

The Quran and the Transformation of Beliefs (Review of Republika's Report on the Rubric of Converts)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and analyze how the Quran influenced a number of figures or scientists who later changed their beliefs or beliefs, as well as trace the background of their lives that contributed to the change in outlook on life. This phenomenon is especially observed through the study of figures who have embraced Islam after studying the Quran, as recorded in the Converts rubric in the Republika Newspaper. The research methodology uses a socio-religious phenomenon approach with a focus on the critical interpretation of hermeneutics towards the lives of converts. The selected figures will be analyzed based on their life background, religious experience before embracing Islam, and how the Quran had a significant impact on their conversion. The results showed that the Quran has a tremendous influence on human life, both psychologically, intellectually, and socio-culturally. The beauty of the language of the Qur'an, its miracles, and satisfactory answers to life's problems are the main factors that stir the hearts of converts. Some characters choose Islam because of inner conflicts, questions related to religion, conflicts in family life, or because of shock at the reality of Muslims that do not conform to initial prejudices. The benefits of this research include strengthening the arguments of the mufassir regarding the miracles of the Quran, providing stronger motivation for Muslims to explore the study of the Quran, and presenting valuable lessons for Muslims regarding the closeness of the Quran to the human heart and life. This research is expected to provide deeper insight into how the Quran can be a driver of changes in people's beliefs and outlook on life.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an refers to itself as a guide for pious people, even a guide for humans without exception. This shows the great attention of the holy book of the Quran to human life. As a holy book, the Qur'an presents itself as the controller of life and the determinant of the direction of life for everyone. The Quran also guarantees that its instructions are to save humanity from the disasters of the world and the Hereafter (Naik, 2014; Zarkasyi, 2006).

Although the Qur'an focuses people's success on their own charity and creativity, man's beliefs about himself, God, and the universe have not escaped the attention of the Qur'an. These beliefs greatly influence the steps, planning, activities and all human behavior. Therefore, the Qur'an emphasizes, in particular, the need for true faith (in which the attributes of God are mentioned in detail, occult matters are revealed, and several commandments and prohibitions are affirmed) (Katsir, 1999; Shihab, 1998). However, such faith must refer to open awareness and maximum use of reason. Therefore, religion has no compulsion, for truth and heresy are clear (Leeuw, 2006).

At the time of the Qur'an's descent, history has proven that the listeners of the Qur'an were amazed and could not deny the superiority of the Qur'an both in terms of content and beauty of its language (DELISER, 2023; Rahman & Arifin, 1992). Although many people refused to believe in the Qur'an at that time (when the Prophet was alive), they still recognized the superiority of the Qur'an. In modern times, many Qur'anic scholars have had similar experiences (Qureshi & Haider, 2019). Some of them still refuse to believe in the Quran as the word of God even though they still acknowledge its greatness, while others choose to believe after properly analyzing the contents of the Quran.

Newspaper *Republika* since two years ago (January 2009) until now every week presents a section called Digest Islam in which there is a rubric Converts (Candra & Ab Rahman, 2010). This section presents the story of the journey of many non-Muslim figures who then chose Islam as their faith. From these stories, it can be seen that several people changed their beliefs because the contents of the Quran moved them. They embraced Islam after studying the Quran and discovering the wonders of the contents of this holy book. This phenomenon attracted the author's attention to examine the influence of the Quran on several figures who changed their faith in Islam. This study specifically pays attention to some of the figures in the report *Republika* to examine their Islamic background, especially related to the influence of the Quran.

The purpose of this study includes efforts to strengthen the arguments of the *mufassir* in explaining the miraculous side of the Qur'an and provide stronger motivation to Muslims to explore the study of the Quran seriously. The position of the Quran, which is considered holy amid Muslims, sometimes makes it feel too far away and difficult to reach, so its substance is sometimes forgotten. Through this research, it is hoped that Muslims can realize how close the Quran is to their hearts and lives and gain valuable lessons to understand this holy book more deeply.

The formulation of this research problem emphasizes the fundamental question of how the Qur'an influences figures or scientists to change their beliefs or beliefs. The focus of the research also involves analyzing the background of the character's life, especially related to his outlook on life, so that the factors that make them so influenced by the Quran can be identified.

METHODS

This study used an approach to socio-religious phenomenon, moving from vision to social phenomena related to one's religion. The study begins by finding suitable figures, as reported by the newspaper *Republika*. They (from several figures in the paper) will select the more relevant ones directly related to their conversion experience with studying the Qur'an. These figures will be analyzed by examining their life background and religious experiences before they embraced Islam. The results of this study will serve as the basis for the development of arguments for the miraculous power of the Qur'an.

The analysis model applied is Hermeneutical critique (critical study of hermeneutics), which provides a critical interpretation of the phenomenon of the life of one or a group of people, that is, converts in the context of this study (Ferguson, 1986; Palmer, 1969).

