

4319 - A Jewish Woman Thinking About Embracing Islam

the question

I have very difficult question and I think this is my only hope that you can help me to find the answer.

I am a Russian Jewish girl and I know this Muslim guy for over a year. The longer we know each other, the more problems and difficulties we face. Not in the religious or cultural ways. We love each other and there is an issue of whether he can marry me or not.

He is a very good Muslim and he comes from traditional family. I am very fond of his beliefs and beliefs of his family. I was born in a very agnostic country and couldn't be properly introduced into any religion. It was forbidden. When I came to the US I started my research on different religions and found out that my beliefs do not really match all Jewish sayings. I did a lot of research on Islam and by looking at him and a couple other Muslim boys and girls, and by reading Quran, I have a very strong feeling that I could become a good Muslim. I want to go to school to learn the culture and religion more precisely, to learn the language. I contacted the mosque and was ready to go... but I faced the issue: would I be accepted as a Muslim sister like other people who came from different religions except Jewish? Jews and Muslims are in big contradictions and I know that friendship is almost impossible. I am praying to God (in my home language – Russian), to lead me the right way to achieve my beliefs.

Please, help me to find my answers!

Detailed answer

“I have a very strong feeling that I could become a good Muslim.” The way you express yourself so clearly in your message indicates that you are indeed open to the truth and have been sincerely seeking for it.

“I am praying to God (in my home language –Russian), to lead me to the right way...” What you say here, at the end of your message, makes the Muslim reader feel deeply moved by

the story of a woman who has turned towards Allaah after realizing that He answers the prayers of those who call on Him and ask for guidance to the right way. Allaah says in the Qur'aan (interpretation of the meaning): "And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them, by My knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright." [al-Baqarah 2:186]. It is a good sign that your heart appears to be open to Islam. Allaah also tells us in the Qur'aan: "And whomsoever Allaah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky..." [al-An'aam 6:125]

Please note that Muslims who understand their religion properly will not feel any kind of reservation or resentment towards any brother or sister who embraces Islam, no matter what their origins. The fact that a new Muslim comes from a Jewish or Christian background should not be a reason for any kind of discrimination or prejudice. We will give you two examples from Islamic history of two Jews – one man and one woman – who entered Islam.

The first one is Abu Yoosuf 'Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam (may Allaah be pleased with him). Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "When 'Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam heard that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had come to Madeenah, he came to him and said, 'I am going to ask you about three things which no one knows except a Prophet. What is the first Sign of the Hour? What is the first food that the people of Paradise will eat? And how is it that a child may resemble either his father or his maternal uncles?' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Jibreel has just now informed me about these.' 'Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam said, 'He is the enemy of the Jews among the angels.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'The first sign of the Hour is a fire that will gather the people together from the East to the West. The first food that the people of Paradise will eat will be the caudate (extra) lobe of fish-liver. As for the child resembling one parent or another, when a man has intercourse with his wife, if the man's discharge precedes the woman's discharge, the child will resemble the man, and if the woman's discharge precedes the man's, the child will

resemble the woman.” [‘Abd-Allaah] said: ‘I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allaah...’” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 3082).

Al-Bukhaari also reported: “ ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam came and said: ‘I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allaah and that you have brought the truth. The Jews know that I am the best of them and the son of the best of them, and I am the most knowledgeable of them and the son of the most knowledgeable of them, so call them and ask them about me before they know that I have become Muslim, for if they know that I have become Muslim, they will say things about me that are not true.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent for them and they came to him. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to them, ‘O Jews, woe to you! Fear Allaah, for by Allaah besides Whom there is no other god, you know that I am truly the Messenger of Allaah and that I come to you with the truth, so become Muslim.’ They said, ‘We know nothing about that.’ He said it three times... He said, ‘What kind of man is ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam among you?’ They said, ‘He is the best of us and the son of the best of us; he is the most knowledgeable of us and the son of the most knowledgeable among us.’ He said, ‘What would you think if he became Muslim?’ They said, ‘May Allaah protect him from that! He would never become Muslim.’ He said, ‘What would you think if he became Muslim?’ They said, ‘May Allaah protect him from that! He would never become Muslim.’ He said, ‘What would you think if he became Muslim?’ They said, ‘May Allaah protect him from that! He would never become Muslim.’ He said, ‘O son of Salaam, come out to them.’ He [‘Abd-Allaah] came out and said, ‘O Jews, fear Allaah! By Allaah besides Whom there is no other god, you know that he is the Messenger of Allaah and that he has come with the truth.’ They said, ‘You are lying!’ The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told them to leave.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 3621)

