion later by people. Thereby the Judaic religion had been thoroughly stripped of its social character and become the religion of a small minority. Concluding that there was nothing in Judaism for the world to benefit from, I left it aside, and focused my quest into other religions. In the meantime I attended both the church and the synagogue. Yet those visits were done for quasi-religious purposes. In fact, I was neither a Christian nor a Jew. Alongside the Anglican Church, I examined the Roman Catholic Church, too. I saw that the Catholic credo contained more superstitions than did the credo of those Protestants who were adherent to the Anglican Church. Especially, the Catholics' excessive adherence to the Pope and their semi-deification of him made me hate them all the more. Now I turned my face to the east and began to examine the oriental religions. I did not like Magians' religion at all. For they gave too much prerogative to the priestly caste. A pariah, on the other hand, would deserve what remained from their scorn for beasts. It never occurred to them that they should have compassion for the poor. According to them, a person's poverty was his own fault. If he put up with it silently and without any complaints, there might be some improvement in his situation owing to the priests' intermediary invocations. The priestly order purposely spread this belief in order to strike a fear of themselves into the people's hearts and to make the people feel dependent on them. Therefore I hated the Magian religion. And my hatred even doubled when I knew that

the Magians worshiped animals. A cult of that sort could not be a true religion. As for Buddhism; the Buddhists adhered to philosophical thoughts and beliefs. They told me that, if I should exert myself, try very hard and practice the required abstinence, I would obtain great powers and play with the world like doing chemical experiments. However, I did not find any ethical rules in Buddhism. In this system also, the priestly order were different from the ordinary people and occupied a higher status. Indeed, they taught me many wonderful feats of skill. Yet those things had nothing to do with Allah and religion. Those feats of skill were, like sports or illusionistic artifices, were pastime activities and served only to amaze people who did not know them. They were far from purifying the human heart or bringing man closer to the approval and love of Allahu ta'aalaa. They had nothing to do with Allahu ta'aalaa or with the beings He created. The only benefit they gave was that they drilled a full self-discipline into the practitioner. There is no doubt as to the fact that Buddha was a well-educated, intelligent man. He enjoined a full-scale self-sacrifice on them. He gave commandments such as, "Do not retaliate evil!" "Forego all your desires and ambitions!" "Do not think of tomorrow!" Didn't Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' say the same things? But commandments of this sort had been observed during the early days of Christianity, when the religion of Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' had been in its pure form; people had already given up obeying them. I diagnosed the same laxity in the Buddhist societies. If people were as pure-hearted as Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' or as benevolent as Buddha, they would in all probability follow their guidance and attain the state approved by Allahu ta'aalaa. But how many people in the present world could be so pure-hearted and noble-natured as to cease from all vices? It came to mean that the ethical principles laid by Buddha were not practicable in the modern man's system of thoughts. How strange it was that I was living in the Islamic world and yet I was examining the other religions without thinking a bit about Islam! The reason was clear: We had already been brainwashed with the information of Islam given to us and with the books written about it in Europe, which asserted that that religion was entirely wrong, meaningless, and false, and that it infused torpor. Reading Rodwell's translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem had specially fixed these preconceptions into my subconscious. Rodwell had purposely mistranslated some parts of the Qur'aan al-kereem and distorted its meanings, thus turning the holy book into a mass of unintelligible words altogether different from the original version. It was not till after having contacted the 'Islamic Society' in London and having read a true translation of the Qur'aan al-kereem did I know the truth. One thing I would regret to say at this point is that Muslims are doing very little to advertise this lovely religion of theirs to the world. If they try to spread the true essence of Islam over the entire world with due attention and knowledge, I am sure that they will achieve very positive results. In the near east people are still reserved towards foreigners. Instead of coming into contact with them and illuminating them, they prefer to keep as far away as possible from them. This is an exceedingly wrong attitude. I am the most concrete example. For I was somehow hindered from being interested in the Islamic religion. Fortunately, one day I met a very respectable and highly cultured Muslim. He was very friendly with me. He listened to me with attention. He presented me an English version of the Qur'aan al-kereem translated by a Muslim. He gave beautiful and logical answers to all my questions. In 1945 he took me to a mosque. With intent attention and deep respect, I watched the Muslims praying there, which was a sight I was watching for the first time in my life. O my Allah, what a gorgeous and sublime sight it was! People from all races, all nations and all classes were worshiping. All those people had come together without any sort of segregation in the presence of Allahu ta'aalaa, and they had entirely devoted

