

Why I believe

In the name of the Most Merciful!

My Autobiography: Why I believe

Vincent J. Cornell, a scholar of Islamic studies quotes the following statement from Imam Ali (PBUH):

To know God is to know his oneness. To say that God is one has four meanings: two of them are false and two are correct. As for the two meaning that are false, one is that a person should say "God is one" and be thinking of number and counting. This is false because that which has no second cannot enter into the category of number. Do you not see that those who say that God is a third of a trinity fall into this infidelity? Another meaning is to say, "So-and-So is one of his people," namely, a species of this genus or a member of this species. This meaning is also false when applied to God, because it implies likening something to God, whereas God is above all likeness. As to the two meaning that are correct when applied to God, one is that it should be said that "God is one" in the sense that there is no likeness to him among things. Another is to say that "God is one" in the sense that there is no multiplicity or division conceivable in Him, neither outwardly, nor in the mind, nor in the imagination. God alone possesses such a unity.

My religious background:

We were raised as Christians, my mom came from a strict Christian family and religion was a part of her identity. Since a little child I can remember that in difficulties she would call upon God, Jesus or the Virgin Mary. In good times she would remember God, Jesus, or the Virgin Mary as well. She went to church every Sunday and took us with her and she even enrolled us into a private Christian school. I remember being absolutely comfortable with this Christian lifestyle. I loved praying to God, Jesus and the Virgin Mary. I loved studying the bible, but I must admit that church was a bit boring at times and I sometimes had a hard time sitting still! I loved celebrating the Christian holidays and in school I was active in setting up religious

celebrations. I particularly loved the Virgin Mary. She looked so beautiful in her modest clothing; I would play dress up and pretend that I was the Virgin Mary, while other girls would pretend that they were super models or beautiful blonde actresses or singers. You could say that I loved being devoted.

Influences in my life:

Once in school, when we kids were waiting for our teacher to come, we were making a lot of noise out in the hallway and our principle came in and gave us a lecture about how we were not using our ability to speak, think, etc... in the way that Jesus would want us to. Instead, she said we should reflect on Jesus and say prayers that would help us to understand him better and be better Christians. I thought, “‘Wow!’ she is right!” I was in fourth grade at that time and so I began to pray in my own childish way to Jesus and to think about God. Parallel to this, my own mother had always told us that thinking was our key to success in life. In addition, I had remembered that once in fourth grade religion class, our teacher told us that God was the strongest being and that He was our Creator and that the Virgin Mary had special status with God because of her purity and chastity. So I felt nearer and nearer to God and the Virgin Mary. At night I would say the Lord’s Prayer, which was basically,

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.”

Also for the Blessed Virgin Mary,

“Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer really touched my heart because it clearly declared the strength, kindness, and glory; and it showed our place in relation to God: as a humble servant that should battle against temptation, sin, and evilness.

This prayer helped me feel secure that such a Great Being was overlooking me and it helped form an undeniable monotheistic belief in God. At night I would lay in awe at the power of God....

You could say that my entire being was shouting Allahu Akbar! Subhanallah!

However, in school we began to study deeper in the Trinity and Jesus became the central focus in our lives. God was Jesus, Jesus was God, God was the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit was God and Jesus was the Holy Spirit.

At times when I would pray to Jesus, I would reflect on my words, and I started to think "Wait, how can God be Jesus?" This paradox bothered me and in my prayers I started to change them to fit what I thought made sense and that was God is God the Unique and Jesus was not God or even his son and that the Virgin Mary was not the "Mother of God". So my prayers evolved into being directed toward the Only One Lord and Creator of Everything.

You could say that the Trinity was the catalyst that brought me to Islam. At the same time, though I could remember that my devout mother would teach us about God and say that God was the strongest and was undividable and unique and that God was so strong that it was not necessary to share the Kingdom of God with anyone or anything. This was what gave me courage and strength, because I knew that my Creator could not be equaled and so I felt that I had the strongest protector watching over me.

As time went by, I realized that what my mother was teaching me and my siblings was not Catholicism, but rather something else. When we got older, my mother told us that many years ago she had converted to Islam and that now it was time, she felt, to proclaim her new religion by wearing the headscarf. We were shocked, but at the same time she

reassured us that she would not force us to change our religion because we had to arrive at the point of whether to be Muslim, Catholic, or any other religion by ourselves. After researching and asking lots and lots of questions we decided to also change our religion and now it is 29 years that I am Muslim.