

PROBLEMS FACED BY CHINESE MUSLIM CONVERTS

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AUTHOR DECLARATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I hereby declare that the work in this academic project is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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Grateful to God, Allah S.W.T, the Lord of the universe and His Messenger Muhammad SAW who has granted the strength, determination and opportunity for the writer to work out an academic project to comply with the requirements to complete the First Degree with the Distinction of Dakwah and Management in Islam.

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Thank you.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini membincangkan tentang masalah yang dihadapi oleh mualaf Cina di PERKIM Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur. Untuk memperolehi data, penulis telah membuat soal selidik terhadap 30 orang mualaf Cina dibawah pemerhatian PERKIM. Data yang diperolehi dianalisis menggunakan kaedah deskriptif. Dapatan dari kajian menunjukkan bahawa masalah utama yang dihadapi oleh mualaf Cina di PERKIM ini adalah dari aspek penerimaan keluarga terhadap mereka. Disamping itu, penerimaan masyarakat sekeliling terhadap mualaf Cina juga antara masalah yang dihadapi oleh golongan ini.

ABSTRACT

This academic project aims to discuss on the problems faced by Chinese Muslims converts in PERKIM Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur. To obtain relevant data for this study, questionnaires were distributed to 30 Chinese Muslim converts under the care of PERKIM. The data gathering is analyzed by using descriptive method. The findings indicate that the main problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts in PERKIM are acceptance of the families and society towards the converts.

ملخص البحث

إن هذا البحث يتحدث عن المسائل التي يواجهها المؤلفين الصينيين في بركيم شارع ايفوه، كوالا لمبر. لقد وزعت الكاتبة أوراها استبيانات على ثلاثون مؤلفاً تحت مرافية بركيم من أجل الحصول على المعلومات. كما أنها قد إتخذت المنهج التحليل التصورى في دراسة هذه المعلومات. ويستنتج من هذا البحث أن أهم المشاكل التي واجهها هؤلاء المؤلفون الصينيون في بركيم هي المشكلة في عدم قبول الأسرة على إسلامهم. إضافة إلى ذلك إن مشكلة قبول المجتمع لقد من أكبر شاكل لديهم.

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Translittération

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ARABIC WORDS TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

1. ALPHABET

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ء	,	فأر	fa'r
ب	b	برد	burd
ت	t	تلّ	tall
ث	th	ثوب	thawb
ج	j	جدار	jidār
ح	h	حليب	halīb
خ	kh	خادم	khādīm
د	d	ديك	dīk
ذ	dh	ذهب	dhahab
ر	r	رفيق	rafīq

ز	z	زميل	zamīl
س	s	سلام	salām
ش	sh	شعب	sha ^ʿ b
ص	s	صخر	sakhr
ض	d	ضيق	dayq
ط	t	طازخ	tālib
ظ	z	ظالم	zālim
ع	c	عقل	^ʿ aq̄l
غ	gh	غلام	ghulām
ف	f	فيل	fīl
ق	q	قلب	qalb
ك	k	كلام	kalām
ل	l	لبّ	lubb
م	m	مال	māl
ن	n	نجم	najm

هـ	h	هول	hawl
و	w	ورق	waraq
ي	y	يم	yamm

2. Short Vowel

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
_____	a	كتب	kataba
_____	i	علم	°alima
_____	u	غلب	ghuliba

3. Long Vowel

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ى , ا	ā	عالم, فتى	°ālim, fatā
ي	ī	علیم, داعي	°alīm, dā°ī
و	ū	علوم, أدعو	°ulūm, Ad°ū

4. Diphthong

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
و	aw	نوم	nawn
ي	ay	ليل	layl
يَّ	iyy	شافعي	shāfi ^ʿ iyy (ending)
وَّ	uww	علوَّ	^ʿ uluww (ending)

ABBREVIATIONS

comp.	compiler/compiled by
Def.	Definition
ed.	editor/edition/edited by
n.a.	no author/no artist
narr.	narrated by
n.d.	no date/no year
n.pl.	no place
n.pb.	no publisher
p.	page
pp.	pages
perf.	performers
trans.	Translator/translated by
SAW	salla Allah alayh wasallam
SWT	subhanahu wa ta ala
vers.	version
PERKIM	Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia
vol.	Volume
writ.	written by

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER

THE FIRST PART OF THE RESEARCH IS THE INTRODUCTION. IT IS THE PART OF THE RESEARCH THAT INTRODUCES THE READER TO THE RESEARCH AND PROVIDES THE READER WITH THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION THAT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THE RESEARCH.