Some points need to be raised about this approach: **First**, it is an approach in the study of reality that has been finished or called the text in the book study. It must be realized that a phenomenon (as well as text) cannot be used as an object in scientific research or analysis. Phenomena must be treated as finished realities, which reveal themselves in a world of their own, in which one must be prepared to leave one's world if one wants to enter it. The phenomenon is not understood through the so-called "anatomy of criticism" but through "humanistic understanding." The phenomenon or text must be approached with a sense of humanity. It is not dissected for its contents but dives into living with the meanings it contains.

Second, understanding one's life is always related to events, history and the past. So, the historical process that gave birth to a phenomenon of life is a very important factor to consider. This is done by looking at the background of the lives of the people being critically studied.

Third, a person's life who has become a phenomenon must also be seen as a language and symbols expressed in a particular time and place. This time and place needs to be broken through to gain a brighter and more relevant meaning and understanding of perhaps different realities of life, which Ferguson called to span the gap between the past and present. Many experiences, thoughts, and feelings are rewarded in a person from time to time. This situation presents diverse faces of life, and the values adopted become out of tune. This is the task of hermeneutics: to understand and interpret it critically (Setyo, 2021). The keywords in this approach and analysis model are Understanding.

RESULTS

The Quran as a Miracle

This study begins by paying a little initial attention to the question of miracles because the main discussion is concerned with the question of the causes of one's conversion to Islam in relation to one's emotional and intellectual interaction with the Qur'an, which, in this context is believed to have miraculous power or in Islamic literature is called miracles.

"Miracle" is a familiar word in Muslim society. In lay and learned circles, the term miracle has been understood to mean extraordinary events that occur to the prophets of God. Miracles were believed to be God's grace to the prophets to subdue his enemies and to prove that he was God's messenger. Without miracles, a prophet would be underestimated by his people and have no defense. In the Quran, for example, it is said that the Prophet Moses defeated Pharaoh's hired sorcerers by turning his staff into snakes and devouring all the snakes resulting from the sorcerer's magic action. Jesus was able to heal the sick without going through a common treatment and even raise the dead. Such events in Islamic literature are called miracles (Warraq, 1995). It contains the following elements: divine intervention, incredible, invincible, and only happens to the prophets of God.

The greatest miracle of Prophet Muhammad was the Quran. This book has defeated those who challenged it when it was revealed (Guillaume & Ibn-Ishāq, 1955; Rizvi, 1988). The influence is amazing. Anyone who listens to it will feel amazed. Some of the Jinns at the time of the Prophet had also listened to the Qur'an and believed because they believed in the wonders of the Qur'an and the amazing instructions. Some of these things will be discussed in this chapter before a more focused analysis of the miracles of the Qur'an affecting the human heart is given.

Location of the Miracles of the Quran

The Quran is the Holy Book of Muslims, which is a book that is believed to be a collection of revelations revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad to be used as a guide by humans in carrying out their lives in the world to obtain salvation and happiness in the world and the Hereafter. As a Holy Book, the Qur'an certainly has advantages and even properties that transcend the normal lines of logic and natural laws. The Quran is the greatest miracle of the Prophet of the last days. The question is: where are the miracles of the Qur'an?

In various Islamic literatures, scholars of the Qur'an have explained various aspects of the miracles of the Qur'an by referring to several historical realities and phenomena related to nature and human life revealed by the Qur'an.

When referring to the Qur'an itself, the Qur'an seeks to draw people's attention to things that are more rational and digestible to common sense. The Quran rejects Muhammad's prophetic dependence on miracles in the form of "strange" or magical events and contradicts The Law of Nature (natural law). The inconsistency of natural events is no more amazing than their consistency. The Qur'an refers to "normal" and consistent natural events as admirable signs of God's power. Nature itself, with all the phenomena in it, is a miracle. The sun rises daily from the east and sets to the west, which is more amazing than the coming out of a dove from a magician's handkerchief. Man should meditate on it to

live out God's majesty and find true faith. When an infidel asks: "Who brought to life the shattered bones?" the Qur'an reminds him to look back when they were not there: Who created it? So the Qur'an replied: "Say: he was made alive by (God) who created him first, and He knows all creation."

Likewise, the Qur'an criticizes opponents of the Prophet who desire "extraordinary" and bizarre miracles. According to the Quran, the Prophet was just an ordinary man sent by Allah to deliver His revelation. The revelation should be man's primary concern, not his deliverer. The revelation must be pondered and lived out, as well as all the lessons contained in it. The Prophet, on the other hand, can only be used as a model of the teachings contained in God's revelation because the Prophet has become a person or person who is integral to the teachings of the revelation he brings.

The main concern of the Qur'an in responding to the challenges of the infidels of that time was on his unparalleled superiority, as well as on the existence of the Prophet (as a reader or presenter of the Qur'an), who was neither a poet nor a poet. In a serious tone, the Qur'an invites those who still doubt its truth to try to match it. But no single piece of historical evidence shows anyone's ability to match the Qur'an. Even the opponents of the Qur'an themselves are forced to acknowledge the superiority of the Qur'an and its extraordinary uniqueness (as will be discussed in the following section).

