

Why are New Muslims Leaving Islam? Posted by: [Umm Raiyaan \(Blog\)](#)

"I don't know if you can help me; I don't even know where to start. My life is a mess. I've been a Muslim for 5 years and each Ramadan instead of increasing in my emaan, I question whether I can continue living as a Muslim. The loneliness I have felt over the last 5 years is one I never felt before I became Muslim. I feel it even more in Ramadan. I receive so many emails about how to complete the Qu'ran in 30 days, how to attain taqwa but I just struggle trying to get through the days. When I took my shahadah, so many sisters hugged me and gave me their phone numbers but after a few weeks, they didn't respond to my calls or my messages. I'm so alone, it really hurts. They told me they would help me learn how to pray. I still don't know how to pray. I've tried youtube and books but they don't work. I'm really struggling. I phoned my local masjid and they laughed at me after I told them how long I was Muslim and couldn't pray. I'm so down and alone. I wish I could be like most and look forward to Ramadan. I wish I could read the Koran. I wish I could pray taraweeh. I wish I didn't feel so alone. I have tried; I went to the masjid to break my fast. But nobody spoke to me. They offered me food and drink but then after praying they just ate in their little circles smiling and laughing. You're my last attempt – can you help me? I'm desperate." **Mandy**

Sadly, the [SOLACE](#) team receive many emails like that of Mandy's. There's a sound proportion of revert sisters who receive support and they really work diligently with their SOLACE support workers to make positive change in their lives. In contrast however, there are sisters like Mandy who disappear despite our willingness to support them. It is as though they are scared to receive support only to be let down for the umpteenth time. As a team, we can only pray and make du'aa that they will meet beautiful sincere Muslims who will help them as they should have been helped during those first few fragile weeks of being a very new Muslim.

The picture for most new reverts is indeed a very positive one. One needs only to attend a shahaadah ceremony and observe the mixture of excitement and nervousness sprawled across the face of the one taking that amazing step; crossing from the fields of kufr into the vastness of tawheed. It is such a joyous moment – both for the new Muslim and for those who are present, witnessing the guidance of Allah unfold in an individual's life. Most faces are streaming with tears as their hearts increase in faith in the One and Only Creator, Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala).

It is equally overwhelming for the new believer as she is swamped with hugs, kisses, books, hijabs and telephone numbers. There is a sense of a new immediate family, and the fear of what their own non-Muslim family will say and do is subdued by the hope that their new Muslim family will be there no matter what.

Quite tragically, the situation can at times be very different just as Mandy described in her email. More than likely, brothers and sisters that attend a shahaadah ceremony really do have a good intention to keep in touch. Certainly excuses must be made; perhaps they imagined that the new believer has a solid support network, after all, there were so many telephone numbers handed over that day. Others may be busy in their own lives and feel pressurised with the responsibility of helping a new Muslim. Passing on a few books and CDs is sufficient but what if they needed somewhere to stay?

The sad reality is that too many brothers and sisters leave the responsibility to others assuming that there is enough support when in fact, the new Muslim has absolutely no one to support her. It is at this delicate time that she definitely needs support as the onset of tests pervade her life. It is as though upon uttering the testimony of faith, the new believer is tested to see whether they truly believe as Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

'...We might test him who believes in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it: and the Lord watches over all things.'[1]

Had the new Muslim been supported, been shown how to pray, been taught the foundations of Islam and given a firm foundation, been put in touch with a good group of brothers or sisters that took them under their wings and looked after them; they would have had the tools and strength of faith to deal with the tests that face most new Muslims.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of the above at the crucial beginning of their Muslim life, the following types of issues arise which sadly often lead to someone like Mandy entering Islam with zeal and belief and leaving it weeks, months or years later with hatred and disbelief...

Rejection by family

A large number of new Muslims experience negative reactions from their non-Muslim relatives. The experiences vary from being ignored, physically removed from the family home, and we have even received cases of others who were locked up and beaten by relatives. It is at this time that support from Muslims is crucially needed. However, many new Muslims endure these tests with their family with minimal support or understanding from members of the Muslim community. Often, the rejection and abuse received at the hands of family members is too much for some and they succumb to the pressure of leaving Islam feeling that they have no other alternative because all the brothers and sisters disappeared and hence there is no other alternative.

Choosing a wrong spouse

Many brothers and sisters feel that there is a simple quick fix for the new Muslim who has been abandoned by their own relatives: To get married and get married quickly! This is the case more so with female reverts than their male counterparts. The sister is struggling to learn Surah Al Fatihah and before she knows it, she is flooded with recommendations of pious brothers who are looking to get married, brothers who could help her on her path. She is given a good breakdown of what characteristics constitute a good Muslim husband; one who wears trousers above his ankles and observes a beard. Well-meaning sisters persuade the new Muslim to marry their own recommendation with choruses of 'Trust me, my husband has known him for years – he's a good practising brother!' Regrettably, there is no mention of his character, likes and dislikes and the likelihood of compatibility. Two or three meetings

are conducted by a wali (guardian) appointed at the last minute. The nikaah takes place in a small room within the masjid. Non-Muslim relatives who have not abandoned their daughters, look on in dismay as their dreams of their daughter's wedding is shattered. Or the new Muslim takes the next most important step in her life without the knowledge of her non-Muslim relatives.