THE INTRODUCTION SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN A CLEAR AND CONCISE MANNER. IT SHOULD PROVIDE THE READER WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND SHOULD END WITH A STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Malaysia is a democratic country, which consists multiracial citizens such as Malays, Chinese, Indians, apart from Sabahans and Sarawakians such as Kadazans, Bidayuhs and so on. As a result, the people here embrace different religions and beliefs such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christian. Although, Islam is the official religion, the non-Muslims are allowed to embrace and practice other beliefs, too. This matter is included in the First Part of Malaysian Constitutional (Negeri-negeri Agama dan Undang-undang Bagi Persekutuan, Fasal 3) that is; -

“Islam is the official religion, but other religions or beliefs are allowed to be practiced freely in any part of the Federation (Lembaga Penyelidikan Undang-undang Perlembagaan Persekutuan, 2000)

This constitutional, indicates that Malaysia gives spaces for other beliefs to be practiced although Islam is chosen as the official religion. However, other religions are not prohibited to be practiced; instead, they are allowed to practice and disseminate the beliefs only among their followers or worshippers only. Consequently, this condition is a guarantee to ensure the freedom of embracing different beliefs according to their own customs harmoniously.

Each one of the followers has the right to disseminate one's beliefs. Nevertheless, the rules and regulations of the states forbid the dissemination of other beliefs (other than Islam) towards other worshippers especially the Muslims. The rights include the; -

- i) Management of the religious affairs on their own
- ii) Set up and take charge of the foundations for the benefits of the religion
- iii) Possessing the properties and manage it according to the rules.

(Mohd Suffian b. Hashim, 1987)

Based on the above statement, it is clearly shown that Islam is the official religion, which has the specialty to be disseminated to the other followers. As a result, a council called National Council of Islamic Affairs (Majlis Kebangsaan Dalam Hal Ehwal Agama Islam) was set up in 1968 whereby the Royal Highness is given the honour to be the official religion leader in Malaysia.

Nowadays, the number of non-Muslims who convert to Islam has increased in Malaysia. Sociologically, the community who has converted to Islam come from rural areas such as the aborigines (Orang asli) who belief in animism and pantheism. Other converts are Chinese, Indian apart from Siamese, Fijian, Korean and so on, who have been dominated by Confucius, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian and there are people who claim themselves as free thinkers (Institut Dakwah Islamiyah PERKIM (IDIP), 2001).

The national religion in Malaysia is Islam; however, the total number of Muslims is only confined to the Malays who formed the majority of the whole population. As mentioned earlier, by Constitution, Malays are defined as Muslims. The other races share a rich diversity of religion. Chinese may be Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, etc. The indigenous people in Sabah and Sarawak are animist, or Christian; and descendants of Portuguese are largely Christian. There is freedom of religious belief and practice, an individual right protected by the Constitution.

In Malaysia when we say new Muslims we name them as 'Mualaf'. There are many associations, which deal with new Muslim converts. Such as ABIM, PERKIM, JAIS and so forth. Even though until now, we are still facing the problem in defining new Muslims in Malaysia. It was a fore mentioned that Shari' act fails to provide an answer to

prominent question, firstly as to who qualify as a Muslim. This particularly difficult issue bound up with question of faith. (S. Salahudin Suyurno & Mohd. Nor. Mamat. 2000)

At this juncture, preliminary point can be made. A child born to a Muslim father is being presumed to be a Muslim. As one who has converted to Islam from another faith or atheism or agnosticism is deemed as a Muslim as a person born into the but there is no consensus as to the exact scope of believe admitted to the Muslim faith and there conflicting case law on the matter of prove of adherence to Islam by conversion.

Numerous studies have been done on problems faced by converts, and occasionally individual write-ups may be seen in local newspapers or magazines, highlighting the frustration and discriminations they face from all races. As Malays are Muslim by definition according to the constitution, the other races, then, are not Muslims. This is how people generally perceived in Malaysia, as far as their religious affiliation is concerned. *"A change of attitude is necessary not only by Mlalay youth, but also by their parents who unintentionally help to reinforce the assumption that all nno-Malays in this country are non-Muslims"*. Says Haji Mohideen bin Mohamad Ali in an article entitled *Muslim converts in Malaysia: Do we make them feel uncomfortable? (2)*. Yet, there has not been any concerted effort from the government nor the religious bodies to seriously look into these problems.

The difficulties faced by Chinese Muslim converts are multifaceted. For many of them, it not only means a change of religion, but at the same time, a partial or total change of identity as well. In Malaysia, Islam is being associated with the Malay race; there is a general tendency to view any Muslim as Malay therefore, they say *masuk Melayu* for converts. A common major problem faced by the converts here is that before they are presented with a good knowledge on the essence and basic values of Islam, [which in reality are not very different from traditional Chinese ethics or the moral values underlying any other religion for that matter of fact], they are made to start learning how to pray, memorize verses in Arabic, and are immediately bogged by do's and don'ts on petty, mainly cultural issues. (Nor Raudah Siren. 2000)

No law in Malaysia stops the Muslims from preaching non-Muslims. But the non-Muslim are forbidden by law to preach the Muslim, infect the political power is in the hand of Muslims. Each state has a department dealing with Malaysian who wants to converts to Islam, and it is basically easy for Muslims here to preach Islam, guide them and support them in practicing Islam. Unfortunately it happens otherwise and it still needs a very hard work to ensure that Islam be a first optional religion.

