Q: What were the motivating factors in your conversion to Islam?
A: I converted to Islam once I could no longer deny the Prophethood of Muhammad salallahu alaihi wa salam. It was tough as a Christian to decide whether to believe that someone other than Christ could have been a prophet or a “savior.” And besides that I was amazed by the amount of thinking Muslim scholars had done in terms of what actions could be considered right and wrong.

Q: Can you elaborate on that. Do you mean fiqh, Islamic law?
A: When you study a little bit of fiqh, how Muslim scholars worked tirelessly to preserve the exact way the Prophet prayed, those were the things that impressed me. These people were concerned with not selling out their religion to the vices of the world. Also more than that, there seemed to be a level of God fearing that the ordinary Muslim had, that no ordinary Christian had. Islam made a difference in the lives of Muslims, even if they didn’t choose to practice.

Q: When you say that Muslims were not concerned with selling out their religion, explain how so?
A: What I meant was that Muslims did not forget what the principles of their religion were. They did not sell out to Modernism or Neo-pan-ganism or any of those things that ruined Christianity.

Q: What other things do you like the most about Islam?
A: The rules :-)

Coming to Islam:
An Interview with Sister Noura Quayson
by Sarah Khurshid

In Iraq…
Jan 1st:
Iraqi children marked New Year’s eve in Baghdad by protesting against threats of military attack on their country. The children shouted “No to the embargo! Yes to peace!” and “So where is conscience and humanity?” in Arabic, and “Down, Down USA.”

Jan 8th:
According to a confidential U.N. report, nearly 500,000 Iraqis are prone to suffer serious injuries during the first phase of an attack. The number “includes up to 100,000 wounded in combat, and 400,000 hurt in the devastation expected from any U.S. attack on Iraq.”

In Palestine…
Jan 11th:
A Palestinian stone-thrower was shot dead and nine others were wounded by Israeli occupation soldiers in the Askar refugee camp in Nablus, West Bank. Bassem Shanir, 20, was shot dead when a group of Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli armored vehicles. Israeli soldiers answered with live fire.

Jan 12th:
Two teenage Palestinian bystanders, one of them in a wheelchair, where killed when a missile fired by an Israeli helicopter missed a taxi carrying three Palestinians, including two members of the Islamic resistance Hamas. The three managed to escape before two more missiles destroyed their vehicle.

In Turkey…
Jan 22nd:
Ankara-Turkey’s constitutional court effectively ended Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s leadership of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) Jan. 22, in the latest run-in between the prime minister-in-waiting and the courts. Senior party members, however, said there was no obstacle to prevent AKP from re-electing Erdogan as chairman from recent legal amendments to rescue the popular leader from political bans stemming from a past conviction for “inciting religious hatred,” said.

In Afghanistan…
Jan 14th:
Two Afghan groups in Khost announced unleashing martyr operations against American forces in the south east provinces. Citing that the two groups are unknown, some observers said the announcement was part of a psychological war against the American military presence in Afghanistan.

In Saudi Arabia…
Jan 30th:
More than 765,000 Muslim pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam’s holiest site. On Tuesday, 719,000 pilgrims arrived by plane, 35,300 by land and 10,800 by sea. Some 17,000 Iraqi pilgrims are expected to perform the Hajj.
This publication contains the name of God, please respect it. Nasihah welcomes submissions and articles from everybody. Articles may be edited for content and length at the editors’ discretion. Submit all articles to alnasiah@yahoo.com. The opinions expressed in Nasihah are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent that of ISRU or the staff of Nasihah.

Visit ISRU and Nasihah online at www.eden.rutgers.edu/~muslims/newsletter.htm
Understanding, it takes time to develop re-
lations. However, it’s not the congregation that
we should do to integrate these converts. Gatherings are alright, but are actually just
hand-aid for a more serious situation.

“I felt like a pork chop at a
Muslim wedding party.”

They are good to bring converts together, but situations where you interact with people
who have the same belief; you discover they may not
have the time to celebrate, or may not un-
derstand the significance of the event, all because
they are too busy in their houses, jobs, and
families. On top of this, you may look different, and could very well end up celebrating alone.

What is needed is not for all American con-
tests to get together and promote
them-what is needed for the body to
integrate. The convert is a believer. He or she
is the one who is making up their minds, propa-
gating a new converts group. I am proposing something
perhaps slightly more difficult in the long run, but
will lead to a more open and active and benefi-
cial. Not only for the convert, but for
the community as well.

