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The change was the beginning of a spiritual happiness for me, and I sensed an inner silence with great joy for the right creed that I had discovered, and had no doubt that it was the true Islam. I felt ecstatic and proud of myself for what Allah had granted me from His guidance and direction.

I could not bear the silence and the secrecy about what was going on inside me, and I said to myself, "I have got to tell the truth to people." "Talk about the graces of your Lord", and it is one of the greatest graces, or indeed, it is the greatest grace in this world and the life hereafter, and "he who keeps silent about the truth is a dumb devil" and "after the truth there is nothing to go astray."

What made me convinced that I should spread this truth was the innocence of those Sunni traditionists and al-Jamaah who love the Messenger of Allah and AhI al-Bayt, and all what needs to be done is to remove that mist which was made by history and then they would follow the right path, and that is what happened to me personally.

Allah, the Most High, said,

"... You too were such before, then Allah conferred on you a benefit." (Holy Qur'an 4:94)

Within a month we finished the book, and the three friends were enlightened and I supported them and helped them along the way and gave them all that I had accumulated from experience and knowledge during the years of investigation. I started to taste the sweetness of guidance and became very hopeful about the future.

Frequently, I invited friends from Gafsa who I used to know through the mosque's school or the Sufi orders in addition to some of my faithful students. A year passed, and praise be to Allah, we became a large number. We were all friends of AhI al-Bayt. We are the friends of their friends, and the enemy of their enemies, we celebrate their festivals and mourn during Ashura.

Two of my early letters which carried the news of my enlightenment were sent to al-Sayyid al-Khu'i and al-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, during the festivity of al-Ghadir, which we celebrated for the first time in Gafsa. Everybody got to know about my conversion to Shiism and that I was calling people to

follow Ahl al-Bayt, and all sorts of accusations and rumors started to go around the country.

I was accused of being an Israeli spy working to make people doubt their religion, that I cursed the Companions and was planning to cause disturbances among the people ... etc. In the capital Tunis I approached two friends, Rashid al–Ghannushi and Abdul Fattah Moro, who expressed strong opposition to my ideas. and in a conversation that took place in Abdul Fattah's house I said that as Muslims, we ought to re–read our hooks and look again at our history, and I gave Sahih al–Bukhari as an example, for it contains materials that any sensible person would find difficult to accept.

They became very angry with me and said, "Who are you to criticize al-Bukhari?" I did my best to persuade them to be involved in the research, but they refused, saying, "If you yourself have become Shi'i, that is your business, but do not try to convert us to Shi'ism. We have a more important task than that: namely to resist the government which does not work according to Islam."

I answered by saying, "What is the use? If you come to power, you will do more than they are doing now, because you do not know the true Islam." Thus our meeting ended with a state of aversion between us.

Some people from The Muslims Brotherhood ran a campaign against us, because they were not aware at that time of the Islamic Trend Movement, and started to spread rumors among their ranks that I was a government agent and that I was encouraging Muslims to doubt their religion in order to keep them away from the main issue: namely resisting the government.

Gradually people started to make us feel isolated, especially the young members of the Muslims Brotherhood and the Shaykhs who follow Sufi ways, and we experienced difficult times, living like strangers in our own homes and among our own brothers.

But Allah – praise be to Him – changed our situation for the better, and many young people from various cities came to see us to investigate the truth, and I tried my utmost to persuade them, and as a result many young men were able to see the light; they were from Tunis, Kayrawan, Susa and Sidi Bu Zayd. During my summer visit to Iraq I travelled through Europe and met friends in France and Holland and discussed the subject with them, and praise be to Allah, they too saw the light.

I was absolutely delighted when I met al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr at his house in Holy Najaf where he was surrounded by a group of learned people. He introduced me to them as being the seeds of Shi'ism (following AhI al-Bayt) in Tunis. He also told them that he had cried when he first received my letter which carried the news that we had celebrated the festival of al-Ghadir, and how I complained about the difficulties we were facing including malicious rumors and isolation.

Al-Sayyid said: It is inevitable that we pass through difficult times because the path of Ahl al-Bayt is a difficult one. A man once came to see the Prophet (s.a.w.) and said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, I love you." He replied, "Then expect many tribulations." The man said, "I love your cousin 'Ali." He replied, "Then expect many enemies." The man said, "I love al-Hasan and al-Husayn." He replied, "Then get

ready for poverty and much affliction."

What have we paid for the cause of justice for which Abu Abdullah al-Husayn (as) paid his life and the lives of his family's members and companions; and for which the Shi'is along the path of history have paid and are still paying up to the present day as a price for their allegiance to Ahl al-Bayt? My Brother, it is inevitable that we go through difficulties and give sacrifices for the cause of justice, and if Allah helped you in guiding one man to the right path, it is worth the whole world and what is within it.

Al-Sayyid al-Sadr also advised me against isolating ourselves and ordered me to get even closer to my Sunni brothers whenever they wanted to keep away from me, and to pray behind them so that there would be no rupture in relations, and to consider them innocent victims of distorted history and bad propaganda, because people are the enemy of what they do not know.

Al-Sayyid al-Khu'i also advised me on the same lines, and al-Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali al-Tabatabai al-Hakim had always sent us letters full of advice that had a great influence on enlightened brothers. My visits to the Holy City of Najaf and its learned people became more frequent, and I committed myself to spend each summer holiday near Imam 'Ali and attend the lessons of al-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, from which I reaped great benefits.

I also promised myself to visit the graves of all the twelve Imams and Allah helped me to realize my wish for I was even able to visit the grave of al-Imam al-Rida which is situated in Mashhad, on the borders between the U.S.S.R. and Iran. There I met some of the most outstanding scholars, from whom I benefited a great deal.

Al-Sayyid al-Khu'i, whom we follow in our religious affairs, gave me permission to use Khums and Zakat to help our enlightened group, and to give them what they needed regarding books and grants and many other things. I also was able to establish a small library which contained some important references connected with the research which belonged to both parties (Sunnis and Shiis). I called it "Ahl al-Bayt Library" and benefited many people, praise be to Allah.

Fifteen years ago Allah doubled my joy when the clerk to the city council of Gafsa agreed to naming the street where I live "Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) Street". I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for that honorable gesture, for he is one of the hard-working Muslims and has a great respect and love for Imam 'Ali, and I presented him with "al-Murajaat" by Sharaf al-Din. He and our group have mutual respect and love for each other, so may Allah reward him well and grant him whatever he wishes.

There were some wicked people who tried to remove the street's sign, but all their attempts were in vain and Allah willed it to stay where it was, and we received letters from all over the world carrying the name of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib's street, whose honourable name blessed our good city.

In accordance with the advice of Ahl al-Bayt (as) and the advice of the learned scholars of the holy city of Najaf we are determined to keep in touch with our brothers from the other madhahibs and have

maintained our relation with al-Jamaah by praying together. Thus people started asking us about our prayers, ablution and our beliefs.

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