



The
Ex-Muslim's
Guide to
Christianity

KENZA HADDOCK

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Kenza Haddock

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Appendix by Eric N. Pement, MDiv, MBA.

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Preface

This book was written for Muslims who have converted to Christianity. As a former Muslim myself, I presume that you will already have an understanding of Islam, its practices, and its culture.

I know that Christians who have never been Muslim will “listen in” to help their ex-Muslim friends adjust to their new life in Christ. If this is you, here’s how to say some common words. The religion is called *Islam*, pronounced “iz-LAHM.” Followers of Islam are called *Muslims*. Their name for God is *Allah* (pronounced “ah-LAH”), but their ideas about God are distorted. The word *Qur’an* should be pronounced “kooor-AHN” (not “kor-ANN”).

For both types of readers, I have added a sidebar here and there to elaborate some ideas that didn’t fit well into the text, but still might need to be explained.

Also, the Bible is the Word of God, and it is life to me, so when I quote from it, I put it in *italic type*, so it stands out.

If you would like to follow my story more closely, please visit me at:

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CHAPTER 1

From Death to Life

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:17

I was raised in an Islamic household in Morocco. Like you, I believed I was Muslim from birth, because Allah willed it that way. We were taught that all children are “born Muslim” by nature.

I grew up believing that I had the capacity to “achieve” salvation by satisfying the five Pillars of Islam. The Islamic confession, (1) the *shahada*, was whispered in my ears the day I was born: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.” I said it in Arabic regularly. Those who taught that God has a “son” were the worst of blasphemers. I believed that if I (2) prayed regularly, five times each day facing Mecca, (3) fasted correctly in the month of Ramadan, (4) gave enough money to the poor, and (5) traveled to Mecca to participate in the pilgrimage activities at least once in my life, then maybe I could “achieve” my way to heaven.

When I was twelve, my family and I moved from Morocco to the United States. Before our move, I had little exposure to Christianity. I was a child when our family visited Spain prior to relocating to the US, and I remember evangelists trying to hand Bibles to me, and my parents would intervene. My parents taught me that Christians mistakenly think Jesus was crucified and he actually wasn't. I was taught that Jews were hated by Allah, and they were all destined for hell, all of which is based on what the Qur'an taught.

I grew up fearing Allah. I saw him as a god who was closely scrutinizing me, so I tried my best to strive to earn his favor. I was the first of my brothers and sisters to read the entire Qur'an during the month of Ramadan. I made sure to fulfill the five obligatory prayers, plus the additional two. When I became of age to fast, I fasted extra, prayed extra, and carried the Qur'an with me, all in an attempt to gain favor with Allah. However, I could never be sure.

I grew up expecting that negative circumstances in my life would come as punishments for my sins and failures. God even told the angels to be angry with me. One of the sacred hadith was especially troubling. As you know, a *hadith* is a record or narration involving Muhammad's life or sayings, but the sacred hadith (*hadith qudsi*) are a special type. They carry more weight because they are supposedly a direct revelation of God in the words of Muhammad, one notch below the Qur'an. One of them says:

If Allah has abhorred a servant [of His], He calls Gabriel and says: I abhor So-and-so, therefore abhor him. So Gabriel abhors him. Then he [Gabriel] calls out to the inhabitants of heaven: Allah abhors So-and-so, therefore abhor him. He said: So they abhor him, and abhorrence is established for him on earth.¹

Based on this belief and after growing up in a traumatic home, by the time I was twenty-three I was convinced God hated me. It didn't matter how much I prayed. It didn't matter how much of the Qur'an I read or how many times I went to the mosque or how many good deeds I did—nothing in my life got better. I was stuck in a cycle of anxiety and depression.

On October 19, 2012, I was so depressed that I bought bottles of NyQuil and contemplated ending my life. That night, a fear came over me. I suddenly knew that if I did go through with suicide, I would end up in hell forever. I skipped all of the Islamic bathing rituals I was used to completing prior to prayer, and I threw myself

on the ground, crying. I cried out to God to have mercy on me and to show me the way to him. I then cried myself to sleep.

That night God answered my prayer. I dreamed it was the end times and the heavens opened. I looked up and saw a man in a white robe, descending from the clouds. He approached me, and I realized Jesus Christ, not Muhammad, was coming back at the end times.

On the morning of October 20, 2012, I woke up to an answered prayer. God had answered my plea to show me the way to him. In John 14:6, Jesus says, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” God showed me ever so clearly that Jesus is the only way to him.

I wish I could tell you I immediately got up and made the decision to give my life to Jesus, but that was not the case. I saw the truth about Jesus, but openly confessing him to my family would come later.

In Luke 14, Jesus describes the terms of following him. Jesus tells the people who expressed a desire to follow him to first “count the cost.” This was to ensure that they wanted him most of all, not simply a chance to see healings or miracles. The condition was clear:

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”
(Luke 14:25–27)

Jesus did not use the word *hate* in the sense of malice, hostility, or contempt. That would be evil. His beloved apostle John clarifies that “*anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him*” (1 John 3:15). Rather, Jesus knew that following him would be misinterpreted as betrayal or apostasy. If Jesus is Lord, then other people cannot have first place in your life. Following Jesus would separate his disciples

from their closest relationships, including blood relatives. Such was my story. Following Jesus led me to cut ties with my mother, my father, my brothers, my sisters, and everyone else in the Islamic community.