In Islamic literature, especially tafsir and *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, much discussion has been related to the Qur'an's miracles. Many works in Indonesian have also been written about the miracles of the Qur'an. In general, these works feature various phenomena extraordinarily related to the Quran's language and content or content. The language of the Qur'an has a high literary value, as well as the beauty of the arrangement and regularity of its sentences. In terms of content, the Qur'an covers various problems of human life and the universe comprehensively and beyond its time. Even in some letters, some verses are revealed predicting events that happened.

So the Qur'an itself – its inner birth – is a miracle; from whatever aspect is reviewed, the Qur'an is a Miracle. He always fascinates anyone who wants to approach him, and even those who are hostile will be amazed if he analyzes him closely and honestly.

Some Historical Records

At first, people who were not interested in Islamic da'wah were not so hostile to the Prophet Muhammad (Gibb, 1953). But they cannot remain silent when the call has reached the claimants of religion or tradition and their gods. They attacked the Prophet and his followers again. Their hostility and hatred grew when, in reality, the followers of the Prophet Muhammad increased. They began to look for the cause and wondered what power Muhammad had that easily influenced the growing masses (Davies & Ruse, 2021). They eventually discovered that the main cause was the Quran. It is this Quran that has caused them frustration, and since there is no rational reason they can explain to oppose the Quran, they accuse it of witchcraft.

At the time of revelation, some people hostile to Islam were reported to have embraced Islam for listening to Quranic recitations; some even rejected Islam even after listening to the Quran and acknowledging its beauty. Therefore, some Quraysh figures who are hostile to Islam warn their people to be careful not to listen to the Qur'an because it is feared that they will be influenced by it. The Quran is accused of having magical powers that can affect people, namely their opponents, or referred to as magic that can separate a person from his family or father from his child (Al-Ghazali, 1999).

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had embraced Islam because he was very impressed when listening to the verses in Surat Ṭāhā. Similarly, Sa'ad ibn Mu'adz and Usayd ibn ḥuḍayr embraced Islam because they were influenced after listening to the Quran, which they found very beautiful. Perhaps even more amazing, as quoted by al-Bāqillānī, is Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im, who embraced Islam after listening to two verses (7-8) in Surat aṭ-Ṭūr. Because of the influence of the Qur'an among Arab listeners, the enemies of Islam strongly hate those who recite or recite the Qur'an to others. One day, with the permission of the Prophet's companions, Ibn Mas'ūd deliberately came to where the Quraysh had gathered and recited the Quran to them aloud or loudly. The unbelievers of Quraish immediately got up and beat him until he

was bruised and bleeding, then returned to his place, and the companions of the Prophet forbade him to do the same again. Still, he replied, "If you want, I will repeat it tomorrow."

All this confirms how, from the beginning, the Qur'an has aroused tremendous charm and hostility from those who are hard-hearted and harsh and have no desire to accept the truth openly. At first glance, it also appears that admiration for the Qur'an in this context may be innate or linguistic only rather than in its content or content, as Adonis, a Modern Arab writer, supposed. However, when referring to the entire historical process at that time, there is no doubt that there was a dialectic of culture and faith struggle between two opposing camps, the defender of the Qur'an and its opponent or enemy. This is not hostility to the outer shell but latent hostility that concerns all aspects of life, from prestige, self-respect, faith, and concepts to economic issues and power politics. The Qur'an is feared not only for its tremendous influence on people in terms of the beauty of its language but also because its extraordinary movement changed the mindset of the Arab people at that time. But the persona born of the Qur'an is certainly more visible because of its more exposed nature and striking.

Another narration mentions that some unbelievers of Quraish had gone to listen to the Quran recited by the Prophet Muhammad in his house in prayer. They left individually secretly without telling each other. But after listening to the Quran directly, they cannot resist the beauty and height of its charm and its greatness in influencing the listener. This has caused them to hate the Quran even more.

Some of the inhabitants of Medina who visited Makkah had heard this amazing thing from the Qur'an, and they believed in it. After returning from Makkah, they spread the religion to the people there, so no house in Medina does not have the Quran. It is narrated that some say: "Great cities have been conquered by war, while the Quran conquered Medina."

This historical record illustrates the development of Arabic language and literature and how its people, since that time, have paid special attention to the systems and concepts of communication that humans use either in relation to others or to other supernatural realms. Words, especially those expressed in the form of voice, are believed to have powers that can influence, arouse, and even mislead and harm others. Therefore, although recognized as great, the Qur'an may be regarded as a bad force that disrupts and undermines various traditions and existing socio-cultural orders.

Views of modern scientists

Several contemporary scholars and scholars, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, have studied the content of the Qur'an, its history, and its development. Serious scholars and scientists have paid special attention to various aspects of the study of the Qur'an, both in terms of etymology, content, and aesthetics and various statements of the Qur'an related to science and modern science.

