

A Reverts Letter to her Parents *Written by Maryam Jameelah*



Dear Mother and Father,

I have now been living in Pakistan for more than twenty years during which time you have acquired an entire additional family of loved-ones there, adding much to your happiness. You have reached a ripe age, thank God, living longer in good health than I had ever expected. You have read all my books and Islamic literature I have sent you with a broad and open mind. Therefore you need no introduction to the subject I wish to discuss with you now and nothing I have to say will seem strange and new to you.

I wonder if you realize fully how very fortunate you are. So long as you can keep in reasonable health and are able to take care of yourselves, you can continue to enjoy a pleasant life. But do you ever think of the tragic fate of those hundreds of thousands of other older Americans, the victims of chronic illness and infirmities, who crowd to overflowing hospitals and nursing homes (which are really charnel houses), the old-age homes and the senile wards of mental institutions? And do you ever think of those still greater numbers of older people who are widowed and live their lonely lives confined to their dingy rooms in constant fear of muggings, physical attacks and robberies by juvenile delinquents who prey on the old and infirm with no remorse or fear of punishment? The maltreatment of older people is a direct result of the collapse of the home and extended family. Does your elder sister - my aunt Rosalyn, a great-grandmother lovingly sheltered in a close and adoring family and a happy home, ever think how lucky she is and how few of her advanced age in America are left like her?

You must know that society in which you were brought up and have lived all your life is in a state of rapid disintegration on the brink of collapse. Actually the decline in our civilization was evident as far back as World War I but at that time few people except some intellectuals and artists were aware of what was happening. But since the end of World War II and especially during the last two decades, the rot has reached such a stage of advanced decay that nobody can any longer ignore it.

The moral anarchy in the absence of any respected, fixed standards of behaviour and conduct, the obsession with perverted sex over the entertainment media, the mistreatment of older people, the divorce rate which has climbed so high that among the new generation, an enduring, happy marriage is becoming rare, child abuse, the destruction of the natural environment, the prodigious waste of scarce and valuable resources, the epidemic of venereal diseases and mental disorders, drug addiction, alcoholism, suicides as leading cause of death, crime, vandalism, corruption in the government and contempt for the law in general - all of this has a cause.

The cause of this is the failure of secularism and materialism and the absence of absolute, transcendental theological and moral values. Deed does in the final analysis depend upon creed because if the intention is wrong, the work always suffers.

No doubt that it may bore you to read this. You will protest that if you are not theologians, philosophers or sociologists, then why bother about such "deep" matters when they do not seem to be of any direct concern to you? After all, you are happy and content living just as you are. You only wish to enjoy life right now, live entirely in the present and accept each day as it comes. If life is a journey, is it not foolhardy only to be concerned with pleasant and comfortable accommodations along the way and never to think about the journey's end? Why were we born? What is the meaning and purpose of life, why must we die and what will happen to each of us after death?

Father you have told me more than once that you cannot accept any traditional religion because you are convinced that theology conflicts with modern science. Science and technology have indeed given us much information about the physical world, provided us with abundant comforts and conveniences, increased efficiency and discovered remedies for many diseases that used to be fatal. But science does not and cannot tell us about the meaning of life and death. Science tells us "how" but it never answers the question "why"?. Can science ever tell us what is right and what is wrong? What is good and what is evil? What is beautiful and what is ugly? And to whom are we accountable for what we do? Religion does.

Today America is in many ways a repetition of ancient Rome in the terminal stages of her decline and fall. Thinking people know that secularism has failed to be a sound foundation of our social order. They are anxiously searching in other directions for a solution to the crisis but do not know yet where to find it. This is not of concern only to a few sociologists. The disease of national disintegration directly affects you and me and each one of us. During its most critical period, ancient Rome adopted Christianity as its salvation and henceforth the Church dominated Europe for more than a thousand years. This put an end to many of the worst social and moral evils of decadent Rome and greatly raised the moral and spiritual standards of the people. Unfortunately during the formative period of its history, the Church compromised with paganism and secularism, adopting an elaborate priesthood and incomprehensive theology which could not resist the impact of the renaissance, the revival of the natural sciences and the radical

secularism of the French Revolution. While Christians in Europe and America have deserted their faith wholesale leaving the churches almost empty, the missionaries continue to represent the vanguard of western imperialism and exploitation in Asia and Africa.