If you grew up Muslim, you know how tight an Islamic community is. You're familiar with the importance they place on blood ties. If you change to any other religion, your relatives will hound and pursue you to "revert" back to Islam, because the Qur'an promises that apostates will be cursed and condemned:

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good). How shall Allah guide those who reject Faith after they accepted it.... Of such the reward is that on them (rests) the curse of Allah, of His angels, and of all mankind.... Those who reject Faith after they accepted it, and then go on adding to their defiance of Faith, never will their repentance be accepted. (*Al-Imran*, 3:85–87, 90)

While it is serious to ignore religion and live as a worldly person, it is far worse to leave Islam to commit the most serious sin of all: saying that God has a Son.

The sin of apostasy, especially the apostasy of a daughter, dishonors and brings shame upon the entire family. Dishonor cannot be fixed by talking about "no compulsion in religion."² It can only be restored by fulfilling the harsh demands of Islamic law.

Sharia law is clear that apostates should be given an invitation to return to Islam, but if they persist, the penalty should be death. Family members should be the first to carry this out. "When a person who has reached puberty and is sane voluntarily apostatizes from Islam, he deserves to be killed."³ This is to be done by someone representing the family, but there is no punishment due to the person carrying this out, "since it is killing someone who deserves to die."⁴

During my childhood, my parents frequently warned me of the repercussions of abandoning Islam. After our family moved to the US, it seemed as though my parents became anxious about their children leaving Islam, so they constantly reminded us, “You were born Muslim; you will die Muslim. You know what Allah says about infidels.” My parents told me that if I ever left Islam, not only would Allah’s wrath fall on me, but it would fall on them as well. A few years before I became a Christian, we watched a documentary about Rifqa Bary, an ex-Muslim who had put her faith in Jesus and sought refuge in a Christian home. Since she was then a minor, she was at the mercy of the court system to keep her away from her parents. While watching the documentary, my parents said that if she were their child, they would have convinced her to come home and then punished her until she proclaimed Allah as her God and Muhammad as his prophet, since Allah has no mercy on traitors.

Growing up, I heard about honor killings in the US, which my parents explained were in agreement with sharia law. They said sharia law was above US law because it was a direct decree from Allah. Taking all this into consideration, when I decided to follow Jesus, I knew I had to move far away.

For safety reasons I decided to move to another state. I took nothing with me but my car. I had nothing and no one but the call of God on my life. And I’ll tell you, friends, that was enough. God is enough. Looking back, I’m grateful God allowed me to walk through times of isolation. He was the only help I had and the only one I could rely on so that I could realize he is my Father. Then God provided a woman at church who let me live with her until I got on my feet.

A few years later, I met my husband. When I was pregnant with our first child, my relatives somehow tracked me down and started harassing my husband and me. For a few days, they scouted our neighborhood. A next-door neighbor told us she saw a red car pass slowly in front of our house at least five times, and she thought it was suspicious. I didn’t think much of it until the same red car

parked in front of our home, and my mother and brother came out of it. We spotted them from the window. When my mom reached the entrance, she started banging on the door, shouting, “You were born a Muslim, you will die a Muslim!” At the same time, my brother circled around to the back yard and tried to break down our back door. I was paralyzed with fear. All I could do was dial 911 and tell the dispatcher of the situation.

While the police were on their way, my relatives tried to open the windows. (Thank God they were locked!) Failing that, my mom returned to banging on the front door, screaming at me, while my brother took pictures of our home, my license plate, and my car’s interior. While we waited for the police to arrive, the banging and the shouting on the other side of the door continued unabated. I hid under a desk and prayed earnestly. I repeated the words of Psalm 121:7–8 over and over until the words in my head became louder than the chaos outside: “*The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*” Finally, the police showed up. As the officers took control, I was able to breathe again. The police sent my relatives away.

That night, as I continued to pray, God led me to John 10:27–30:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.

As the years passed, every time a relative came back to harass my husband and me and our children, I stood on the promise in John 10:27–30 that God had shown me years earlier.

My friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, in this book I want to show you how to stand on the promises God gives you as his child.

My heart for you is that you may escape some of the heartache I went through while figuring out my newfound faith in Christ. This book will help you distinguish between God's voice and Allah's voice. It will help you relate to God as your Father. It will encourage you to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, stand firm in the midst of persecution, and live a life worthy of the call you have in Jesus. Best of all, it will explain what you can look forward to in experiencing eternal life.

When God called me out of Islam, I left everything I knew and entered my new life in Christ. I was surrounded by a loving Christian community, which was great, but I had no resources to help me transition from the bondage mindset of Islam to the freedom mindset in Christ. I had no resources that addressed the Islamic beliefs I needed to drop or the Muslim-based thought patterns that would try to creep in.

The Bible says when you are in Christ you are "*a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*" (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV). I wholeheartedly believe that. I also believe it's important to know which specific Muslim mindsets you must consciously resist and leave at the cross to walk in the freedom Jesus died to give you. The Bible says that as believers "*we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

This book sheds light on the destructive, Muslim-based mindset you must resist and abandon. These thought patterns will especially try to creep in during your early years of walking in Christ, and you will need to consciously cast them down. Then you can walk in the freedom Christ has purchased for you.