Non-Muslim professors of Islam have given their own views. Prof. Gibb, for example, has pursued Islam in depth in terms of its history and culture. He later became famous as a Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies. In his book *Mohammadanism*, he expressed his various views on the Qur'an. Although much can be criticized from his thinking, he has spent much of his life studying the Quran. Gibb asserts that the Qur'an can never be matched by his opponents, and this proves its miracles. So did Sir William Muir (1896), who pursued Islamic history and wrote about the life of the Prophet Muhammad. He admitted clearly that the content of the Qur'an really covers various aspects of science. Both of these figures were modern orientalists who began to pay objective attention to the study of Islam, in stark contrast to their predecessors who saw Islam as full of malice and subjectivity. There are, of course, a string of other names made up of people like them, but it's out of place to be described in detail here.

Other scholars have given a more concrete appreciation of the greatness of the Qur'an. Gary Miller, for example, a Canadian mathematician who later converted to Islam, has written a long article that reviews the various contents of the Qur'an related to modern science. In his view, the Qur'an is truly a book unparalleled in history, and there has never been found a holy book that equals the Qur'an in terms of content, language, and various other aspects, especially science, which is very amazing. We also know other names in the Islamic world, such as Harun Yahya, Zakir Naik, and Afzalur Rahman, who are

modern Muslim scholars who have given special analyses of the content of the Qur'an in relation to modern science, and what they produce are works that should be welcomed with great appreciation.

The Quran and the Transformation of Beliefs (Review of the *Republika* Report on Converts)

Why did they convert to Islam? How the Qur'an can influence their outlook on life and how they become prepared to face the challenges resulting from a life policy they take. This is the basic question you want to elaborate on in this section. A brief explanation of *Republika* as an Islamic mass media that has played a very significant role in the country will begin this chapter. This is because this mass media is a basic reference for tracking converts to be researched. Then, it will be followed by a brief description of the converted figures used as studies. After that, the discussion will enter the "transition space," namely the description in subchapters D and E, followed by research analysis.

Republika and the Role of Islamic Media

Republika is among the Indonesian print media (in the form of newspapers) that cares about Islamic issues and news about the Muslim community and the Islamic world, nationally and internationally. Since the early 1990s, *Republika* has filled itself with a supplement called "Islam Digest" and the rubric "Converts". This includes a very distinctive section and attracts the attention of many readers. Several figures, such as Professor Imam Suprayogo (Rector of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang), Dr. Hidayat Nurwahid (former Chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia) and Professor Dr. Yunahar Ilyas (Chairman of the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah) have given very positive comments and consider these supplements and rubrics to have a major impact on the development of the insight of the Indonesian Muslim community. The information about the history of Islam and Muslim figures and scholars is interesting and inspiring. The same is the case with stories about Western scholars or non-Muslim figures who embraced Islam, which are packaged in the rubric "Converts".

Da'wah was the first expression the Prophet showed in his commitment to God's teachings and appeals. Da'wah is inviting and informing the truth. Islam without da'wah is like a vehicle without wheels. Da'wah is a movement to change the lives of mankind to a better and more perfect state. Therefore, It is not surprising that from the beginning, the Quran has underlined the basic principles of da'wah: professional, sincere, patient, and wise.

The role of mass media as it is carried out in *Republika* is one form of professionalism in the role of Islamic da'wah. There have been many mass media in various forms in Indonesia that display the role of Islam and invite truth and goodness. This is indeed worthy of appreciation. But *Republika* has come up with its own unique and interesting format. Special appearances in presenting historical stories of the role of Islamic figures and the development of the Islamic world are indeed very distinctive and impressive. This study may be a form of appreciation for this.

What *Republika* presents about converts is very concise and informative and in the form of news as it is. As material used as a reference source for a study, it is certainly inadequate. Many things must be studied about the life of a convert to truly understand what is happening to him when he decides to convert because, as discussed and will also be discussed, the phenomenon of conversion is not something that is not complicated both psychologically and socio-culturally. Therefore, the materials for this study from *Republika* newspaper sources were collected as much as possible to get a broader, although not in-depth, picture. This material is analyzed using the cross method, which provides comparisons between one another wherever there is relevance and suitability. Some other material of course, inevitably, must be sought to bring together concepts and theories about conversion. Nevertheless, this paper has provided a fairly interesting basic reference for this study material.

Appointed Figures

Various figures are sampled, ranging from religionists, scientists, ordinary people to journalists, reporters, lecturers and artists. One of their characteristics is an open attitude and wanting the truth. They do not tolerate fanaticism and always struggle to find answers to questions about the phenomena

of their lives and religions. Many times, it's that dissatisfaction that leads them to do *intellectual adventure*, Explore the world of science, philosophy and religions to reconcile thirsty hearts and minds.

