

Religious Conversion: An Ethnographic Analysis

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Abstract : *This paper examines the impact of religious conversion on the identity, perceptions and everyday life of Australian converts to Islam in Melbourne. Based on ethnographic research, the paper draws upon qualitative data collected in 2002 a time when the supposed inherent conflict between 'Islam and the West' became even more prevalent in the political, academia and media milieu. I gathered qualitative data to study the experiences of forty Australian Muslim converts in order to examine the perceived conflict between being Muslim, Australian and 'Western'. It is significant to examine how these perceived tensions are managed in everyday life. While it is a scholarly significant research question to examine why people convert to Islam, it is equally of importance to examine what happens to Muslim converts post-conversion. What impact does converting to Islam have on one's identity, perceptions and everyday life? How are such changes managed and 'negotiated'? An ethnographic analysis and the experiences relayed by the participants in this study indicate that, research participants on the whole reflected significant changes to everyday life and worldviews but less change is experienced with regard to their personal 'identity' and personality.*

Keywords: Religious conversion, Islam, Everyday-life, Identity, Ethnography and Australia.

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Introduction

This paper examines the impact of religious conversion on the identity, perceptions and everyday life of Australian converts to Islam in Melbourne. Based on ethnographic research, this paper examines religious conversion in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2002 when the supposed inherent conflict between ‘Islam and the West’ became even more prevalent in the political, academia and media milieu. Qualitative data was used to study the experiences of Australian converts to the religion of Islam as to determine perceived conflict between being Muslim, Australian and ‘Western’ and how these perceived tensions are managed in everyday life. Religious conversion, as elucidated by Ali Kose deals with any one of the following three experiences: an increased devotion within the same religion; a transformation from being non-religious to a devout religious life and the change from one religion to another.¹ It is the latter that will be the focus of this study.

Indeed it is scholarly significant to examine both why people convert to Islam and what happens to Muslim converts after their actual conversion.² The article, *Religious conversion, Models and Paradigms*³ presents a theoretical overview of religious conversion and an analysis of the motivations for conversion to Islam. Based on this theoretical framework and ethnographic analysis this study examines the experiences of converts to Islam in Melbourne. In order to fulfil the objectives of the research I regularly attended weekly ‘Revert Support Group’ meetings held at the Islamic Council of Victoria for a period of five months in 2002. Attending the meetings provided me with an opportunity to gain first-hand experience and information and to conduct semi-structured interviews. In addition, I visited several Islamic centres throughout Melbourne to ensure that participants in this study reflect a cross-section of the Muslim communities in Melbourne.

Contested Terminology: ‘Revert’ vs. ‘Convert’

It is necessary to clarify terminology when discussing the terms ‘convert’ and ‘revert’ in this study because of the Islamic conception of *fitrah*. It literally means, “...an inborn natural disposition which cannot change, and which exists at birth in all human beings”.⁴ And as such, the individual is furthermore socialised into a different environment. The concept of *fitrah* is further explained by Mohamed based on the *Hadith* (sayings) of the Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W.):

Every newborn child is born in a state of fitrah. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Majian... [Fire worshipper]...And if his parents are Jews, they make him a Jew, with respect to his worldly situation, and if Christians, they make him a Christian with respect to that situation, and if Majians, they make him a Majian with respect to that situation, his situation is the same as that of his parents until his tongue speaks for him, but if he dies before his attaining to the age when sexual maturity begins to show itself, he dies in a state of conformity to his preceding natural constitution, with which he was created in his mother's womb”.⁵

Dhaoudi confers, “Ibn Khaldun’s use of *Al-Fitrah* concept is inspired by the Holy Quran and *Hadith*. In these two basic Islamic sources, the notion of *Al-Fitrah* appears to mean, a balanced human inclination that lives according to the laws of the natural divine order”.⁶ It is this notion that explains religious conversion in Islam. Therefore, during my visits to several Islamic centres, on numerous occasions whilst asking permission to leave information about the research project for converts, I found myself with the response, “not converts but reverts.” When I asked Abu Bakr, an Australian convert and participant of this study, whether he preferred to use the term convert or revert, his response was:

