

4. Dhikiri U. M. Kiondo Dar-es-Salaam

Mr. Dhikiri Kiondo was born in 1946, at Kwemiinu village (District Lushoto, Tanga Region, Tanzania). His grandfather was the traditional Chief of the Wakilindi clan of the Wasambaa tribe. His father was a farmer and a staunch Muslim of Sunni faith. He did not like to send his only son to any school as he was afraid that his son would be converted to Christianity (as was common in those days). As a result, he started his education late. He was enrolled in a Native Administration School and then was sent to a Quranic school, which he left in 1954 owing to bad health; and then his father died and he could not go back to school.

In 1955, he was enrolled in a Mission school and completed his Primary (in 1958), Middle (in 1962) and Secondary education at various school run by U.M.C.A (in 1966). One of his subjects was Bible knowledge. He was selected for Teachers Training Course at Butimba T.T. College, Mwanza (1967-68).

It was from Butimba that he wrote his first letter to us, asking 24 questions which showed that he was an intelligent youth eager to learn the truth about Islam; and also that he was completely in darkness about Shi'ism. I replied to him and the correspondence continued.

In 1969, he was employed as a teacher in Lushoto District, and at the end of that year I invited him to embrace the Shia faith which he gladly did.

We first met in August 1970, when I went to see him at National Service camp at Oljoro, near Arusha. On the third day he came to Arusha where he was introduced to Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff and Haji Ahmad Hussein Sheriff.

*In August 1973, he was sent by the Mission to Iran to study under the patronage of 'Group of Muslim Brothers', Tehran, from where he returned in September 1974. In February 1975, he resigned his teaching post to become the Administrative Secretary of this Mission. He then became Editor of the Mission bi-monthly Swahili magazine, *Sauti Ya Bilal*; and translated many of my books into Swahili.*

He remained with the Mission for nearly 10 years. During that time he established Tanzania Ithna-'asheri

Community (TIC), and held its first meeting in the Mission Husainiyah; with increase in TIC activities, he resigned from the Mission in 1994 and is now engaged in TIC activities.

I Followed the Light Of Allah

Dhikiri Umari Mohammad Kiondo

My acceptance of Shi'ism is wonderful and was due to Allah's Guidance and Mercy. I had never heard of Shi'ism before, although I had been an active Quranic pupil for at least 6 years.

I was schooling in one of the Missionary schools in Tanzania. In a history lesson my teacher (who was very much accustomed to mocking the Muslim pupils in the class) said, "Muslims in East Africa are of two 'divisions', Sunnis and Shias. Dhikiri, did you know this before?"

"No Sir. What I know is that I am a Sunni", I shyly replied!

It was a shame to me. A Muslim who doesn't know important things about Islam. For the first time I had heard the word "Shia." The teacher explained that these people "Shias" oppose the majority of the Muslims. This sentence remained in my thoughts for 8 years.

Whenever I asked my religious leaders about it, no clear answer was given. I was just told, "Those people are against the Qur'an. God's Messenger had no heir" which seemed to be their only crammed point of argument to this question.

At last I came to believe that the cause of difference was difficult for me to understand.

Again, another "Force" made me find more about other Muslims sects. It was the question of the responsibility of our actions. I was taught that if a person does something good or evil, it is because Allah guided him to do so. If this is the case then, it means that Allah Himself has created two groups of people: one for paradise and another for hell. It did not seem justice to me.

In February 1968, I came into contact with an African Shia Sheikh. I tried to question him about the question of "Will of God."

From that point, the said Sheikh introduced Shi'ism into my mind.

In March 1968, I sent many questions to the Shia-Ithna-asheri Council of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam. The questions were passed to Maulana S.S. Akhtar Rizvi, who since then has been answering my questions with much care, politeness and humbleness.

Maulana S.S. Akhtar Rizvi opened my eyes. I found that all my doubts were easily removed through the Shia doctrines. I felt that the way to the peace of mind was the way of Shi'ism.

We (my wife and I) gradually were convinced of the truth of Shi'ism. But it was so difficult to go against the ancestral beliefs.

I was not sure whether I was a Muslim, since I still was keeping my eyes closed, in spite of Allah's Guidance. I knew I worshipped none except Him, nor did I associate anything with Him. But I was perturbed because I knew that my persistence in going against Allah's Guidance would ruin me.

At last, my wife and I decided to follow the words and guidance of Allah. We accepted Shi'ism.

I thank Allah for His True Guidance and Mercy.

May He Reward anyone who has given or is giving to give me a helping hand to acquire true Islamic knowledge. May He glorify Islam. May He glorify Shi'ism all over the world. May He give Unity to All Muslims. May He accept our Dua and Tauba. May He bless His Messenger Muhammad (s.a.w.), his Umamah, his friends and his Ahlul Bait, with peace and give them plenty of Heavenly Rewards. Amen.

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