In this study, the figures studied were divided into two categories, namely those who embraced Islam because of the influence of the Quran and those who embraced Islam because of various other influences. As will be explained later, the influence of the Qur'an that has caused a convert to change his religious orientation is different: some are impressed by the outward beauty of the Qur'an and others by admiration for the content of the Qur'an which he believes to be very rational. There are also others, embracing Islam because they see the miracles of the Qur'an in terms of its harmony with modern science.

These selected figures are all taken from the report *Republika* Randomly, from 2009 to 2010, a total of 59 (fifty-nine people). In terms of religious background, they are divided into: Jews, Christians, Hindus, atheists and some are not reported religious background. Geographically, they come from Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia.

Table 1. Converts Based on Previous Religions

No.	Region	Sum	Percentage
1.	Jew	2	3,39
2.	Christian	40	67,80
3.	Hindu	7	11,86
4.	Atheist	1	1,69
5.	Unknown	9	15,25
	Sum	59	100,00

Table 2. Converts by geography

No.	Region	Sum	Percentage
1.	America/Canada	17	28,81
2.	Europe	19	32,20
3.	Asia	16	27,12
4.	Australia/New Zealand	2	3,39
5.	Afrikaans	3	5,08
6.	Unknown	2	3,39
		59	100,00

Among the highlights of the above comparison is that it turns out that, as far as the *Republika* report goes, most converts are of Christian background and generally come from America and Europe. Here is a background study to provide a deeper understanding of the process of conversion and how the life experience of our converts came to such an important conclusion, as well as how it relates to the influence of the Qur'an.

Various Life Backgrounds

From any background, one can change, as long as one has a passion for self-search and development. People will easily experience change if they have the belief that there are no absolutes in this world. Change is a good, if directed correctly. Denying change is stagnation, which makes one fanatical and easily justifies mistakes and shortcomings in others. In this case, the background of life becomes unimportant. Change is largely determined by one's perspective on the world and the truth.

However, a change in outlook on life or conversion or conversion has a significant meaning and relationship with the experience and background of life that a person lives. Such changes sometimes occur suddenly; Sometimes it also happens very slowly, where a person changes gradually and at a certain time he experiences a very meaningful peak of change and will appear outward as something as

if new or suddenly happened. The first model change, which is sudden, usually occurs due to a very emotional influence; while the second, due to intellectual wanderings or unsatisfactory search for truth. However, both conversion models have the same characteristics, namely that there is a crisis or conflict between the doctrine or belief held and rationality or thought that continues to move dynamically. The difference is only in how to respond to the conflict; The former is more pent-up while the other is creatively developed.

The cause of a person experiencing a change in outlook on life often comes from small or trivial things. *It may be some text often heard*, said G. Van Der Leeuw, *that suddenly appeals to the mind with extraordinary force*. Ordinary things sometimes become extraordinary all of a sudden. Some dreams can change a person's life so that he, for example, changes his religion. This was experienced by Sugeng Threen, a Hindu who later wandered to Catholicism and eventually embraced Islam. He dreamed of wearing robes and turbans. He told the dream to a scholar who said, "Good dreams come from Allah, nightmares come from Satan." That was the beginning of Sugeng's desire to embrace Islam, which was then accompanied by long and deep reflection before deciding to pledge himself to become a Muslim. Another experience was felt by Wahyu Soeparno Putro, a Caucasian man born in Scotland who later lived in Indonesia. He lives in Yogyakarta near a mosque, and therefore he complains of being annoyed every morning by the sound of the dawn call to prayer. But without realizing it, the sound of the call to prayer has also changed his lifestyle and accustomed him to getting up early and being disciplined. When he began to realize that, the sound of the call to prayer became something he longed for. This astonished him and finally what he felt led him to the path of Islam. Cindy Claudia Harahap experienced an event that seemed simpler. One night, he and a friend "chatted" while lying on the grass and looking up at the clear sky. Suddenly, he gasped in awe, looking at the crescent moon adjacent to the brightly shining star. A feeling of awe came in his heart, and he wondered what was happening to him. His friend told him that it was the symbol of the mosque. Then he said: "Lest this is a hint, if we have to go to the mosque." This simple event led him to the shahada after he had studied Islam and the Quran's contents.

The conversion also occurred as the culmination of a long heart or intellectual struggle, which Leeuw referred to as *an eruption of what has for long been accumulating beneath the threshold of consciousness*. It is an eruption (explosion) of what has long been accumulated and buried in the threshold of consciousness, and finally can no longer be hidden. This is experienced by many thinkers or intellectuals who live and are raised in an indoctrination of beliefs contrary to the mind and various results of the intellectual journey they experience. This eruption results from a crisis or internal conflict that has been long and long and finally found its own way. Jeffrey Lang, a professor of mathematics at an American university, is an example of this. He was born and raised in a Roman Catholic family, but his intellectual journey into mathematics led him to atheism. He did not believe in God, and the religion was considered unnecessary. However, their religious upbringing in childhood and adolescence remained in his heart. He always wondered about the various issues presented by the scriptures to which his faith referred. He discussed religion with his friends and students. Finally, the one who gave him a satisfactory answer was the Quran. Lang converted to Islam.