I use revert because, I mean everyone uses convert because that's just the western ideals you know, that you converted to something, but when you look into Islam, I guess you realise that the term Muslim just means, it comes from Islam, right, a statement of what you are. So, Islam means to submit your will to God, so to do what God asks you to do, where as Muslim is someone who is doing it, so it's a verb, so if you're not doing what God has asked you, you are not a Muslim. It's not a name, it's not a noun, it's a doing word you know, a Muslim, so my tree in the backyard is doing what God asked it, the tree is Muslim to me you know, it's submitting its will to God, everything has an energy. So when you're born, you're a Muslim you know, I'm hungry, you cry, that's Islamic you know [laughing]. You're acting in accordance with your nature, and it's only when you get a little bit older, and people teach you stuff that you go away from Islam because you take on someone else's ideal and then when you want to comeback, you revert because you already were, when you were born.

The idea of being referred to as a “revert” is not an idea specific to Melbournian converts. Nicole Bourque, having conducted research on the identity of new and young British Muslims, also found in her study that the term reverts was much more preferred. As Bourque indicates, “Many of the New Muslims I interviewed did not use the term “conversion” to refer to their experience. Instead they said that they had “reverted” to Islam”.⁷ They provided the same reason for the preference of “reversion”. The use of this term was explained by reference to the Muslim belief that all creatures are born Muslim. Whereas animals have no choice but to obey Allah’s will (and thereby remain Muslim), humans have free will and can be led away from Islam. So, these converts were born as Muslims, but were lead astray by other sets of beliefs. Once they began to learn about Islam, they recognised the truth of Allah as being rediscovered from within. In making *Shahada*, the declaration of faith, they were not converting to Islam, but rediscovering or returning to it. Furthermore, Dutton points out that there is no Arabic word for “conversion”, but rather the idea of “becoming a Muslim”. And conversion to Islam entails more than changing a religion, but rather it is submission to a way of life prescribed by Islamic teachings. Dutton explains:

Since the word islam is, grammatically speaking, a verbal noun, it has a distinct verbal force behind it. Thus, Islam is not simply the name of a religion in the way that “Christianity”, “Hinduism” and “Buddhism” are, but actually denotes an action- and that should be the hallmark of this religion, namely, “submission.”⁸

Moreover, it is important to note the ontological and epistemological dimensions of religious conversion, particularly when examining the concept of *fitrah* in Islam, however it is not within the scope of this study to delve in to these philosophical debates.⁹ What is important in this study are the labels with which Muslim converts identify themselves and how such understanding influences their perceptions and world-views. Considering the fact that terms reversion and revert are not familiar to the readers for the purpose of this paper, the terms conversion and convert will be used.

Spiritual and Social Aspects of Muslim Converts

Parrucci defines conversion as “a reorientation of the personality system involving a change in the constellation of religious beliefs and/or practices”.¹⁰ The individual cases discussed here indicate that this is not necessarily the case for every convert. As Kose argues, “converting from another or no religion into another entails change which largely involves aspects of the individual’s personality, and this may vary in extent according to the religion itself”.¹¹ Converting to Islam

entails accepting Allah as Lord and the Prophet Muhammad as the final Messenger. Dutton explains this process, “this two-fold acceptance is enshrined in the double declaration of faith, ‘I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God’, which when said in front of witnesses, marks the formal entry of someone into the community of Muslims”.¹² The declaration of faith has seven conditions: (1) knowledge of its meaning; (2) certainty which is to have complete surety of it; (3) exclusively worshipping Allah; (4) truthfulness; (5) love for the *Shahada* and pleasure for what it necessitates; (6) submissive compliance by fulfilling its rights, which are obligatory actions and (7) acceptance, which is achieved by doing what is commanded and avoiding that which is prohibited.¹³

The conditions that are entailed in this declaration demonstrate that conversion to Islam cannot be coercive-brainwashing. In this regard Kose explains, “The two keys of the coercive motif are the compulsion of an individual and the confession of guilt or acceptance of an ideological system by the individual”.¹⁴ It is only with free will, knowledge and sincerity that one can make declaration of faith in Islam. Therefore, once the requirements are realized, accepted and declared one enters the fold of Islam. Hence, conversion to Islam is not a very complicated process. However, Dutton states, it is presumed that in taking *Shahada* the individual is being prepared to live in accordance to Islamic guidelines.¹⁵