Therefore, it is very important to every Muslim to accept them as one's family and it is our duty to know their problems, to support their new lives, to guide them in this new path and so on.

Allah S.W.T said:

Aim (goods and money given in charity) is for the poor and the needy. And those employed to managed the (funds), for those whose hearts have turned (to truth and belief recently) for those in slavery (and servitude) and in debt, in the cause of Allah, and for the way farer, (it is so) ordered by Allah and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

(Al-Qur'an. Al-Taubah 9:60)¹

Clearly from this verses understand that Allah S.W.T asked the Muslims helped new converted Muslims. (S. Salahudin Suyurno & Mohd. Nor. Mamat. 2000)

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A person who has just embraced and chosen Islam, as his way of life will be called a 'mualaf'. This term is applied to differentiate the converts and the other Muslims. However, the term 'mualaf' that our community tends to apply give a bad impression to those who has just embraced this religion. Those who are labeled as 'mualaf' are always

¹ All Quranic translations in this writing are based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali. 1989. *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translations and Comentary*. Maryland: Amana Corperation. Translations from other source will be cited accordingly.

being foreshadowed from the perspective whereby they are normally being recognized as 'Islam celup' and others. (Buletin PERKIM, 2003)

This identity categorization has put the converts into a long-term dilemma whereby the word 'mualaf' is always being associated to negative perception. Those who has just converted will feel aloof, ashamed, and humbled because of this so-called application. As a result, they will think that they are alienated and disqualified to join the other Muslims. (Krisis Identiti Saudara Baru, 1994)

Islam is always assumed as the religion for Malays. This stereotyped has become another factor for the non-Malays to stay away from Islamic teaching. This stigmatization still hold steadfast in non-Muslims' perception. As a result, it is not very surprising to see the converts are still looking for the identity and seek for truth if they have been alienated from the society and their own flesh and blood. (Buletin PERKIM, 2003)

Generally, the converts lost their trust or become apostate because of Muslims wrong deeds and irresponsible mannerism. For example, a few of the converts decide to apostate after being divorced or treated badly by their Muslim husbands. (Krisis Identiti Saudara Baru, 1994).

Muslim's attitude that questions the sincerity of the converts to embrace Islam is another factor for them to apostate. This mannerism has oppressed those who are just in the process to understand Islamic teaching and this encourages them not to remain in Islam.

Apostate is taking place widely among those convert to Islam because of marriage. Not only that, the converts who are really depending on the other Muslim to guide them, will be another reason which cause the problem to arise. (Mohd Asri Abdul, 1994).

Besides, a lot of Muslims do not view Islam universally. They are associating themselves to Islam very closely but they are not sensitive towards the converts. Instead, the converts are being hesitated by others because they do not practice the tradition of Malay culture.

This factor gives rise to the uncomfortable feeling among the converts who live in Muslim community especially the Malays. (Tuan Hajji Yaakob Lazim, 1994).

Moreover, there are too much Feqh ulema compared to 'dakwah' *ulema*. The former views something from the aspect of rules and regulation that a Muslim should comply with. Actually, as good Muslim, we should not pressure the converts with the punishment (if they break the rule). Instead, the 'dakwah' *ulema* would not do so as they emphasize more on the specialty of being a Muslim so that the converts will feel that embracing Islam is not a burden.

Furthermore, it is very hard for them to get rid off the previous wrong doing that they have practiced in their old belief. They should be given enough time and opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new situation. Therefore, as supportive Muslims, we should not expect them to change it drastically because they are still in the adaptation process of becoming a Muslim. (Tuan Haji Yaakob Lazim, 1994)

The main focus of this research is the problems which the converts have been facing especially the Chinese-Muslims that can be divided into a few major problems: socioeconomic and education. It is important to measure the effectiveness of the approaches in a form of teaching or 'dakwah', which has been prosecuted by the 'dakwah' organizations in Malaysia.

Due to this reason, the researcher hopes to see the motive of the converts in embracing Islam as their new way of live. Is it because of the self-importance or to get the blessing from God? Realize it or not, it goes without saying that our community nowadays discriminate the newly converts. Although not all the Muslims do so, but it does happen in some part of our society.

1.3 AIM OF RESEARCH.

The aim of this research is to investigate problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts.

1.4 OBJECTIVES.

The objective of this research is to:

- 1- Examine the demographic profile of Chinese Muslim converts.
- 2- Identify the reasons why Chinese convert to Islam.
- 3- Identify the problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts.
- 4- Identify the Chinese Muslims expectation.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION.

- 1- What is the background of Chinese Muslim converts?
- 2- What are the problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts?
- 3- What are the reasons that Chinese convert to Islam?
- 4- What are the expectations of Chinese Muslim converts?

1.6 DEFINITION CONCEPT/OPERATIONAL.

Problem.

According to Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, problem means a situation that is unsatisfactory and causes difficulties for people.