themselves to Allahu ta'aalaa. Next to a rich Turk, for instance, stood a very poor Indian clad in beggar-like clothes, next was an Arab who I would say was a merchant, and besides him prayed a Negro. All these people were performing a prayer in profound reverence. No one was different from any other. Entirely oblivious to their nationalities and economical, social and official statuses, they had focused all their existence to the worship of Allahu ta'aalaa. No one assumed superiority to another. The rich did not despise the poor, nor did persons of rank have an iota of scorn for their juniors. Seeing all these marvels, I realized that Islam was the religion that I had been seeking for. None of the other religions that I had examined up to that time had had an effect like that on me. In fact, after seeing Islam closely and learning the essence of Islam, I accepted that true religion without any hesitation. Now I am proud of being a Muslim. I attended lectures on "The Islamic Culture" at a university in Britain, whereupon I saw that as Europe had suffered the gloom of the Middle Ages, Islam had shone through the darkness and illuminated everywhere. Many great explorations had been accomplished by Muslims, Europeans had been taught knowledge, science, medicine and humanities in the Islamic universities, and numerous world conquerors had embraced Islam and established great empires. Muslims were not only the founders of a universal civilization, but also the recoverers of many an ancient civilization devastated by Christians. When the news of my conversion to Islam got about, my friends began to remonstrate with me and to accuse me of retrogression. Each time they did so I answered them with a smile: "Quite the other way round. Islam is not retrogression. It is the most advanced civilization." Sad to say, today's Muslims have fallen behind. For Muslims have been gradually getting less and less appreciative of their possession of so sublime a religion as Islam, and more and more negligent in carrying out its commandments. The Islamic countries still boast the intact remnants of a warm hospitality. When you go to a Muslim's house, he will welcome you in a balmy air of readiness to help you. For helping others is one of Islam's commandments. It is one of the basic Islamic tenets for the rich to help the poor by giving them a certain percentage of their wealth. This property does not exist in any other religion. This comes to mean that Islam is the most, and the only, suitable religion for the present social life-styles. It is for this reason that there is no place for Communism in Muslim countries. For Islam has by far forestalled that social problem by prearranging the most essential solutions.

26 H.F. FELLOW (G.B.)

I am a naval officer. I spent a major part of my life on the sea. I served the British navy in the First World War in 1914 and in the Second World War in 1939. Even the most perfect tools and machines of the twentieth century are far below the capacity to resist the terrific forces of nature. Let me give you a small example: we have no means as yet to defend ourselves against fog or storms. A warlike situation adds a lot more to these dangers. A naval officer has to be always very careful. The British navy holds a book that contains the Queen's Directions and the Directions put by the Admiralty. The book embodies not only records such as the duties of a naval officer and the procedures to be followed at times of danger, but also a list of awards, citations and rewards that are to be bestowed in recognition of good behavior and distinguished services, salaries and pays, and even when an officer will retire. In addition, it contains the penalties imposed for offences and acts of disobedience. If this book is observed with due diligence, life on the sea will be easy and orderly, danger will be minimized, and naval officers will lead a peaceful and happy life. May Allahu ta'aalaa forgive me my fault and sin! Never