This man’s Jewish origins did not prevent him from being one of those who were given the glad tidings of Paradise before they died. Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “I never heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying to any man who walked on the face of the earth that he would be one of the people of Paradise except for ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Salaam. Concerning him, the aayah –

verse (interpretation of the meaning) ‘... and a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies that this Qur’aan is from Allaah...’ [al-Ahqaaf 46:10] was revealed.”

The Jewish woman who became Muslim was Safiyyah bint Huyay ibn Akhtab, from the Jews of Khaybar, who believed in Allaah as her Lord, Islam as her religion, and Muhammad as her Prophet.

This Jewish woman Safiyyah, who embraced Islam, became a mother for all of us Muslims, as Allaah said in the Qur’aan (interpretation of the meaning): “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers...” [al-Ahzaab 33:6].

Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stayed between Khaybar and Madeenah for three days when he got married to Safiyyah bint Huyay, and invited the Muslims to his waleemah (wedding feast)... The Muslims said, ‘Is she one of the Mothers of the Believers or is she one of those whom his right hand possesses?’ They said, ‘If he covers her, then she is one of the Mothers of the Believers and if he does not cover her, then she is one of those whom his right hand possesses.’ When he got on his camel, he made her ride behind him, and he put a screen between her and the people.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4762).

Safiyyah (may Allaah be pleased with her) was the one for whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out of seclusion (I’tikaaf) especially to accompany her to her house. (The one who is in seclusion for worship is not allowed to come out except for a valid reason). ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that Safiyyah, the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told him that she came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to visit him whilst he was in I’tikaaf (seclusion) in the mosque, during the last ten days of Ramadaan. She spoke with him for a while, then she wanted to go back to her house, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up and took her back... (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1894)

According to another report: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was in the mosque, and his wives were with him, then they left. He said to Safiyyah bint Huyay, "Don't rush, I will go with you." Her home was in the house of Usaamah, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out with her ... (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1897).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to take care of her and show compassion towards her. Anas ibn Maalik, the servant of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) described how he took care of his wife Safiyyah on a journey: "I saw the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) spreading his cloak for her to sit on it, then kneeling down and putting his knee for her to step on in order to get onto the camel." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 2081).

These examples and others make it clear that the new Muslim has his or her rightful place in Islam, regardless of whether his background is Jewish or anything else. If some Muslims reject a Jewish man or woman who has become Muslim, this is because of their ignorance and shortcomings; as far as the Islamic view is concerned, you know what it is [Islam welcomes all newcomers]. So hasten to enter Islam at once, and we are sure that you will be happy with your new life in this religion.

It only remains for us to comment on one other matter you mention in your question, which is your relationship with the Muslim man you refer to. This relationship will not be acceptable to Allaah unless it is on the basis of marriage, which Allaah has prescribed for His slaves, and which He accepts as the way for men and women to have relationships. We imagine that in your case, as you describe it, your becoming Muslim and repenting will open the doors and pave the way for you to have a proper relationship (i.e., marriage) with this Muslim man.

We ask Allaah to guide you to the truth and help you adhere to it, to give you goodness in this world and grant you the victory of Paradise in the Hereafter.

Allaah is the Guide to the Straight Path.