The word problem in this study should be understood as difficulties or a problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts after embracing Islam and called a Muslim.

Chinese Muslim.

According to Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, Chinese Muslim relating to, or characteristic of China, its people, or their language and a follower of the religion of Islam.

The term Chinese Muslim in this study should be understood as Chinese Muslim because they have solemnly declared, believe that only God is God and Muhammad is His prophet. Believing that only God is God makes Muslims the humblest and at the same times the proudest creatures. They are humble and rub their foreheads against the ground before God. God is to them the One Creator, Provider, Ruler, Forgiver, Judge, The First Cause and Final End of everything, the Ultimate Reality.

Convert.

According to Collins English Dictionary means, to change or adopt the form, character, of function of transform. It also means to cause (someone) to change in opinion, belief, etc. It also means a person who has been converted to another belief, religion, etc.

The term convert or new-Muslim in this study should be understood as a Malaysian Chinese who was not from Muslim heritage by birth, but who embraced Islam at a certain stage his/her life. Conversion should be understood as conversion into Islam unless otherwise specified.

Expectation.

According to Longman Dictionary Contemporary English means, the belief that something will happen because it is likely or planned. It also means, believe that something good will happen or that someone will be successful in the future.

The term expectation in this study should be understood that expectation of convert especially Chinese Muslim after embracing Islam. This expectation includes their expectation of themselves, families, society and environment to help them to carry on with their lives as a Muslim or new-Muslims.

1.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

- 1) The number of Chinese-Muslims who converted is increasing. Therefore, it is crucial to look into Chinese Muslim's perception (converts) to influence them with the Islamic teaching.
- 2) This research indicates the acceptance status of the converts (mualaf) in the community.
- 3) This research is important to identify the problems which the converts are facing especially the 'dakwah' organizations and society. It is important to help the converts to increase their understanding about their status in Islam and its surrounding.
- 4) This research reflects the hope of the converts as God's creatures that have been delivered to the Earth who still needs guidance.

CHAPTER

2

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous research studies or other written article on problems faced by Chinese Muslim converts. The review examines the process of conversion, the demographic characteristics of converts, motives for conversion, family and socio-cultural problems, and expectation of Chinese Muslim converts.

2.1 Conversion and converts to Islam in Malaysia.

Islam is Malaysia's official religion, and by constitutional definition all Malaysians of Malay ethnicity are Muslims. A person from other ethnic group who by his own will announces that he wishes to embrace Islam "*converts*" to the religion of Islam. In Malaysia, these people are called **converts, mualaf, or saudara baru**.

On the application of conversion, Amran Kasimin (1985) states that it should be made at Majlis Agama Islam at the national, district, or area level, and the ceremony should be officiated by a *khadi*, a religious official, a mosque officer, or a 'dakwah' body officer with the permission given by Majlis Agama Islam. Conversion consists of reciting the Kalima-I Shahadat in the presence of two witnesses from the Syufi Mazhab, akidah Ahli-Sunnah wal Jamaah.

On registration of a convert, quotes from Bahagian 7, seksyen 145, Enakmen Pentadbiran Undang-undang Islam 1952, stating that any person who embraces Islam has to be registered.

The registration needs two photographs, and the recording of all personal particulars of the subject.

According to seksyen 7 (2), the convert should take on a Muslim name. He/she maintains one of his/her own name by choice, followed by an Islamic name, with bin/binti Abdullah added at the end.

Seksyen 7 (3), a state that converts will be issued the Kad Islam, a card showing their new religion after the change of name. Before they can have their new name registered with Pejabat Pendaftaran Negara (National Registration Office), they have to pass an interview with *Kadhi* who tests them on their knowledge of *fard'hu ain*.

Seksyen 8 of the same Enakmen states that the Kad Islam will only be issued after the convert has attended certain periods classes, and after circumcision. Meanwhile a temporary Islamic *surat perjanjian* will be the document bearing witness to their new religion.

To get the permanent Kad Islam, the person must:

- ❖ Be able to recite Shahadat
- ❖ Be able to recite Fatihah
- ❖ Be able to recite Tahiyyat
- ❖ Knows how to pray (practical)
- ❖ Knows the fard'hu ain.

The process of embracing Islam includes: -

A)

- 1) Bringing along the identity card or passport (for those who are not Malaysia citizens)
- 2) Taking along two witnesses
- 3) Bringing along four pieces of passport sized photos
- 4) Filling up the proclamation form indicating that a person is now a Muslim.

B) Attend the ‘fardhu ‘ain’ class in Pejabat Agama Islam Daerah weekly.

C) Attend the intensive course for five days in Pusat Dakwah Selangor, which is compulsory.