oblivious to the great difference and always observant of the due respect, I have compared the Qur'aan al-kereem to that book. Allahu ta'aalaa is the authority who has laid down these principles in the Qur'aan al-kereem. He teaches in extremely explicit and exquisite expressions and in a language intelligible to everybody how all men, women and children over the world should act, from what directions danger will be coming and what should be done against it, and how the good and bad behaviors will be rewarded. For the recent eleven years, since I retired, that is, I have been growing flowers in my garden. It is in this period when I have seen once again the greatness of Allahu ta'aalaa. Plants and flowers grow only with the command of Allahu ta'aalaa. Nothing you plant will grow without His command. However hard you may try, and whatsoever you may do, your endeavor will yield results only with His support. Without this support all your effort will come to naught. It is in no one else's capacity to predetermine the weather conditions required for the growing of plants. With one command of Allahu ta'aalaa, bad weather will set in and ruin everything you have planted. Men have devised various systems in order to pre-estimate the weather conditions. Weather conditions are forecast today. It makes me smile to myself. For only one per cent of these forecasts turn out to be correct. The only determinant in this matter is the decree of Allahu ta'aalaa. Beautiful flowers do not grow in the gardens belonging to those who do not obey the commandments of Allahu ta'aalaa. This is only a retribution which Allahu ta'aalaa visits on them. I believe with all my heart that the Qur'aan al-kereem is the Word of Allahu ta'aalaa and that Allahu ta'aalaa chose Muhammad 'sall-Allahu ta'aalaa 'alaihi wa sallam' as His Messenger to communicate that sacred book to the entire world. The Qur'aan al-kereem is in full concordance with man's worldly life, and it contains rules unsullied with the insertion of exaggerations and superstitions and which are perfectly logical, so that people with common sense will find them entirely true and right. Rather than bringing pressure to bear on the sense of fear inherent in man's nature, the tenets of worship in the Qur'aan al-kereem appeal to love and respect. Having lived for long years in a Christian society and under Christian influence, a Christian needs convincing preliminary persuasion to abandon his religion and become a Muslim. However, after examining Islam, I did not need any external persuasion. For I had spontaneously believed in the fact that this religion is a true one. No one compelled me to become a Muslim. Nor was I under anyone's influence. Muslims answered most of my doubts whose solutions I had not found in Christianity, and they satisfied all my mental expectations. I therefore became a Muslim by myself and willingly. I have realized that the pure religion brought by Isaa 'alaihis-salaam' and Islam are essentially the same. Yet the pure Nazarene religion was completely defiled with the superstitions, rites and credal tenets borrowed from idolatrous cults afterwards and turned into what has now been called Christianity. It was so repulsively fraught with the polytheistic accessions that Martin Luther, for the purpose of purifying his religion, had to reform it and to establish the Protestant sect, whereby he, let alone repairing the religion, impaired it all the more badly. As the Queen of England, Elizabeth I, struggled against the Catholic Spaniards who posed a threat against her country, the Ottoman Turks carried on their holy war against the Catholics in Europe. As Protestants and Muslims, these two empires fought against the idolatrous Catholics. The one thing that escaped Martin Luther's attention was that nine hundred years before him Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' had cleansed and purified the defiled Christianity and all the other religions. Today's Christianity is infested with idolatrous elements and superstitions. For a long period of time Christianity has remained as a religion where injustice, cruelty and savagery are all but legalized, and it still maintains this horrendous identity in its

exactitude. I would like you to recollect the unjust verdicts that the Spanish Christians gave at the tribunals called the Inquisition and the savageries that they perpetrated in the name of inquisition. The Sephardis who escaped from their cruelties were provided sanctuary only by the Muslim Turks, who treated them as human beings. Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ asked his umma to obey the Ten Commandments which Allahu ta’ala had given to Musaa ‘alaihis-salaam’ on Mount Sinai. The first of these commandments is this: ”I am the Lord thy God, ...” ”Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”[1] On the other hand, Christians have disobeyed this commandments by increasing the number of gods to three. I did not believe in three gods before converting to a Muslim, either. I always accepted Allahu ta’ala as only one compassionate, forgiving and guiding being. That was the only reason which led me to Islam. For Muslims’ belief in Allahu ta’ala was identical with my thoughts. The manner of life you are to lead is totally in your own hands. If you are, say, an accountant and embezzle money from the employer’s safe, one day you will be caught and wind up in prison. If you drive carelessly on a slippery road, your car will topple over and you will end up in a hospital with one or two broken bones. If you drive too fast and have an accident for this reason, you, again, will be responsible for it. It would be a grave act of immorality to lay the blame for all these faults on someone else. I do not believe in the hypothesis that people are bad tempered by birth. It is a definite fact that human beings are born with a good moral quality. A group of theorists assume that some people are evil-spirited by creation, which I reject. In my opinion, what makes a person’s soul evil is, first of all, his parents, next his environment, next the subversive publications, and next evil company. Another factor that should be added is harmful tutorship. Children are inclined to idealize the behaviors and thoughts of their parents, school teachers and writers and try to follow their examples. Sometimes, without any apparent reason, children exhibit rebellious and mischievous behavior. At such times they must be toned down with gentle, but at the same time serious, exhortation. But if we ourselves exhibit inconsiderate behavior and thereby set a bad example for them, we cannot convince them of their wrong behavior. How could we dissuade our children from doing the vices that have become our daily practices? That means to say that first of all we have to exhibit a perfect example for our children. We should be able to chastise them when necessary. You know that Britons are fond of sports. Sports is something that is almost sacred to us. If a person does something disingenuous or acts in a crooked way in a sports activity, he will be punished immediately and lose most of his honor. The Islamic religion has laid exquisite and very beautiful behavioral maxims and ideal life-styles, which could be, as it were, compared to our sports rules. During my research in the Islamic religion, these rules won my admiration. It was this logic and order that led me to the true religion of Islam. Here is the second one of the Ten Commandments: ”Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” (Old Testament, Exodus:

20-4.) On the other hand, today’s Christian churches are full of images and icons, and Christians prostrate themselves before them! One thing I had always mused with consternation about was that all those tremendous events, such as the miracles of Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, his crucifixion, [which is a Christian belief], his resurrection and ascension to heaven after having been interred, had had very little impact on that time’s Jewish, Roman and other Palestinian community, and their life-styles had not changed at all. The Jews had been quite indifferent towards Isaa ‘alaihis-salaam’, so that it was only centuries later when Christianity began to spread. Contrariwise, the Islamic religion

communicated by Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’ spread far and near in a very short time, immediately changed the life-styles there, and civilized the semi-barbarous people. I think the only reason was that the original Isawee religion deteriorated in a short time and changed into a perplexing, semi-idolatrous new Christian religion, while Islam, on the other hand, was a logical religion intelligible to everybody. Between 1919 and 1923 I was appointed to a naval duty on the Turkish waters. That mellifluous voice that called daily from the minarets and said, ”There is only one Allahu ta’alaa. Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’ is His Messenger.” How lovely it sounded to my ears! Most of the books about the Islamic religion that I had been reading contained contumelies against Islam. Their discourse followed the rules of a certain textual stratagem wherein the first step was to cast aspersions on the last three hundred years’ Turkish Sultans, who were Khaleefas at the same time, the second step was to associate the acts of atrocity and injustice already ascribed to them and reinforced with the slanders that Turks were mendacious, deceitful and venal people and that they had been oppressing the minorities, with the Islamic culture, which was their source of education, and the final step was to conclude that a Muslim could never be as honest as a Christian. Did the Islamic religion really deserve the blame? I could never believe it. Eventually, I decided to resort to a Muslim man of religion to acquire true information. In the meantime, I looked for Islamic books written by Muslims. Some Muslim religious men living in Britain found the books I needed and sent them to me. When I read these books, I saw what a pure religion Islam was, how brilliantly it shone throughout the Middle Ages, how brightly it illuminated the dark Christian world, how, unfortunately, in the wake of a general inattention to religious principles growing in the process of time, the Islamic world gradually lost its vigor, and the recent efforts to restore it to its former state. Today’s scientific improvements could find no place in the Christian religion. Conversely, they are in perfect concordance with Islam. Consequently, the blame for the decline that the Islamic world has been suffering falls not on the Islamic religion, but on today’s Muslims, who have fallen short of fulfilling the requirements of this pulchritudinous religion with due strictness. I no longer had any doubts as to the merits of the Islamic religion now. So I embraced Islam willingly. Today, some European philosophers and writers argue that religions are unnecessary. You must be sure that arguments of this sort ensue from the preposterous tenets of Christianity and from its superstitions which would never receive a welcome in the twentieth century. The Islamic religion, on the other hand, does not contain any of such toxins. Christians can never understand why Islam should meet with such universal acceptance, and they call Muslims ‘eccentric people’. This is an entirely wrong accusation. My final remarks are these: I chose Islam because it is a religion which is both theoretical and practical, easy to understand and logical, perfect in every respect, and an exemplary guide for humanity. The Islamic religion is, and eternally will be, the best way that will lead man to the love of Allahu ta’alaa and to happiness in this world and the next.

