

## The New Convert

Two neighbors, a Muslim and a Christian, were on friendly terms. Having concern for one another they used to enquire after each other's health, and exchanged views from time to time. The Muslim being a devout and religious man spoke high of his religion and the result was that the Christian friend embraced Islam.

The night passed and it was nearing dawn. The Christian, a new convert, heard somebody ramming his door. Surprised and restless he shouted:

"Who is it?"

From the back came a loud voice, "I am so and so;" introducing himself. He was the Muslim neighbor who had the honor of converting him to Islam.

"What do you want at this late hour?"

"Be quick, put on your clothes and perform ablution, so that we should go to the Mosque together"

The new Muslim performed ablution (Wudu) for the first time in his life and set out to Mosque behind his Muslim friend. They had arrived before time. It was the time for the recommended (not obligatory) prayer after mid-night. They prayed till dawn – the time came for the Morning Prayer. They prayed the Morning Prayer and were engaged in benedictions and invocations till it became perfectly clear. When the new Muslim made a move towards the door, his friend interrupted:

"Where are you going?"

"I am going home, since I have finished my morning prayer, there is nothing else to do now." "Wait a while and recite the benedictions till the sun rises." "Very well."

He sat and recited the same till the sun rose. When he rose up to go, his friend placed the Qur'an in his hand saying, "Read it till the sun rises a little high. And I advise you to fast today. Don't you know how much virtues and rewards there are in fasting?" The new Muslim did as he was told, and sat reciting the

Qur'an till it was nearing noon. The Muslim neighbor said: "Now it is almost noon; better we perform the noon-prayer in the Mosque:" So, the Dohr (noon) prayer was prayed. Then he said again: "After just a short time, the Asr (after-noon) prayer will be prayed. We should perform that also at the proper time:" That prayer was also performed. Then he said, "It is almost evening now" and detained the new convert till it was time for Maghrib (evening) prayer. When he rose up to break his fast, the neighbor said, "there is one more prayer remaining. It is named "Esha" or the sleeping-time prayer'." So they waited nearly one hour for the proper time of this prayer. After that the new Muslim got up and went away.

Next day at the same hour of night he again heard knockings at the door.

"Who is there?"

"I am so and so..... your neighbor. Be quick, put on your clothes and perform ablution to go to the Mosque together"

"As soon as I returned from the Mosque last night, I resigned from your religion. Please go away and find some other idle man who has nothing to do in this world, so that he may be able to spend his whole time in the mosque. I am a poor man having wife and children to feed. I should better go after my work to earn my livelihood'."

Imam Jaafer al-Sadiq relating the story to his friends and companions, said: "In this manner a devout man after converting a new Muslim, had himself kicked him out of Islam. You must bear this fact in mind and should not trouble the people unnecessarily. You should judge their strength and capacity and act accordingly, so that they develop affinity for the religion and do not run away from it. Don't you know that the policy of Ummayyads is based on violence, oppression and intimidation whereas our ways and methods are based on leniency, brotherhood and persuasion?"

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