D) After the course, the confirmation card (as a Muslim) will be given and the person is required to adjust the details available in the identity card in National Registered Department

E) The documents needed are: -

- i) Confirmation card for embracing Islam
 - ii) A letter of confession
 - iii) Original identity card
 - iv) Birth certificate
 - v) A copy of Muslim card
 - vi) Photocopy of identity card
- (Tumpuan Utama 2003)

2.2 DEFINITION OF MUALAF

According to Abdul Majid al Zandany (1990), in Kamus Dewan, ‘mualaf’ mean the Muslims who convert to Islam. In other given definitions, the converts are the people who have just embraced Islam who are previously embracing other beliefs such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian and so on. They are called as ‘saudara kita’ or ‘saudara seagama’.

According to Azmi Tarmizi (2003), ‘mualaf’ comes originally from Arabic language, which means “ the person whose heart have been subdued”. The meaning indicates that the converts who embrace Islam sincerely and voluntarily with the good intention, are among the people included in the eight groups who qualify to accept the division of *zakat*.

The importance of *zakat* is to ensure the understanding and confidence towards Islam will grow positively.

As a matter of fact, 'mualaf' concept should be applied relevantly. However, the concept has been misunderstood because of the limited knowledge about it and the converts will be called 'mualaf' for a long term. Nevertheless, according to religion council in Malaysia, the term should be applied in the first two years because they are considered to be under the learning process to know in depth about Islam.

In Tumpuan Utama's article (2003), the word 'mualaf' is given to the converts. Therefore, a person should register him or herself and attend the religious classes. After that, they should attend a five days and four nights course to fulfill the requirements and prepared themselves with the basic knowledge and understanding.

2.3 MUALAF ACCORDING TO ISLAM PERCEPTION

According to Yusuf Qardhawi which has been translated by Dr.Salman Harun (1996), 'mualaf' originally from Arabic term '*alif, yua'liffu, mua'llif*', which associates to the non-Muslim who converts by saying the "dua kalimah syahadah" in front of the witnesses. Connotatively, the converts should concentrate more to increase their confidence in Islam, instead of prosecuting the invisible agenda to destroy the Muslim society. It is a hoped to see the converts will benefit the opportunity as a Muslim to defend and help other Muslim from the enemy.

Nevertheless, according to Mohd Syukri Yeoh Abdullah (1994), there are Muslims who intentionally categorize the converts into two groups that consist of non-Muslim and the pure Muslim. In the group of non-Muslim converts, they are divided into a few more small groups. They are: -

The non-Muslim such as Safwan b. Sumayyah. During the opening of Makkah, he was given chances and opportunities to think for four months by the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W when the Hunain war was taking place. At that particular time, the Prophet had borrowed him weapons and presented a few camels, which had been bought from a valley. As a result, Safwan becomes a better person after the incident.

حدثنا الحسن بن علي الخلال أخبرنا يحيى بن ادم عن ابن مبارك عن يونس عن الزهري عن

سعيد بن المسيب عن صفوان بن امية قال: اعطاني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم

حين وانه لا بعض الخلق إلي فما زال يعطيني حتى انه لا يحب الحق إلي

¹(Hadith narrated by Tirmizi)

Meaning: - As retold by Al Hasan b. Ali Al Khalal to Yahya b. Adam who was originally from Ibn Mubarak to Yunus from AzZuhri by Said b. Al Musayyab from Umayyah's son, Safwan whereby: " During the war of Hunain, Muhammad S.A.W gave me something. He used to be the most hateful creature to me, but he gave me something that made him the person I love the most.

Yusuf Qardhawi has explained that there are group of converts who are qualified to receive the *zakat*. They are: -

a) The newly converts

They need the guidance to inculcate and increase their understanding in Islam. As being told by Syukri, the converts come from the Jews and Nasrani who were just converted to Islam although they are not facing a lot of problem financially.

¹ Al- Tirmizi. Sunan Al-Tirmizi. (trans.) Mohd. Suhri. 1992. *Terjemahan Sunan Al-Tirmizi*. Semarang: Asy-Syifa.

- b) Not only those, the leaders who have just converted to Islam and still keep in touch with the non-Muslim acquaintances are qualified to receive the *zakat*. This is another initiative to attract the non-Muslims to Islam. Such situation used to happen to Abu Bakar who gave out the *zakat* to Adi b. Hatim and Zabarqan b. Badr. Those people were respected idols in their society.
- c) The importance of *zakat* is really obtrusive especially to the leaders who need to keep up with the knowledge associated to Islam. It is a hoped sees that *zakat* will motivate them to embrace Islam. However, this should not happen because others will doubt those who pretend to be Muslims physically and not spiritually, about their piety.
- d) Those Muslims, who live at the sloping edges and other boundaries in order to protect the country from enemies, are given this *zakat* to defend themselves and other people who live in isolated areas.
- e) Besides, Muslims need a mediator to manage or collect the *zakat* from those who refuse to pay it except through enforcement.

On the other hand, 'Ensiklopedia Islam Untuk Pelajar (2003)', 'mualaf' is divided into a few groups. They are include: -

- i) The people (non-Muslims) who are hoped to embrace this religion
- ii) The non-Muslims who are doubted to cause problem in Muslim society and the religion itself
- iii) The newly converts
- iv) The role model who embrace Islam and have a lot of non-Muslim acquaintances
- v) The Muslim public figures who are placed in forts and enemies' boundaries

These are people who are able to have the potential to influence the non-Muslims would attracted to the Islamic teaching.