27 J.W. LOVEGROVE (G.B.)

I would like to give the following short answer to your question why I became a Muslim. I shall not attempt to give you a long lecture on religion and belief. Religion and belief make up a virtue that emanates from the human soul and which is unlike anything else. It is identical with the thirst felt by a person left in a desert. Man definitely needs a belief to rely on as a dependable guide. First I studied a history of religions. I read with attention the lives and the teachings of those personages who had

invited people to religion. I realized that the religious essentials that Prophets ‘alaihim-us-salaam’ had taught in the beginning had been changed and turned into entirely different forms in the course of time. What had survived of them was only a few facts. Various legends had been mixed into the lives of those great, distinguished people, and their deeds had been transformed into myths and reached us as a conglomerate of mysterious stories. In contrast with all these ruins, one true religion, Islam, has preserved its pristine purity and simplicity from the day it was revealed to the present time and, without being polluted with any sort of superstitions or legends, it has survived to our age. The Qur'aan al-kereem is the same today as it was in the time of Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’. Not a word of it has changed. The blessed utterances of Muhammad ‘alaihis-salaam’ have reached our day in exactly the same literal form as they were pronounced by him, without undergoing any alterations. Allahu ta’ala sent Prophets ‘alaihim-us-salawaatu wa-t-tasleemaat’ to humanity whenever He deemed it necessary. They are complementary to one another. In consideration of the fact that the teachings of other Prophets ‘alaihim-us-salawaatu wa-t-tasleemaat’ have been interpolated and changed into annoying incongruities, is there another way which one could find more logical than accepting the Islamic religion, which has remained the most intact, the purest, and the truest? As a matter of fact, a simple and useful religion unsullied with illogical superstitions was what I was questing for. The Islamic religion is that very religion. The Islamic religion shows one by one all my duties towards Allahu ta’ala, towards my neighbors, and towards all humanity. Although this was originally the main objective of all religions, their tenor has been watered down into unintelligible credal tenets. In contrast, the Islamic religion embodies easily understandable, simple, logical, convincing and useful principles of belief. In Islam, alone, did I find the information concerning the requirements to be fulfilled to attain peace and salvation in this world and the next. It is for this reason that I became a Muslim willingly.

28 DAVIS (G.B.)

I was born in 1931, and began to go to elementary school when I was six years old. Completing my elementary education after seven years, I attended a junior high school. My family raised me in a Catholic system of education. Afterwards, I joined the Anglican church. Finally, I became an Anglo-Catholic. During all these conversions, I observed the same thing. Christianity had dissociated itself from man’s normal daily life long ago, and had become reminiscent of an attirement that was worn only on Sundays and kept in a wooden case only for this purpose. People could not find what they were looking for in the Christian religion. The Christian religion was trying to attach people to the church by means of lights of various colors, images, smells of incense, pleasant music, and a variety of glorious ceremonies and litanies performed for saints. Yet all these efforts fell short of attracting people. For the Christian religion concerned itself only with legendary subjects and therefore evinced no interest in what was going on without the church. Consequently, I developed a profound hatred towards Christianity, and finally decided to give a test to Communism and Fascism each, which were being propagated with sequinned advertisements. When I attempted Communism I was happy because I believed that it rejected class differences. As time went by, I faced the awful truth: let alone rejecting class differences, Communism was a totalitarian regime wherein people led a life of slavery, a small minority inflicted all sorts of cruelty and brutality on the others, no one had the right to protest, and any sort of objection, rightful as it might be, would incur a penalty, which meant, more often than not, being

sentenced to death. Stalin is a good example concerning the real face of Communism. Upon this, I shifted from Communism to Fascism. My first impression in Fascism was its discipline and order, which I liked very much. However, Fascists were self-conceited people. They despised all people and all races outside of their community. Here, too, cruelty, suffering, injustice and oppression prevailed. A couple of months sufficed to make me loathe Fascism intensely. For Mosley[1], in Britain, Hitler[2], in Germany, and Mussolini[3], in Italy, were the exemplary models of stark terror and ruthless and despotic cruelty. Nevertheless, I could not give up Fascism, for there was no other alternative left. I was desperately writhing in a state of distress, when I came across a periodical captioned *The Islamic Review* in a bookstore. I scanned the book. I still cannot understand why I bought that book, which cost me two shillings and six pennies[4] and was too expensive for me. I thought, "I have wasted my money. Perhaps the contents of this book are mere twaddles that would not be worth a penny, like those Communist and Fascist follies." Yet, as I read on, it began to capture my attention, which soon developed into utter amazement. I read the magazine once again, and again. So Islam was a perfect religion which accumulated in itself all the best aspects of Christianity and of the other ideologies ending in 'ism'. Despite my poverty, I subscribed to the periodical. A couple of months later I decided to embrace Islam. Since that day I have held fast to my new religion with my both hands. I hope to begin studying Arabic as soon as I enter university. For the time being I am studying Latin, French and Spanish, and reading '*The Islamic Review*'.