Months down the line, still struggling to learn how to pray, she is either divorced or living a very miserable married life. Years down the line, we find that she has remarried four to five times in the same manner as more brothers and sisters pity her and persuade her into thinking that marriage will solve her problems. Children are born into this situation and live with a mother who is severely depressed with only one visible sign of Islam – her hijab. It is only a matter of time before the last sign of Islam is removed and she seeks peace and tranquillity in her old lifestyle or religion.

This example may seem extreme to many but shockingly this is the reality for many new Muslims.

Moving towards an extreme version of Islam

Zeal and passion for Islam is evident in many new Muslims. Like sponges, they are eager to learn, absorb and implement. There seems to be a misconstrued silent rule that upon entering Islam, a complete rejection of everything that came before is required. With an 'all or nothing' mentality, she severs family ties as she cannot live her life surrounded by 'kaafirs'. Clothes are put into bin bags and phone numbers are changed. Within a few days, the new believer changes from wearing jeans to completely covering from head to toe in black. The new Muslim believes she is moving in the correct direction as she receives impressed compliments from other sisters. Shortly down the line, those initial strict immediate changes begin to show its cracks as she wonders why she feels no connection, deep faith or tranquility in her salaah. She wonders why her heart feels dead and why she now craves to go back to the life that she once led.

Confused, depressed and with only a speck of emaan left in her heart, she wonders what to do. She cannot return to her family whom she cut ties with. In addition to the strained relationships she has with other sisters and the sisterhood, the marriage she is in which is full of constant arguments and depression – with all this, she makes an all or nothing choice again and leaves Islam altogether.

There are so many other issues that could be highlighted within this article. But the purpose of this article is not to depress the readers but to portray the other side of the New Muslim's life which often goes unheard.

Ramadhan is a time where many reverts feel very alone. We know that the purpose of Ramadhan is not to socialise but rather it is to attain taqwa of Allah. However, we must try to view Ramadhan from the perspective of a new believer. Coming from a very non-Muslim sociable lifestyle, there are very few chances to really socialise. Ramadhan is seen by many reverts as a time to be with others, to share, eat and grow together. When this is not present, stark truths are deeply felt and the new Muslim begins to realise them; the family they lost upon entering Islam, their lack of Muslim friends and as a result, the huge social void in their lives begins to emerge.

Fasting those first few times without much needed encouragement to make it until iftar is a huge mountain to climb and so many new Muslims give up and break their fasts intentionally. This results in them living the rest of Ramadhan truly believing that they will never be forgiven, that Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) hates them and that they are destined for the hellfire.

Observing large extended families coming together, enjoying iftar, attending taraweeh prayer together and preparing for the equivalent of Christmas, Eid Al Fitr, is quite a depressing time as they realise yet again that they are all alone.

Eid is the most dreaded time of the year. Since they are no longer attending family functions such as weddings, birthday parties, and religious festivities, they hope that Eid would be a joyous occasion to share with others. However, some deliberately choose not to leave their homes on Eid, unable to witness everyone else's happiness at the Eid salaah knowing that they will be returning home alone.

How can brothers and sisters make a difference this Ramadhan and Eid? More importantly, how can brothers and sisters support reverts throughout the whole year so that the rate of apostasy is widely reduced? Here are some tips that we hope every reader will try to implement with at least one revert whom they know:

- Invite a revert around for iftar. Call them and ask after them. Do not assume that they are fine or even fasting. It doesn't matter how long they have been Muslim. Really show that you care about them.
- Give a gift to a revert this Eid. It will build the love between you both and can have a lasting effect in their perception of Muslims at a time when they might be going through a difficult time.
- Share a part of your Eid day with a revert; even if it is just for one hour. Really go out of your way to make it a special time for them.
- Besides Ramadhan and Eid, one of the most important ways you can help a revert is to help them build a very solid foundation in their deen. Bring them closer to Allah and help them develop a strong relationship with their Creator. This step is probably the most crucial as it marks the difference in how they deal with the various tests that will come their way.
- Do not look at a revert in terms of how long they have been Muslim. Remember that they spent twenty, thirty or even forty years with certain thoughts, and practices that were completely alien to Islam. The psychological transition into a completely different way of life can take years.
- Dedicate yourself to really helping at least one revert Muslim for life – help them learn how to pray, share good and difficult times together, attend lectures together – seek knowledge together. Commit yourself to helping them for life.