



Arnoud van Doorn From the Far-Right to Moderate Religion

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Arnoud van Doorn grew up in a Christian family, then embarked on his political journey as a member of one of the most extreme, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant right-wing parties. He co-directed a film that abused Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), creating quite a stir and widespread condemnation, which made him reconsider his stance towards Islam and its Prophet (PBUH). His free mindset embraced new convictions that are neither swayed by whim nor grudges, nor influenced by desires or partisan or political pressures. He kept contemplating until he finally saw the light. Dutch politician Arnoud van Doorn was born in The Hague city, the Netherlands in 1967.

Bitter Grudge

In his youth, Doorn joined the Party for Freedom (PVV), one of the most extreme right-wing political parties in the Netherlands and the ruling party at the time. The PVV held extreme grudges against Islam and Muslims so much that it based its electoral campaigns for the Dutch parliament, municipal or district councils on hostility towards Islam and on calls for deporting Muslims and foreigners. Doorn was a huge enthusiast and activist advocating for PVV ideologies and principles. He was in charge of the Youth Care party unit and gained proper political expertise that qualified him to become vice-chair to PVV chairman, Geert Wilders, who was known for his extreme grudge and hatred towards Islam and Muslims.

In 2008, Wilders was determined to produce the film "Fitna", which offends Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Doorn was quite interested in the message of the film, believing firmly in the PVV's vision of Islam as a religion of negativity, totalitarianism, and adversity.

Responses

After the film was screened, there was a huge backlash from Muslims around the world defending their prophet, which prompted Doorn to reflect upon the reason behind this great love Muslims from all over the world, all races and nationalities, have for their religion and prophet.

Doorn had a free critical mindset. His deeds were founded on personal convictions, little influenced by others. However, he found himself bound by the PVV. He was not allowed to even think beyond the far-right ideology or to criticize beyond the party's principles. A yearning for liberation from partisanship started to grow, but it was not easy.

The Crack of Dawn

Doorn had an overwhelming urge to find the truth of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Dozens of questions arose inside him waiting for clear and believable answers. He carefully studied and reflected upon the Quran and Hadith, and heeded the advice of a Muslim colleague from the municipal council to head to As-Soennah Mosque in The Hague. He went to the mosque with his 9-year-old adopted son Gamal. There he received interpretation and Prophetic biography books. He got to the heart of the truth and had answers to his doubts. Only two months later did he see the light at the end of the tunnel. He converted to Islam on 27 February 2013 with conviction, faith, and a heart finally at ease.

A New Start

As word of his conversion to Islam had spread, and sceptics have expressed their doubts, Doorn tweeted the Shahada in Arabic, leaving no room for doubt, stating that he started a new phase in life, but gave no further details. Then he founded and headed the Party of Unity, based on Islamic teachings. He also became a member of the municipal council as a representative of the independent bloc of The Hague, and Ambassador of Celebrity Relations for the Canadian Da'wah Association in Europe. He was fiercely attacked for this transformation, but refrained from any bickering saying, "I am not a person who follows opinions of others without doing my own research and forming my own opinion. Therefore, I have actually started to deepen my knowledge of the Islam out of curiosity". He believes that Islamophobia emanates from Western media and governments that strenuously attempt to portray a dark image of Islam. Doorn stated how he was captured by the Seerah (Prophetic biography) and by learning the truth about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), mostly by how the Prophet was merciful with his

enemies in the Conquest of Mecca despite Meccans' earlier abuse, how they forced him to migrate from Mecca, and how he could have sought vengeance but granted them amnesty and pardon instead, saying "Go, you are free"!

Apology of Action

After converting to Islam, Doorn planned to produce an international film on the greatness, ethics, and mercy of Prophet Muhammad to "repair the damage" he had previously caused in the film abusing the Prophet. At the same time, he is committed to Quran and Arabic lessons for more knowledge of Islamic teachings and beliefs. He also performed Umrah two months after converting and performed pilgrimage the same year in 2013. At the Holy Mosque, groveling and crying, he prayed to Allah for forgiveness. Then he headed to Medinah to visit the Prophet's Mosque and his grave, where he felt a tranquility that sent him over the moon. He was celebrated in Saudi Arabia by officials in Medinah, Mecca, and Riyadh, and encouraged by Imams of the Prophet's Mosque, Sheikh Salah al-Budair and Sheikh Ali al-Hudhaify.

Inevitable Consequences

After converting to Islam, Doorn was not spared from abuse. Discrediting him, he was unfairly accused of plotting for the assassination of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte since he was present coincidentally at a cafe the Prime Minister used to frequent. However, he was soon cleared of those charges and released the next day. Doorn stated that it was an evident violation of the law and of human rights, and decided to sue the security apparatus responsible for his arrest. A year into his conversion, Doorn's son followed in his footsteps and embraced Islam too with conviction and faith at the Global Peace Summit Dubai.