29 Dr. R.L. MELLEMA (Hollander)

(Dr. Mellema is the director of the section concerned with Islamic Works of Art of the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam. He is known for his works 'Babies of Wyang', 'Information About Pakistan' and 'Introducing Islam'.) In 1919, I began to study oriental languages in the University of Leiden. My teacher was the universally known professor Hurgronje, who had perfect command of the Arabic language. As he taught me how to read, write and translate in Arabic, he gave me the Qur'aan al-kereem and the works of al-Ghazaalee as textbooks. The subject I was majoring in was the 'Islamic law'. I read a number of books about Islam, Islam's history, and Islamic sciences so far published in the European languages. In 1921 I went to Egypt and visited the Al-Azhar Madrasa. I stayed there for about one month. Later, in addition to Arabic, I learned Sanscrit and Malay. In 1927 I went to Indonesia, which was a British dependency at that time. I began to learn Javanese in a high school in Jakarta. For fifteen years I educated myself not only in the language of Java, but also in the cultural history of old and new Java. Throughout that period of time, I on the one hand contacted the Muslims and on the other hand read the Arabic books available to me. The Japanese invaded the Indonesian islands during the Second World War. I was one of the prisoners that they captured. After an extremely severe life in captivity which lasted until the end of the war, I returned to Holland and found a job in the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam. There I resumed my Islamic research. They asked me to write a booklet telling about the Muslims in Java. This, also, I accepted, and completed, too. Between 1954 and 1955 I was sent to Pakistan to conduct a study about the Muslims there. As I have already stated, the only books that I had read about Islam until that time had been written in the European languages. After I went to Pakistan and established direct contact with Muslims, my views of Islam took a sharp turn for the favorable. I requested my Muslim brothers in Lahore to take me to their mosque. They were pleased at my request and

took me there for a Friday prayer. I watched the worship and listened to the prayers with great attention. It had so strong an impact on me that I almost lost consciousness in rapture. I now felt myself a Muslim and a Muslim brother when I shook hands with Muslims. I expressed my feelings as follows in the fourth issue of 'Pakistan Quarterly': "Next we went to a smaller mosque. A preaching lecture was scheduled to be delivered by a scholar who was a professor from Pencab University and who knew English well. As he began his preaching, he said to the audience, 'We have a guest, a Muslim brother, who has come here from a distant country, Holland. I shall mostly add English words into the Urdu language so that he will understand me better,' and then he performed an exquisite preaching. I listened with attention. After the preaching was over, I meant to leave the mosque, when Allaama Saahib, who had brought me to the mosque, said that the Muslim brothers who had been watching me with attention would be pleased if I should be kind enough to give them a speech, a brief one in the least, and that he would translate my speech into the Urdu language. Upon this I made the following short speech: 'I am here from Holland, which is quite a long way from here. There are very few Muslims in my homeland. Those few Muslims requested me to extend their salaam[1] to you. I am very happy to know that you have achieved your independence and to see that the world has been enriched with one more Muslim state. Established seven years ago, Pakistan has already secured its position. After all those difficulties you experienced in the beginning, your country has in the long last attained salvation and is now improving with speed. There is a bright future ahead of Pakistan. When I go back home, I will have so much to tell my compatriots about your kind and polite behavior, about your magnanimous generosity, and about your warm hospitality, of which I shall spare no minute details. I shall never forget the warm affection you have displayed towards me.' No sooner had Allaama Saahib finished translating my statements into Urdu than all the Muslims in the mosque rushed towards me and began to shake hands with me, and the whole place resounded with a mellow roar of congratulatory exclamations, which has preserved its unique moment of happiness in my memories. The heartfelt manifestation of brotherhood moved me so profoundly that I began to enjoy the happiness of entirely having joined the community of Muslim brothers." The Pakistani Muslim brothers showed me that Islam is not merely a collection of theories and proved that Islam means beautiful moral quality first of all and therefore being a good Muslim requires possessing a pure moral character. Now let me answer the second question, i.e. your question, "What was the strongest attraction that pulled you towards Islam?" The reasons that attracted me towards embracing Islam and attached my entire heart to the Islamic religion are as follows:

A unitarian belief in Allahu ta'alaa. Islam recognizes one great creator. This great creator is not begotten, nor does he beget. What could be as logical and as rational as believing in one creator? Even the simplest-minded person would find it right and will believe in it. This single great creator, whose name is Allah, is in possession of the greatest knowledge, the greatest hikma, the greatest power, and the greatest beauty. He has infinite mercy and compassion. 2) Rejecting any intermediary between Allahu ta'alaa and the born slave. In Islam the born slave comes into direct contact with his Creator and worships Him directly. No one is necessary between Allahu ta'alaa and the born slave. People learn their duties pertaining to this world and the next from the Book of Allahu ta'alaa, the Qur'aan al-kereem, from hadeeth-i-shereefs, and from books written by the scholars of Ahl as-sunna. Only to Allahu ta'alaa are they responsible for their actions. Allahu ta'alaa, alone, has the authority to reward or punish a person. Allahu ta'alaa will not hold any of His born slaves responsible for what he has not

done, nor will He enjoin on him something beyond his capacity. 3) The infinite mercy innate in Islam. Its most explicit indication is an aayat in the Qur'aan al-kereem, which purports, "No one shall be compelled to become a Muslim." Our Prophet, Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam', commands that a Muslim should acquire knowledge, by going to the farthest places if necessary. One other precept that Muslims are commanded to observe is to be respectful of the religions previous to Islam, especially as regards their essentials that have remained unchanged. 4) A fraternal unification of Muslims, whereby discriminations due to race, nationality and color are crossed out from the outset. This ultimate goal has been realized only by Islam in the entire world. During the periods of Hajj (Muslims' pilgrimage to Mekka), hundreds of thousands of Muslims from all corners of the world come together, wrap themselves in the uniform (clothing called) Ihram, and prostrate themselves, a colossal expression of all Muslims' fraternity. 5) The equilibrium that Islam maintains between corporeal and spiritual realities. The other religions emphasize only spirituality and a number of absurd, grotesque tenets. On the other hand, Islam gives equal considerations to the soul and the body and dictates to man how he should maintain cleanliness, not only spiritually, but also bodily. It integrates man's spiritual improvement with his corporeal needs and describes in an extremely illustrative language how he should live in full control of his physical activities. 6) Islam's prohibition of alcohol, drugs, and pork. In my opinion, the gravest calamities that have befallen mankind has been on account of alcohol and drugs. Prohibition of such indulgences would suffice as an illustration of Islam's enormous prescience and the gigantic distance whereby it is ahead of its time.

30 FADL-UD-DIN AHMAD OVERING (Hollander)

I cannot figure out precisely the time of my first contact with the oriental civilization. This contact owes primarily to language. To be more clear, my aspirations to learn the oriental languages ended in my beginning to study Arabic when I was only in my early teens. Naturally, with no one to help me, it was rather an onerous work for me to get over. Primarily with a view to learning Arabic, I bought some books written by Europeans about the Arabs and about Islam. I think most of the information they gave about Islam were far from being correct or unbiased. Nevertheless, the passages about Muhammad 'alaihis-salaam' caused me to develop a strong admiration for his personality. Yet the information I collected about Islam was both incorrect and insufficient. Nor was there anyone to guide me. In the long last, I came across a perfect work, namely a book entitled, 'History of Persian Literature in Modern Times', written by T.G. Browne. I found two elegant poems in the book. One of them was the Terjee'i bend of Haatif Isfahaanee, and the other one was the Heftbend of Mohtashim Kaashaanee. I cannot describe to you the greatness of the excitement that I felt when I read Haatif's poem. How delicately the poem depicted a soul that was desperately struggling in a deep gloom of indecision and depression and seeking for a murshid to guide him to salvation! As I read it, I felt as if the great poet had written it about me and as if the poem were describing my struggles to find the truth. He, alone, exists; there's no others in existence; He, alone, is worthy of worship by all existence. To fulfil my mother's wishes and to satisfy my curiosity, I registered in a high school with a religious curriculum. Despite its religious system of education, the school did not follow a fanatical policy. The students could discuss their ideas freely, and their ideas were held in high regard. The religious lessons consisted of religious essentials that a person needed to know. However, the answer, "I feel deep respect for the Islamic religion,"