There are many misconceptions in inte-
gration. Perhaps it is not just the convert that
needs education, but the Muslim body at large!
If converts come to a masjid where they feel a
sense of belonging, then this will be security
when their worlds may be falling apart. Also, I
cannot overestimate that the convert is already
facing difficulty in his/her adjustment to Islam.
Additionally it is the responsibility of Muslims
to establish new relationships and integrate the
convert into what he or she may consider a
closed community. The convert is carrying as
much as he or she can. In short, it is the re-
spect for the integration of the convert that
should rest upon Muslims.

How are Muslims to interlace with new believers? How can the expe-
rienced Muslims work together to help settle the
convert? What DO we do with these new
seedlings? First of all, as stated before, there
needs to be education. The cultural gap should
not be closed, rather we should see the differences
in culture as rays of color on a
flower, the differences adding to the beauty of
Islam. It may appear rude to Muslims the way an
American, he/she is simply addressing you. A
Muslim or non-Muslim, it can prove detrimental
to the Masjid alone, and watch strong families
connect with God and with each other.
I felt like a pork chop at a Muslim wedding party, completely out of place.

On top of this, comes the language and cul-
tural barriers. Many times during those first
visits, I would introduce myself, and I would likewise introduce ourselves. After “As-
aalamu haalum, we would just kind of smile at each other, and I couldn’t speak
the language. My smile was all I had.

New believers in Islam are joining a faith that
has its foundation set, when all of theirs have
been shaven to the core. I don’t think ‘raised
Muslims’ understand converts engages converts have
to do. Maybe I don’t understand Islam. I had to be-
ning, to accept the possibility of losing my
family, job, house, and life.

Imagine experiencing changes such as this.
Your family is angry and wants you to leave.
You lose your home and job; your neighbors
are no longer friendly and spend the rest of your life for your belief. Then, when you try

to celebrate religious holidays with those who share this belief; you discover they may not
have the time to celebrate, or may not un-
derstand the significance of the event, all because
they are too busy in their houses, jobs, and
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Role Models: Love of the Righteous by Ali Farooki

The Name of the Allah, the Benefi- cent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah and may the peace and blessings of Allah be on his Mes- senger Muhammad, peace be upon him, one of the three characteristics that one possesses when he has tasted the sweetness of Faith is Allah and He hasperfected for us. And if one thinks about it logically, every individual should truly have love for The Lord Almighty.

There are several ways a servant can attain love for Allah. The most important and effect- ive way is to love Allah by being connected with Him and understanding how mankind’s exist- ence is eternally tied to Allah. This reemphasizes the greatness of the differentiation which can be performed only by Allah. We will allow the believer to know his or her Lord and in turn be honored by Him. Contemplating these facts will help us to strengthen one’s knowledge of Allah which strengthens one’s love for Allah. Recitation of verses is the first step to loving God. It makes the verses, worshipping Allah during the Day of Judgement lead to love for Him. The Lord Himself has told us the right- ous traits of those truly love Him in the Qu’ran (5:54). He says they are “humble towards the be- ginning to accept the truth.” Would Rasulallah (pbuh) approve of our love of those who are slaves of their creator, waste away their lives, and call others to the same path? 

He says, “Verily Allah has placed their places like them, act like them, eat what they eat, drive what they drive, and go where they go. I think it’s time to be real look at o - r e a l - l y and try to dis- cover what’s going on.” Referring to the three elements in Islamic marriage is that husband and wife dwell in peace and tranquility to- rwards God and His Prophet.5

In the Name of Allah, the Benevo- lent, Our Lord: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the Seal of the Prophets and the Last of the Messenger. The Prophet Muhammad said: “Indeed, the firmest handhold from eeman is that you love for Allah what He loves over what you love. The Prophet (pbuh) also said: “Indeed, the firmest handhold from eeman is that you love for Allah what He loves over what you love.” 

The sad truth is that we cannot deny, at least not by our actions. We may give Allah (pbuh), Islam, our lip- service and claim that we love them, but what we need is for this love to manifest itself in our hearts, actions, and our lives. Nowadays, we try to love both of these people at the same time (the righteous and the devilish). This reflects either igno- 

The Path to Loving Our Parents by Sabah Chaudhry

When we think about love, we usu- ally think of our family. Our father, a sister, a grandparent, or a close cousin. We think of loving everyone we ever stop and wonder whether we have truly loved them. It is our family for Our Creator, Supreme Being. Our real friends are those who can offer us love for who they are, and not to mold them into our image since we have no more right to change their hearts than we do to our own. 