2.4 Percentage of Chinese among converts.

Amran Kasimin's study (1985), the number of Chinese converts between 1974-1985 was 3009 out of a total of 5177 converts, amounting to 59%. His source was Buku Rekod Pendaftaran Saudara Baru from Jawi (Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan). Again from the same study, Laporan Tahunan PERKIM gave the number of Chinese converts as 2331, or 60% out of a total of 3861 during the years 1976-1985.

The number of converts for the years 1987-1990 as 1279, citing the source as Jais: bahagian Masjid dan Kemasyarakatan. Out of this number, 524 or 41% were Chinese.

As seen from the reports above, at any period, in Malaysia Chinese occupied the highest percentage among all converts, except when there were cases of mass conversions (e.g a whole village of Orang Aslis). One important factor for this could certainly be attributed to the fact that Chinese constitute the biggest non-Muslim minority group in Malaysia, but could also be due to the more interaction between Malays and Chinese at all strata of society.

Based on the annual report from PERKIM headquarters in Kuala Lumpur (2000-2002), the overall statistics of conversion, which has been registered there, is about 1386. The number of conversion in year 2000 is about 416. This number has increased in the year 2001 whereby 541 non-Muslims convert to Islam, but in the year 2002, it has slightly decreased to 429. In this statistics, there are eight races, which have been registered in PERKIM. There are Chinese, Indian, Sabahan and Sarawakian, aborigines, Sikh, Eurasians have the highest number of converts between 2000 and 2002 that is 481 are Chinese and is followed by 269 Indians. Both races are the majority who convert to Islam recently.

2.5 Factors for conversion

According to Bulliet (1977), there are a few reasons for the non-Muslim to convert. In fact, it is based on their experience and motives. These problems are obvious in the context of economic progression, social structure and political stability in Malaysia. In the those days, there were many Chinese youngsters who received inadequate education and were facing the economics problem thought that it was compulsory to embrace Islam so that they could get those specialties which were only given to Malays. However, in these few years, economic stability and Malaysia political affairs has become more stable and there is a lot of improvement especially the national integration and this affect the progression of Islam teaching in this community.

There are a few reasons given by H.M.Y Jaafar (1986) for the firstly, the converts because they want to be accepted as a Malays under the Federation Constitution. According to the Constitution, Malays are qualified to have all the specialties, which have been specialized for Malays.

Secondly, they are hoping to be a good Malaysian as they view Islam as the official religion. This happens when the converts fail to maintain the relationship, which forces them to remain in Malaysia. Besides, there are converts who are interested in Islam as it emphasizes justice to all the humankind and not only limited to Malays.

According to S.Salahuddin Suyurno and Mohd Nor Mamat (2000) whose research are studied by Abdul Majid b Kadir, he finds out that, part of non-Muslim embraces Islam because they believe that women's position in Islam is highly emphasized compared to other religion like Hinduism. This is because; Islam preserve women's right for example the inheritance of property and so on. The situation is otherwise to those female Hinduism followers.

Mahanom Aris (2002) also has highlighted the similar situation. The non-Muslim females feel that the Muslims female are being appreciated and important in the community compared to other religion. The factors below show that: -

- 1) Bible proclaims that woman is the source of all the sinful mannerism. For example, when Eve plucked a fruit and ate the fruit from the prohibited tree. However, in Koran, it is actually Adam's misbehavior, and not Eve's.
- 2) Bible assumes that the birth of a daughter is a lost. However, Koran emphasizes that both sexes are treated equally.
- 3) Bible prohibits women to talk in church, but Muslim women were allowed to have debates with Prophet Muhammad.
- 4) In Bible, a widowed is considered as a result of fornication, but not the man. In Koran, there is no such thing existed.
- 5) In Bible, widows and female will not inherit any source of property except the males. However, Koran proclaims that all the problems are solved fairly because God will protect His humbles right
- 6) Bible permitted polygamy. In Koran, God has put the limitation that a man can have four wives in a certain situation and it is preferred to have only a wife. Besides, Koran does not discard the freedom for their right to choose their spouses.
- 7) In Deuteronomy, "If a man meet a virgin and does not promise to get married and he rapes her and then could be found by others, the man should pay the girl's father 50 coins. He needs to marry the girl as he has been to the innocent girl. Moreover, the man is prohibited to divorce the wife as long as she is still alive." In this case, we will be wondering who is supposed to be punished. According to

Bible, a girl must live with the man who has raped her for the rest of her life. However, in hadith by Prophet Muhammad, he has said that, “ It is crucial to get the agreement from the girl before marriage”

- 8) Bible also asks the women to wear *jilbab* as in Islam’s teaching to reduce the number of rape cases.
- 9) Women had been given their right to vote in America about 100 years ago, but Islam, they had already given the right to choose since almost 1500 years ago.
- 10) Islam does not put the barrier to control women in their territory. Instead, there are women who have become the presidents worldwide, but until now, the male have been oppressing the women (especially in US) from overpowering the leadership in Christian countries. Compared to Islamic countries, they already chose and vote for females to be the leaders. The examples are Khadijah bt Khuwailid, Aishah bt abu Bakar, Ummu Salamah, Ramlah bt Abu Suffiyan, Rumasya Milhan, Asma bt Abu Bakar and Zainab al Ghazali.

