

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Conversion to Islam

Early years of Islam

During the first three years, Islam remained a private affair and no attempt was made to proclaim Islam publicly. The message of Islam was during this period conveyed privately to his friends by the Holy Prophet. Among the persons outside the family of the Holy Prophet, Abu Bakr was the first to be converted to Islam. Abu Bakr in turn brought some of his friends to the fold of Islam. Those who accepted Islam persuaded their friends to accept Islam. In this way the chain came to be extended, and the progress of Islam though not spectacular was quite satisfactory. The early Muslims prayed in secluded glens, or other solitary places. On one occasion Abu Talib happened to see the Muslims praying behind the Holy Prophet in a glen out side Makkah. Ali was one of the congregation. Abu Talib asked Ali as to whom they were praying, and what was the religion they had adopted. Ali told his father that they were praying to Allah, the Lord of the world and the universe. There was no god but Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) was His prophet. Abu Talib pondered for a while and said, "If Muhammad has become the prophet, hold fast to him for he cannot but be right. I know that his elevation to prophethood was expected many years ago". When the Holy Prophet and Ali visited the house of Abu Talib, they had a more detailed discussion about the new faith. Abu Talib was sympathetic, but as he was one of the tribal chiefs he could not abandon the faith of his forefathers. He warned the Holy Prophet that he would have to face the opposition of the Quraish. He promised that though he would not accept the new faith, he would stand by him through thin and thick, and he would enjoy his full support. Fatima the wife of Abu Talib was more sympathetic. She said that she had mothered Muhammad, and Muhammad (peace be on him) was not the man to make a false claim. She observed that it was yet too early for her to make a decision whether she was going to accept Islam or not. Jafar, a brother of Ali put a few questions to the Holy Prophet, who answered them satisfactorily. Jafar wanted some more time to consider over the matter.

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