The converts studied came from different family lives and even professions and beliefs that were not uniform. But they have one thing in common, which is what is called *Longing for Truth* (longing for truth), and they are generally critical people in thinking and creative in working.

Some converts reportedly come from blended families, for example, Muslim fathers with Christian mothers, or vice versa. This often happens in Indonesia. They felt oscillated between two faiths. But it brings a silver lining: a stronger spirit of search grows. They also hang out with friends of different religions, which gives them a wider input of knowledge and becomes a comparison material.

Deep-rooted Religious Spirit

Abandoning a belief is not easy. There is a heavy psychological pressure that everyone who opposes the beliefs that once grew in his heart feels. In addition, social pressure from his loved ones or

the community around him is not a light thing to bear. These are among the things that many people experience when converting. However, from the experiences of the converts studied, it appears that a core of fundamental and strong beliefs persist. Conversion does not necessarily mean conversion of "faith" because they considered the religion they previously professed not as a belief but rather as a "forced" tradition.

Most religious conversions occur precisely in those who have a strong religious spirit. They care deeply about their religion, always paying attention and pondering the meaning of the religion they believe in. This deep passion, as well as the critical attitude and earnestness in seeking the true meaning of religious teachings, leads them to a stance that they must take in a firm way, namely conversion.

In the examples of converts mentioned above, it appears that they found compatibility with Islam through a period of transition, during which they wanted to discover the true meaning of their faith but had rational difficulties when trying to look into the Islamic tradition, especially at its central source, the Qur'an, they found a match. They are not "stubborn" dissidents and do not see religion as vain; It's just that they are eager from the beginning to get the true meaning of the teachings of the religion they believe in but always find it difficult. The anxiety then finds another way that can be reassuring. That is Islam.

Walter Houston Clark mentions there are four stages of a person experiencing the conversion process, namely: (1) *conflict and mental struggle*, (2) *relaxation or surrender*, (3) *a sense of peace, release, and inner harmony*, and (4) *the concrete expression of conversion*. So Conversion, according to this theory, is the movement of life that proceeds naturally. Conversion does not necessarily mean conversion, but rather a spiritual development in which one processes one's soul to peace. Cases of conversion in the form of conversion to Islam generally demonstrate the existence of such a process. Converts, spiritually and intellectually, are like travellers looking for something lost. When discovering Islam, specifically the Quran, they believed they had found what they had been looking for.

It is difficult to define what a person is looking for in his life in relation to his feelings, soul, and spiritual needs. But the various life experiences of converts make that reality so evident in their testimony. The misery resulting from the inner pressure of practising an unreasonable religion was so real to them. Likewise, the inner satisfaction in religion after finding a teaching that can solve life's problems is a very concrete and satisfying experience. Inner experience is no longer a mere concept, imagination, or hope but a real enlightenment that has a tremendous effect on real life.

Some converts have experienced the beginning of a change with feelings *Shock* or shock. Kenneth L Jenkins, a pastor in America, experienced this while visiting Saudi Arabia and found the life of the Muslim community very different from what he had known so far. Jenkins thought Muslims were just as Christian in religion, or worse. Jenkins found many Christian religious leaders who perverted from religious teachings; and instead find such a polite Muslim community that guards each other from the various paths that lead to possibility. Muslim women who cover their aurat began to be understood values and wisdom by Jenkins after hanging out intimately in the midst of the Islamic community. Shock turned into admiration. The spirit of religious teachings in him grew again and found its way in Islam.

Courage and Sincerity

Leaving a faith or religion, let alone having been practised and practised for a long time, as mentioned above, is not easy. Even more so when he is abandoned for having found another faith. Psychologically, the conversion of beliefs will occur when a person continuously finds his beliefs provide dissatisfaction, both intellectual, emotional, and social satisfaction. Only when a person feels it is painful enough will he commit the "reckless" act of conversion. This means the person has discovered a new world that can satisfy him.

The psychological challenge for a religious convert is the most basic because it relates to the religious process. There will be inner pressure that plagues a person in moments of change or transformation of beliefs. The demand to defend what has been believed on the one hand and its rejection, due to various processes of life experience, on the other hand, will leave a person who wants

to change his religion in bitter internal conflict. Man defends the religion or belief he professes. However, when psychologically religion cannot satisfy the inside, there will be an inner impulse to find a way out. This is experienced by those who care about their religion and make it an important part of their lives.

The most difficult challenge in social life is the alienation of family, friends, loved ones and even loved ones. These challenges impact social roles and daily life, where a convert will find it difficult to interact in society. When a person is known to have adopted a teaching that is considered deviant by his social community, he will be seen as a stranger who does not deserve to be given certain trust. He will find it difficult to get support for various needs of life. So when a person has been alienated in belief, he will also be socially alienated. This is due to the social dependence of a community on the same beliefs they profess. In general, the social strength of a community is centered on the togetherness of a vision of life and a religious mentality.