Therefore, the similarities and protection of the right is the main factor for the non-Muslim females to embrace Islam. It goes without saying that Islam upholds the women’s dignity and provides the humanity protection to its followers regardless of the sex and race.

Most of the non-Muslims who convert to Islam because of marriage. However, this reason is not a guarantee for the consistency of the particular individual to learn more about Islam. As a matter of fact, marriage should be the best channel for the converts to learn more about Islam, as it will affect them positively. Nevertheless, if the conversion is solely for the marriage, it will cause disaster and sufferings in the future. Therefore, the converts will unhesitantly claim that Islam is burdensome and it is unworthy to embrace the religion. . (Norwani Arshad 2003)

Furthermore, according to H.M.Y. Jaafar in his statement, a marriage that unites the non-Muslim and a Muslim encourages a person to convert.

This motive has been emphasized by Zainuddin Abdullah (1982), S. Salahuddin Suyurno and Mohd Nor Mamat. This statement is emphasized in a column called Tumpuan Utama (2003) based on the statistics given whereby 45% embrace Islam because of marriage. According to Nor Raudah Siren (2000) who has explained the history of Islam development in Tenaha Melayu, Islam has been disseminated via marriage especially among the aristocrats.

Not only that, H.M.Y Jaafar has observed that the socialization among the Muslim peers has influenced the non-Muslims to know more about Islam. The healthy socialization to those who participate in similar activities will mould their heart positively to accept Islam as their way of life. For example, to those who are living in with Muslim friends, feel aloof especially when it is the time for them to pray. Therefore, when they can join the people to perform the prayer, they will be very glad and feel that the community is accepting them. Besides, the concept of believing in one God and the spiritual associated to it, make the non-Muslim see more clearly about Islam knowledge.

Promoting Islamic mannerism towards the non-Muslims is important to show our friendliness towards the non-Muslims by supporting them morally, giving good treatment and being a 'Qudwah hasanah' (the role model) in society. According to Masyitah Abdullah who had been embraced Islam a year ago, there are a few reasons for her turning point from a Chinese to a Muslim. The reasons are; -

1) Social affairs

The close relationship among the Muslims friends has changed her perception towards Islamic community. Her close relationship with other Muslims has changed her way of thinking and the social life. According to Masyitah, her best friend has worn the scarf only when she is in higher institution. At first, this has shocked her, but actually, it is her turning

point, which changes her entire life. She learns about Islam and starts to question herself about the real Islam- the religion of God.

2) Confidence in Islam

After attending the classes, which have been carried out by PERKIM, and having some debates, she becomes more determined and her curiosity towards Islam has increased. The brief and compact explanation by the *ustaz* there has opened up her eyes. Moreover, the statements presented during the session are fully supported with evidences that help her to understand more about the religion. Besides, there are lots of friends who help her regarding the religion by giving Islamic tapes, reading materials such as books about Islam and magazines.

3) The uniqueness of Islam

According to Masyitah, she is very interested with the summon to Muslims to perform their prayer (azan) and she used to listen to it conscientiously for a few times. Another obligation that challenges her mentally and physically is fasting season. The first attempt of fasting causes her a lot of problems. However, when it is the time to break the fast at the end of day, she feels very happy and starts thinking about the benefits of fasting, which emphasizes on healthy body and mind. She does not think that this obligation is a burdensome after the first experience. Luckily, she has supportive Muslim acquaintances that encourage her to do so. (Norwani Arshad 2003).

Normally, this kind of exposure comes from learning process which is started with the fundamental needs for being a Muslim, the consistency in teaching, discussions, conversation, attending the religious talks and understanding the obligations in Islam. Not only that, Islam is a complete *ad din* that encourages the non-Muslims to convert because they are curious to know the true colors of being a Muslim.

The understanding comes from the research that has been carried out and also the indirect exposure towards Islamic teaching that attracts the non-Muslims' towards Islam. This understanding will diminish the prejudice and the negative views about Islam, instead, it arises the consciousness to learn more about Islam.(Norwani Arshad 2003)

A lot of non-Muslims who embrace Islam after making investigation and observation through religious comparison. They are trying to look for the advantages and the drawbacks to draw the line of which is true and which is not. Besides, the similarities and protection of the right have made them to choose Islam as their way of life.