which I gave to a final exam question querying our opinions about other religions must have consternated the school director. In those days, the strong feelings of sympathy I had had for the Islamic religion had not developed into a definite belief yet. I was still in a state of indecision. Nor had I completely recovered from the morbid hostility against Islam that the church had engraved into the depths of my soul. Firmly resolved to disentangle myself from the influence of those books with European authors, I embarked on an entirely personal study of Islam; this time the only criterion would be my personal evaluation. How thoroughbred the facts that the study yielded were! It began to dawn on me why so many people abandoned the religions inculcated into them during their childhood and embraced Islam. For the first feature of Islam reflected man's own essence, his personal world, his true belief and trust in Allahu ta'aalaa, and its second feature involved his unconditional submission to Allahu ta'aalaa, his Owner, and obedience to His commandments. In the following paragraphs I shall attempt some quotations from the Qur'aan al-kereem, which I consider relevant to the subject. Stripped as they may be of the magnificent harmony inherent in their Arabic originals, translations of these divine statements still have very strong attraction. The twenty-seventh and later aayats of Fajr Sura purport, "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!" "Come back thou to thy Allah, well-pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!" "Enter thou, then, among My devotees!" "Yea, enter thou My Heaven!" (89-27, 28, 29, 30) This statement alone would be enough to prove the fact that the Islamic religion, quite unlike the superstitious Christianity, or the other religions, which are even worse, is an extremely pure, true, and genuine religion. In contrast with the Christian credo which imposes a tenet wherein mankind is sinful from birth and even a newly born baby has a share from sins of earlier generations, the hundred and sixty-fourth aayat of An'aam Sura in the Qur'aan al-kereem purports, "... Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but himself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. ..." (6-164) In fact, the forty-second aayat of A'raaf Sura purports, "...

No burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear, - ..." (7-42) As you read these statements, you feel deep in your heart that they are divine statements of Allah, and you willingly have belief in Islam. I did so, too; I chose Islam, the truest religion of Allahu ta'aalaa, and I became a Muslim willingly.

31 Prof. Dr. ABD-UL-KERIM GERMANUS (Hungarian)

(Prof.Dr. Germanus is a professor of 'Oriental Languages' in the University of Budapest and has a worldwide reputation. During the First and Second World Wars, he traveled in India and in the meantime worked as a teacher in the University of 'Shanti Naketen,' which was under the directorship of Tagore.[1] Later he moved to Delhi, and became a Muslim in the 'Jaami'a-I-Milliyya'. Prof. Germanus has been looked on as a great authority in literary areas, especially in the Turkish language and Turkish literature.) I was only a fresh adolescent that could just as soon be called a child. On a rainy day, I incidentally found an old illustrated magazine. It contained pictures of apparently overseas countries. I was leisurely turning the pages, when, all of a sudden, one of the pictures caught my attention. It illustrated some one-storied small houses surrounded with rose-gardens. On the roofs of the houses sat people in elegant attirements listening with rapt attention to someone who must be conducting a conversation under the dusky firmament that was hardly illuminated by the half moon. The people, the dresses, the houses, the house yards were entirely different from those in Europe. As far as I could figure out from the writings under the picture, the picture was an illustration of some

Arabs listening to a public story-teller in a small Arabian town. I was sixteen years old then. As an Hungarian student seated comfortably in an armchair in Hungary, I looked at the picture and imagined myself being there, among the Arabs, listening to the mellow and at the same time strong voice of the public story-teller, which gave me unusual pleasure. This picture gave a direction to my life. Immediately, I began to study Turkish.

Läs mer om Islam på:

www.islamguiden.com