Thus, culturally the impact of a religious conversion will also be felt greatly on a person and his social community. Changes in a belief will usually be followed by various changes in behaviour, way of dressing, family order, and of course on changes in the orientation of thought and also the direction of children's education (Ansari & Thiele, 2018; Clark, 1959). All of this can be why a person who has changed religion often feels compelled to look for another environment completely different from the environment in which he has lived all this time. Not all converts experience the same cases, because the characteristics of their communities vary. In traditional societies, issues of religion and belief (even schools and sects) are very sensitive. Differences in religion and sect are sometimes enough grounds for conflict and quarrels. But in a more educated and modern society, attitudes are fairer, and tolerance can be found, although not a few also experience converts who are just the opposite.

The experience of religious conversion is also inseparable from one's intellectual struggles. Knowledge and education play a role in developing one's belief formation. Paul Davies reminds us that many factors influence a person's beliefs, ranging from rational argumentation to blind tactics. Faith and belief can form, develop and change due to personal experiences, education, social interaction, indoctrination and even evocative dreams.

Many converts have a spiritual experience in a dream or in a simple natural phenomenon, as discussed above. Some feel amazed at the art of calligraphy, the sound of the call to prayer and the recitation of the Quran. Still another experience is an intellectual odyssey. Most scientists and religious figures experience this. Some Christian chroniclers who embraced Islam said that intellectual difficulties in understanding their religion had caused them to struggle with exhausting intellectual challenges, which eventually led them to Islam.

The challenges above show how much courage is needed to navigate the sea of ideology, build more convincing, and reconcile life principles. Some people may not be so worried about their beliefs because they believe everything is settled. He found no blemishes in his religion, nor was there the slightest room for criticism of his own beliefs. Perhaps there are not many intellectual struggles that a person like this faces, or he may not want to be confused by debates that seem never-ending in the history of mankind. Or, it may be that he has found an inner satisfaction that no longer needs to be disturbed. Another possibility is that the person has been indoctrinated with a conviction, and the entire acceptance of the faith baptized to him has descended into (and is neatly stored in) his conscious threshold brain.

Sincerity is a source of strength that can move a person to see life's problems clearly and transparently, without fear, and without hesitation to take important steps to change his life for the better and reassure the soul. That remarkable spiritual feat stood out to most of the converts studied. Sincerity also means the courage to take all risks due to the life policies taken. As mentioned above, stepping into another religion is entering the wilds of life that are socioculturally full of obstacles. But the mental readiness to do so is evidence of a remarkable commitment to a convincing decision of faith.

Such decisions are certainly not made arbitrarily, but based on maturity of thought or various adequate intellectual and emotional considerations.

Analysis and Interpretation

We are not born with the choice of what religion we will follow. We are born with freedom, but then grow up and are raised in an environment of a certain faith. This is the reality that humanity experiences. We are taught to believe in a particular belief, sometimes without choice, or through an influence that is difficult to challenge because there is already a norm that forbids such opposition. Islam recognizes this reality, as the Prophet said: that every child is born of fitrah; It was his parents who jewished him or tortured him or promoted him. Again, this hadith is, of course, talking about reality, not about true faith and human fate. In reality, man is indeed greatly influenced by the world outside himself.

Confidence has tremendous power. A person will willingly die to defend his beliefs. The history of war and bloodshed is often linked to faith. What makes that belief so remarkably affect a person's personality?

Life is impossible to live without faith. Man depends on something he does not fully know and master, And man will not be able to master everything. But man can develop himself and his knowledge infinitely. That is, human beliefs themselves may still change or develop, along with the development of knowledge and experience. One such form of change is religious change or conversion.

Some people convert because they think they have lost their way, or they may even leave religion altogether because they think religion is just folly. He became an atheist, believing neither in God nor in anything supernatural or irrational.

The cases of Muslims who convert to other religions are not small, as well as those who choose to leave the religion altogether. They are generally people who received a half-baked and intellectually immature Islamic education. Some of them even rose with emotional fervor to berate Islam, the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad. They lament the backward, illiterate, ignorant, and often narrow-minded, fanatical, and extreme condition of the Islamic world and Muslims. All these phenomena they refer to as the error of Islam as a very dangerous teaching and religion. Psychologically, they are influenced by their inability to accept the harsh reality of Islamic world life, which is materially far behind the Western world and modern Europe. They also denounced his traditional education as having no clear purpose, fanatics and superstition. Reading the Quran in villages, taught solely for worship and ritual without meaning and passion, has become a very foolish experience for them, and seeing it as a very bad blemish as a result of Islam. Ibn Warraq (pseudonym) has written a tome recounting his life experiences in a Muslim family, which he reproaches. He also tried hard to criticize Islam and the Quran based on his superficial knowledge. Muslim thinkers, and even objective orientalist like W. Montgomery Watt, were not spared. He and others like him are typical unrestrained "free thinkers" who are shocked to see the development of the Western world. At the same time, he has just escaped from the entanglement of his environmental fanatics who supply his head with traditional doctrines that are actually only part of the interpretation and understanding of Islam born and developed in a very distinctive environment and should not be considered to reflect the nature and spirit of Islam more broadly and universal. In fact, as Abou El Fadl says, what Ibn Warraq wrote only repeats the sentences of orientalist and Islamophobes, nothing more. Some sites on the internet have also become a place to express themselves in the form of freedom of opinion that often does not escape immature, emotional and superficial attitudes.