Other than that, according to Nik Fauziah Nik Hussin (2002) in her article, which is based on her experience as a convert. It started while she was carrying out the Christian mission, which encompassed the truth of Koran's contents. The former objectives were to find the weaknesses in Islam, which could be used to distract the Muslims' way of thinking. However, the mission was total a failure on her because the truth has led her to embrace Islam as her new way of life.

By the same time, Noorzila Jamaluddin (2003) finds out that the research, which has been done towards the Chinese converts, comes from the religious comparison between Islam and Christian. She has spent a few years for the same purpose and decides to embrace Islam as she believes that Bible is not the words from god, instead Korans.

In another situation, a student has exclusively confessed to Al Islam (1996), the reasons of embracing Islam. He has learnt and carried out a research about the genetics and is interested with Islam by applying the theory which proclaimed in the Koran. This reason gives him strength to choose Islam as his new belief.

According to a convert's experience in Muslimah (2003), he has been embraced Islam after studding about the different religions. He finds out that the difference about the goddess concept in Buddhism and Allah S.W.T is totally different. The changing of the

Chinese culture and tradition such as respect the elderly, patience, honesty, and determination has been replaced with other mannerism, which is not encouraged in Islam, encourages him to embrace Islam.

The curiosity and determination manner are among the reasons for him to have confidence in Islam. By thinking and observing about the existence of the universe, it will deeply affect those who are interested in this religion. For example, a person will start to ponder on how the sun is able to stand on its own without having stilts or depending on something. (Norwani Arshad 2003)

Moreover, Muhammad Abdullah (2003) has explained that there are a few reasons that attract the non-Muslim to learn about this religion and one of them is the knowledge of Islamic teaching itself. Once a person becomes a Muslim, he should be acknowledged with the fundamental knowledge to remain in Islam.

Jamilah Aini (2001) and Noorzila Jamaluddin (2002) are the converts who confess that they are really excited to know more about Islam after looking at the close relationship of a Malay family. Both converts claim that the situation make them feel comfortable compared to Chinese family which normally live their life separately after the children are able to take care of themselves. Besides, they are also interested on how Malay community practice teamwork and work collaboratively in many social activities. This is because non-Muslims does not really emphasize this sort of moral values among the younger generation.

Reading is another methodology that has been applied among the converts who wants to know more about Islam. This is how Nor Raudah gains her knowledge about Islamic teaching especially the reading about the Muslim role models such as Hamka, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas, Imam Al Ghazali, Abu Bakar al Khattab and others.

According to S.Salahuddin Suyurno and Mohd Nor Mamat, those non-Muslims who are of the age of averagely aged between 21-35 years old, are the people who are curious to

know about Islam. The increasing effort made by individual and other 'dakwah' organizations and also the television programme by RTM, are the additional factors that lead them to Islam.

Finally, the so-called 'ilham' or dream that has been granted by God the Almighty is the unexplained phenomenon for those non-Muslims who find the truth about Islam.

Meanwhile, according to Mohd. Hafizan Abdullah who had embraced Islam since 1998 says that there are a few reasons why he chooses Islam as his way of life. They are;

- a) He makes a comparison between Islam and other beliefs. He looks for studies and compares the variety of the religion and what are the teachings say about the beliefs. Then, he finally decides to embrace Islam and takes it as his way of life. He embraces Islam in PERKIM.
- b) Based on the belief that there is only one God (Allah S.W.T), he says that Hinduism teaches the followers to believe in the same thing. However, the situation is vice-versa because the followers worship the god and goddess (which are supposedly to be the mediators between the worshippers and the god). Not only that, he believes that God will bless the people as long as they are following the right path.
- c) According to Mohd Hafizan, poverty is another factor that encourages him to embrace Islam. Hinduism followers are bounded by the Cast System, which prioritizes, on one's social position. Instead, Islam emphasizes on similarities and justice socially. Indirectly, it can avoid the isolation, cruelty and oppression in human social structure. (Norwani Arshad 2003).

2.6 Problems faced by converts

According to Chow Hock The (1997), the racism polemics, which has existed during colonialism, affect the racism implications to the social development in our country. Noorzila Jamaluddin (1994) has found out that those obstacles influence the non-Muslims to assume that the conversion as solution for them as they should 'Masuk Melayu' and not being a Muslim.

According to Amran Kasimin (1985), in non-Muslims political aspect, this situation is actually a betrayal towards their generation and what they are defending for. This causes problem in many aspects. They are; -

- 1) Social problem (Family and society)
- 2) Economic Crisis
- 3) Problem in Islamic teaching

1) Social Problem (Family and Society)

According to Masa Journal Penyelidikan Islam Malaysia (1978), there are converts who are alienated by their own family and it is very hard to find a place to live in. Based on what has been narrated by Nor Raudah Siren (2000), the family relationship will deteriorate when one of the family members embraces Islam. Some of them used to be abused by their parents especially those converts who are underage and the female children. This pressure forces them to return to their previous belief.

The worse thing is the converts will be urged to apostate by ceasing the material aid, which causes them a lot of trouble. Not only that, they will not inherit any property from their family unless they return to the religion.