The truth is, we are all in need of one another, or we would not have come together in families. The Prophet (pbuh) said: “Indeed, the firmest handhold from eeman is that you love for Allah what He loves over what you love.”

And therein lies the answer to our question: What is love? Love is a feeling of belongingness, respect, and care for others. It is the purest form of love we can have, and it is also the clearest expression of our faith.

Love should not consume but sus- tain. The Prophet (pbuh) said: “Indeed, the firmest handhold from eeman is that you love for Allah what He loves over what you love.”

The article explains that love for Allah comes through recognizing His bounties and having knowl- edge of His names, attributes, and actions which will allow the believer to know his or her Lord and in turn be honored by Him. Contemplating these facts will help us to strengthen one’s knowledge of Allah which strengthens one’s love for Allah. Recitation of verses is the first step to loving God. It makes the verses, worshipping Allah during the Day of Judgement lead to love for Him. The Lord Himself has told us the right- ous traits of those truly love Him in the Qu’ran (5:54). He says they are “humble towards the be- ginning to accept the truth.” Would Rasulallah (pbuh) approve of our love of those who are slaves of their creator, waste away their lives, and call others to the same path? 

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What I Love about Islam

by Sara Awad

Islam, as a religion, is a means of guidance and protection. It teaches us how to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to Allah. Muslims are guided by the principles of the Quran and the Hadith, which have been passed down through generations. These principles include the Five Pillars of Islam, which are the foundation of Muslim life:

1. Shahada (testimony of faith)
2. Salat (prayer)
3. Zakat (charity)
4. Sawm (fasting during Ramadan)
5. Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

These principles are not just about outward actions, but also about the inner state of the heart. Muslims are encouraged to perform good deeds, to be kind to others, and to live a life that is pleasing to Allah. This includes practicing patience, forgiveness, and compassion. Muslims are also taught to be truthful and honest in their dealings with others.

In addition to these principles, Muslims are guided by the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was the final Messenger of Allah. He taught us how to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to Allah, and he is an example for us to follow.

Islam is a religion that is based on love and respect. Muslims are taught to love Allah, to love their fellow Muslims, and to love all of creation. This love is not just for those who belong to our community, but for all of creation. Muslims are taught to be kind to all of creation, and to work towards the betterment of all.

Islam is a religion of peace. It teaches us how to live in harmony with others, and to work towards the greater good of all. Muslims are encouraged to work together to achieve this goal, and to be united in our beliefs.

In summary, Islam is a religion that is based on love, respect, and peace. It is a religion that is a blessing, and one that I love.

PARENTS contd. from pg. 7

At the end of the day, it is important to remember that love and respect are the foundation of a good relationship.

MARRIAGE contd. from pg. 7

The main goal of marriage is to build a relationship that is pleasing to Allah, and to work towards the greater good of all. Muslims are encouraged to work together to achieve this goal, and to be united in our beliefs.

In summary, Islam is a religion that is based on love, respect, and peace. It is a religion that is a blessing, and one that I love.
**SALEEM contd. from pg. 10**

Saleem, which sent Saleem flying over the car and scattered his belongings. Saleem was knocked unconscious by the impact. Bob got out of the car, opened the trunk, and dragged Saleem’s body into the back of the car, then got back into the driver’s seat and drove off.

Saleem opened his eyes to a bright white lamp. Bob, in surgeon’s clothing, moved the lamp out of his sight and said, “Sorry about that. Try not to look directly at it.”

Saleem got up, but Bob pinned him back down. Saleem’s legs were already tied to the gurney, and Bob strapped a belt around his chest as Saleem struggled to get up.

“This won’t work unless you cooperate,” Bob said.

“Cooperate with what? What are you doing?”

“Remember our deal? If you can’t benefit from something, I can have it. I didn’t think you’d be willing to do it, but the stereo sounds the deal.

“What deal? I didn’t agree to this!”

“Sure you did. Your tongue obviously isn’t benefiting you, because you abuse people with it. It happens that I know all of people who are willing to pay top dollar for a nice tongue. People who can benefit from one.”

“What?”

“I won’t hurt or anything. Do you want me to outline...?”

“I want you to let me go!”

“Calm down, this won’t work if your hearts racing. I’ll just inject this...”

He put the needle in Saleem’s arm and injected the anesthetic. “...Which will just put you to sleep. Wallah, you won’t feel a thing, trust me.”

Saleem’s eyes became heavy, and he finally fell asleep. A piercing feeling in the tongue startled him. The sedative kept him paralyzed, but he still felt the steel of a surgical knife sawing through his blood. Tooth coated the inside of his mouth and throat. Onechis tongue was removed, he passed out.