On the contrary, the experience of entering Islam is mostly found in those who deliberately struggle to find the truth and resist even inner pressure. They are scientists, researchers, religious figures, and people who were critical of various religious views and thoughts, both traditional and modern.

For the purposes of this study, some of the converts were divided into two groups: those who embraced Islam because of the direct influence of the Qur'an and those who embraced Islam because of various other influences (Deedat et al., 2000). Nevertheless, in the end, all of them refer to the Quran. For example, several converts embraced Islam because they saw strong values of brotherhood among

Muslims and no discrimination due to race and skin color among Muslims. Most who are impressed by such social phenomena are those who have experienced the bitterness of discrimination in their own non-Muslim society. Although basically very impressed by such social realities, they generally then find out why Muslims are so tolerant and fraternal in this way, where they later discover that the Quran has taught universal human values.

As already discussed, the Qur'an has had a tremendous influence since its inception. It impacts people personally and communities willing to unite their hearts for a more universal humanitarian mission. The Qur'anic messages received by the Arabs at the time of revelation had such a profound impact on radical and real change that anyone would be tempted to justify the phenomenon as an extraordinary force unparalleled in history.

This power is especially evident in its exterior, as it is transmitted orally and directly addressed to those familiar with traditional culture's dialectic and uphold linguistic aesthetics. So, it is easy to understand why the evocative spirit of the messages of the Qur'an is formulated in a unique, distinctive narrative. Even though it is outside the entire order of the format of ignorant Arabic literature, it still merges with the spirit of perfect Arabic aesthetics. This astonished and amazed his listeners so much that it was like a bewitch, and therefore, his enemies accused him of being Muhammad's magic. But it is undeniable that magic was performed by people completely different from Muhammad in character, behaviour, commitment principles and purpose. The Arabs recognized no sorcerer traits in Muhammad, and he never created enmity with anyone.

It is this exterior area that has influenced some converts to embrace Islam. The art of recitation, calligraphy decoration, and the feeling of peace when reading, understanding, or meditating on the verses of the Quran seem simple to be used as reasons for someone to change his religion. But isn't art a greatness? Has he not separated man from other creatures living without civilization?

Entering the deeper regions of the Qur'an has amazed several people. Some converts have read the Quran (understand its contents) before embracing Islam and found lessons and influences he had never experienced. Jenkins, mentioned above, completed the translation of the Quran within four months before he converted to Islam. Israel Ponty Moletsane has wrestled with questions about the paradoxes she has found in her religion for years. He was relieved and satisfied after reading the Quran because all his questions were answered after reading this holy book of Muslims.

The interior area of the beauty of the Qur'an is the core of the source of enlightenment. The satisfaction that the Qur'an gives in this area is, of course, remarkable and impressive because it touches the deepest part of human consciousness. The satisfaction of the soul due to the disappearance of doubts, the intellectual satisfaction of finding solutions to the problems of life, and the peace of heart due to the light of guidance are part of the power of the influence of the Qur'an on most converts. This last part (related to guidance) is a phenomenon that is difficult to explain. This is the greatest miracle.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the Quran has had a tremendous impact since the time of the Prophet until today. The testimony of Qur'anic listeners at the time of the Prophet reflects its profound influence, influencing life psychologically, intellectually, and socio-culturally. Some early Muslims chose to follow the Prophet Muhammad because they were fascinated by the beauty of the language of the Quran which was considered imitable. The study of Scripture, especially in the Western world, confirms that religion, history, and philosophy have a major role in the development of human civilization, with the Qur'an as the main driver of changing the orientation of life. Scientists who studied the Qur'an also admired its extraordinary content and explanation of the amazing phenomenon, even changing their hearts to embrace Islam.

The experience of converts shows that the recitation of the Quran provides satisfactory answers related to life, converts their beliefs and encourages conversion to Islam. Some converts were impressed

by the tolerance of Muslims and the calmness of Sufism, led them to a deeper study of Islam, and were eventually convinced that the Qur'an was the source of truth sought all along. Various reasons that drive converts to Islam, such as inner conflicts, religious conflicts in the family, shock at realities that are different from initial perceptions, and the discovery of the beauty of life in Islam, are evidence that the Quran has a strong appeal in changing people's lives and beliefs.

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