After Christianity, the Jews comprise the second largest religious group in America who dominate politically, and economically, as well exercising considerable control over the media. But Judaism has always been parochial and tribal, seldom welcoming converts. It is not and has never been a universal faith. The Zionist movement which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel is the secular expression of Jewish nationalism and tribalism. The dreadful atrocities committed by the Israelis in occupied Palestine, the unprovoked aggression in Lebanon and adjacent areas and attempted genocide of the Palestine Arabs, depriving them of all human and political rights, is the logical result of this same narrow parochial outlook. This is the reason why even the most orthodox of the rabbis refuse to believe that Israel can do any wrong and uncritically support everything she does. These glaring moral and spiritual defects automatically disqualify Judaism as the faith of the future.

The Muslims comprise the third and fastest growing faith in America today. No longer is Islam confined to remote regions of the deserts and jungles of Asia and Africa. No longer is Islam foreign to the American scene. There are more than three million Muslims in America today and their numbers are increasing fast. There are thousands of students from all Muslim countries studying in American universities, and well-educated, highly-trained Muslims are busily at work in all professions. In the last two decades, hundreds of native-born American converts have swelled their ranks. At first most of the converts were black people who found in Islam, dignity, honour, self-respect and racial brotherhood as did Malcolm-X, but in recent years more and more white converts of European origin, searching for guidance in all the affairs of their formally chaotic lives, have also embraced Islam, making many sacrifices and enduring much hardships to do so. Few of them are fortunate as I am to have loving parents like you. Most of them suffer severe frictions with their non-Muslim parents and relatives. Today churches and synagogues are almost deserted but the newly-built mosques and Islamic centres, springing up in every important American city and town, are attracting rapidly growing numbers. Most of the new Muslims in America are young, intelligent and well-educated. What attracts so many young Americans to Islam?

Americans today, both young and old, are desperately searching for guidance. They know from bitter experience that the personal freedom and opportunities they as Americans enjoy are meaningless and self-destructive without reliable guidance, direction and purpose. Secularism and materialism are powerless to provide any positive or constructive moral values for Americans either individually or collectively. That is why after Christianity and Judaism have failed them, more and more people in America today are turning towards Islam. In Islam as new Muslims, they find a sane, healthy, clean and honest life. And for Muslims, everything does not come to an end at death. They look forward to an Eternity of bliss, peace and perfect happiness in the Hereafter).

This Guidance found in the Holy Qur'an and the recorded words and deeds of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is not only for foreign races in some far-away corner of the East, centuries ago. Here are to be found the solutions to all economic, social, moral and political problems which face us right here in the West today. Furthermore, Islam is not cold, remote and impersonal. Muslims have complete faith in a very personal God who not only created, sustains and rules the universe but also loves and deeply cares about the fate of each of us. The Holy Qur'an tells us that God is nearer to every one of us than our jugular veins!

Since the Holy Qur'an is divine revelation, it cannot and will never be changed. Because it is perfect, it cannot be improved, revised or reformed. Since Muhammad, peace be upon whom, is the final Prophet, his guidance can never be superseded by any other. The Qur'an and Sunnah are addressed to all peoples, in every country of the West as well as the East. Since it is relevant for all times, in all places, it can never become obsolete or out-of-date.

You are both of very advanced age and there is so little time left. Yet it is not too late if you act now. If your decision is positive, your ties with your loved ones in Pakistan will not only be by blood but also in faith. You cannot only love them in this world but be all together with us forever in eternity. If your decision is negative, I am very much afraid that your happy, comfortable and pleasant life will very shortly come to an end. As soon as the inevitable occurs, it is too late for remorse and regrets. The punishment will be terrible from which there is no refuge and no escape.

It is as your daughter who loves you and hopes to the end that you will be spared this fate. But the decision rests entirely with you. You have complete freedom to accept or reject: Your future depends upon the choice you make now.

All my love and best wishes. Your devoted daughter,

(Maryam Jameelah)

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