**ROLE MODELS contd. from pg. 6**

(i.e. “You will be with those whom Allah smashed on you. And Allah will give me to you from Malik from Abdullah ibn Abi al-Rahman ibn Mamar from Abu’l-Habib al-Qatadah ibn Yasar. That is from Abu Hurayra said, ‘The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, will say on the Day of Rising, ‘Where are those who loved each other for My sake, the majhe names of The The Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, A.R.A.)? Can we compare our musicians to any of the Sahaba? Can we compare today’s women to the best ones ever created (Maryam bint Imran, Fatima bint Muhammad, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid)? Does Bill Gates possess wealth in comparison to the treasures of Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, or Imam Shafi’i? A thousand times NO!”

Sahih Al-Bukhari hadith, narrated by Abu Huraira. “I was with Allah’s Apostle in one of the Markets of Medina. He left the market and so did I. Then he asked thrice, ‘Where is the (small) child?’ Then he said, ‘Call Al-Husayn bin Al-Muthanna! Al-Husayn bin Al-Muthanna! Al-Husayn bin Al-Muthanna!’ and said, ‘Don’t go out and start walking with a necklace (of beads) around your neck like a nobleman, or you’ll get killed.’”

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In the confused and blame-ridden aftermath of the 9/11 tragedies, the TV channel PBS broadcast a documentary on the history of Islamic civilization. It attempted to cover some of the political, cultural, and intellectual accounts of Muslim invention but was only able to peruse through a chronological but arbitrary history. As the documentary panned across scenes of turbaned men scribbling away with beautiful tajweed ringing in the background, I came to wonder at the title of the program. Surely we Muslims were members of an ‘Empire of Faith’, but what was it that made us faithful? What was it that bound us so firmly to the Divine message, to the love of the Prophet (PBUH), and to each other? I realized that it could be nothing other than faith, or iman, that came from obedience to a coherent and sagacious Law (Shari’ah) that gave us the strength for the conquest of many nations, the development of alchemy and algebra, and the construction of advanced law giving systems among other breakthroughs. It is this iman that keeps us alive and gives us an identity through living our lives in accordance to the Will of Allah, which is embodied in the Shari’ah. But the documentary did not encompass this subject and I would like to point out the important concept of the Law in the everyday lives of Muslims all around the world. 

The light of iman is produced through adherence to the Law and covenant of Allah; those that break the covenant suffer and those that follow succeed (2:27, 66:8). There might be disagreements among the scholars and schools (madhahib) as to the questions of leadership and jurisprudence (al-imamah wa al-fiqh), but all Muslims that value the Quran recognize that the Shari’ah is one of the most important aspects of a Muslim’s everyday life. The Divine discourse addresses mankind directly and commands it to follow the Law and also gives a glimpse of the rewards waiting for those who do so (64:8, 98:6, 9:33). The Prophet (PBUH) himself said, “Act according to what Allah had made obligatory upon you, and you will be the most God-fearing” (Shaykh al-Mufid’s al-Amaali). The possessors of virtue and piety for Muslims, namely the esteemed ‘ulama (clergy), have also stressed the importance of following the lucid and straightforward way sent down by Allah. Akhund Quli Hamadani, who was a highly respected teacher (ustadh) of many famous scholars, wrote to one of his friends, “It should not remain hidden from (our) brothers that there is no way to achieve the nearness of the Lord of Splendor and Majesty except [piously] following the sacred religious law of Islam (Shari’ah) in all movements, pauses, conversations, and instances. Superstitious methods practiced by some pseudo-mystics and ignorant ones in accordance to their intellectual taste do not produce any desired result except increasing the distance from Allah, the Almighty” (Amini, Ibrahim). All these indications point to the great value and position of the Shari’ah, and warn about following “natural” desires that frequently pull man away from the path of Allah. In the light of our actions, we must attempt to understand the teachings of the Shari’ah and implement principles in our everyday lives. The Quran, the Sunnah, and the examples of the pious personalities are some of the many resources at our hands if we arm ourselves with true devotion for Allah. We must also keep in mind that the Shari’ah is the best law aimed at the evolution of all humanity toward a practical and just society based on truthful principles. If we desire a happy life and a good reward, we must choose this way, as it is the best path that leads us to our destination. May Allah guide us to the Right Path that leads toward His Shari’ah and give us the strength to awaken the rest of humanity to this blessed religion. Ameen.

“Superstitious methods...do not produce any desired result except increasing the distance from Allah, the Almighty.”