Having internalised the *Shahada*, and declared it publicly in front of witnesses, the individual enters Islam, and is henceforth identified as a Muslim. In some cases, religious conversion has an immense effect on one’s identity and world-view. Baumeister points out, “...religion, almost by definition, contains some explicit concept of human potentiality such as salvation and enlightenment”.¹⁶

Taking the *Shahada* is an intense experience on both a personal and social level. It is an intense experience that takes place within the individual with feelings that have been described as cleansing and purifying. The fact that the majority of converts choose to declare their faith publicly demonstrates the significance of social factors impacting their conversion. In declaring their faith publicly they are welcomed into the Muslim community and they are recognised as a brother or a sister. One of the research participants, Abu Bakr describes his experiences following his decision to convert to Islam:

I went straight to the Mosque, and told them I want to become a Muslim... there were all these Muslims there, heaps of people and I’m thinking look at this, they’re all so strong, so many people! Then I realised it was the first night of Ramadan, they’re all there to do their last prayer you know, but I really did think this was amazing, so my first experience there was this, honestly, there must have been a thousand people at Preston Mosque, maybe more. I took Shahada [declaration of faith] there at Tarawih [night prayer during Ramadan] and I’m sitting there thinking if I get these words wrong, I’m a dead man, [laughing] they’re going to kill me! So, I’m standing up there and Sheikh Fehmi says to me, these are the words that you say (shahada) and so I started saying them and I got to admit I was nervous before, but as soon as I started saying the words, I felt like aah, like it was just me standing there by myself, like that there was no one else and I felt, honestly the only feeling I can describe it as like a shower on the inside of my head just on cold you know, just straight through my body, I’m standing there hair standing on end, and then all the brothers came and hugged me, but you know I didn’t even know how to pray, I had to fast, and I was still eating ham, and I didn’t even know that you shouldn’t eat it so I’m fasting and then eating like a whopper burger with ham, I didn’t know it was haram [forbidden] but I knew that you’re not supposed to eat just before sunrise til sunset, you know, I was fasting but it was pretty hard.

The Imam of Preston Mosque, Sheik Fehmi, expounds upon his own experiences with converts to Islam before they declare their faith in Islam:

When they first arrive, they are nervous, because they don't know what to expect, they don't know if we are going to put incense, or burn something, but when finish, they say, I feel very happy now, I didn't expect this...

He further explains,

When we have conversions in the mosque, in particular after Friday prayer, with all the people there and I stand there and say to everybody, please don't go, there are some conversions. Sometimes they do know the shahada by themselves, and sometimes they need assistance because they shiver and when they finish, everybody rushes to them and hugs them, they say "what happened, why did they do that?" I tell them because they are so happy for you, so excited for you that you have chosen the right way of life and everyone of says, "you're a brother to me now, you're a brother to me now, you're a sister me". All this has a feeling, and gives them a different atmosphere. Sometimes I ask them, do you want to have the conversion quietly in the office, or do you want it outside there, it depends, some say inside, but many want it out there.

The above personal experiences of converts indicate that the declaration of faith as both the personal and social dimension of conversion to Islam must be examined when researching religious conversion. In this regard, as noted by Baumeister, psychologists tend to think of identity as something that exists within the individual, as a part of personality and perceive the broader society vaguely as an agent that puts things into individuals. On the contrary, sociologists view identity in relation to society and perceive identity as a set of roles and statuses defined by society, like profession, education, social status; and see the individual's physical self and motivations as irrelevant.¹⁷ As conversion to Islam entails both belief as well as religious practice within society, both psychological and sociological aspects play significant roles in identity construction.¹⁸ Kose states, religion is a very effective context for identity as it is generally accompanied by moral systems which support identity by establishing basic values of right and wrong, and by regulating interpersonal conduct or at least it is one of the sub-identities among others of which an individual's identity is made up. Furthermore, Kose indicates, "religious conversion is defined as a definite break with one's former identity such that the past and the present are anti-ethical; in some important respects. Investigators of conversion seem virtually unanimous that conversion involves a radical change in ones identity, beliefs, ideas, values and personality".¹⁹ However, how these contentions apply to the comments in this study. For instance, Amir, asserts that his identity has not changed at all, but what has changed are his "ideals". He explains his first contact with Islam was through a Muslim friend at school. His response to the question, "What caused your interest in Islam?" was, "No idea to be honest, I was just bored so I went to the library, then I looked up Islam". Regarding the question: "How has becoming a Muslim affected your identity?", his response is as follows: "I would like to think I'm more responsible and I would like to think I obey Allah (S.W.T) more". Thus, Amir was not experiencing an identity crisis nor was he on a spiritual quest; however, he explains that as a result of converting to Islam, he has become a more responsible person living his life according to Islamic guidelines. Similarly, Abu Bakr revealed that instead of his identity changing his priorities have changed. In his words:

I feel like I am here for a different purpose, but I don't think if you met me when I was fifteen years old and you met me now, I don't think you'd say man you have changed so much, you're not the same person I knew before. I think I have carried through most of the person I am, just that I don't do some things I used to do, and I don't think some ways about things that I used to think, I think I've always been positive but Islam has given me that, like if the guy outside put his bobcat through the house, I'd just go, Subhan'Allah, I have to fix that, it's not like I'm gonna go, oh why do you always do this to me? You know it's just a thing that's not so important, probably my priorities are completely different, like before it was all me.

Hence, conversion to Islam does not necessitate that one abandon their socio-cultural way of life and drastic identity re-construction. From the responses of the converts, it appears some aspects of their perceptions change; what varies are, their priorities and their ideals. Participants were asked what impact converting to Islam had on their perceptions of the world and life. Chris stated, "It has made me think about God before all my actions, for example, would Allah approve of what I'm doing?" Abu Bakr stated, "I know why I am here, what I am here to do and what it is all about". Dawud's response was, "in everyway I now understand the purpose of my existence". Another convert by the name of Dawud stated, "That this sensory existence is absolutely mortal and the sole opportunity for assuring the afterlife- all else is trivial". Once again, the perception changes that have been indicated pertain to the purpose of life. Such perception changes have an impact on the daily life of the converts as they try to lead their life in accordance to what is permissible. As such, their priorities are in accordance to Islamic notions, with importance placed on the family unit and less significance placed on materialism.

The perception changes expressed by the converts in this study are similar to that of the findings of Kose's study on British converts to Islam. Kose stated that "the change caused by conversion fundamentally transformed their conception of the world and changed the convert's perception of the universe of discourse in which meanings were understood".²⁰ Having converted to Islam resulted in not necessarily an identity change as such, but rather an adjustment to one's perceptions and priorities in life. This in effect has had a considerable impact on how they perceive themselves, their purpose in life as well as in the way they present themselves in the public sphere. Gillespie confers that in dealing with the religious conversion experience in general, there are distinguished aspects of the identity issue.²¹ Kose summarises these as: Organisational affiliation; Re-organisation on a deeper level of consciousness and a sense of cosmic identity.²²

The responses to the question, "has becoming a Muslim affected your identity to Islam?" prompted interesting responses and can be analysed in the context of the three aspects of the identity issue. Aziz's response, "Yes, I consider myself a complete Christian" can be best understood as a reorganisation of the self on a deeper level of consciousness. As a convert from the Christian faith, Aziz indicated that rather than make an extreme identity change; he made some adjustments to his previous belief, as Islam is taken to be the last of the three great world religions. Sharif stated, "Being a Muslim is being an international citizen, it overrides culture, race, class etc. I am a Muslim first because Allah comes first", while Dawud indicated, "I now keenly feel the many tragedies and ignominies that Muslims suffer, suffered, are subject to, as if it is happening to me".

Both these statements demonstrate the significance of the concept of the *ummah* in Islam as they identify with it regardless of their nationality, race or class. Identifying with the *ummah* and having a trans-national identity is an important aspect of their identity that changes when they convert to Islam. Accordingly the responses of Sharif and Dawud can be examined in light of gaining a sense of cosmic identity and having an organisational affiliation. Having converted to Islam, aspects of their identity are transformed, as they not only become affiliated with a certain set of beliefs and join the community of Muslims, but also join the trans-national Muslim

community. The notion of becoming a part of a transnational community (*ummah*) was also noted in the study of Muslim converts in Britain by Bourque. She has found that the converts, “see Islam as a trans-national religion based on the Quran and *Hadith* rather than as a set of practices embedded in the culture of Pakistan, India...or the Middle East”.²³ Asiya Rodrigo stresses the point that Islam is not specific to a particular race or nationality or culture. She states:

*Western converts need to remember that their identity as a westerner does not necessarily mean that they aren't just as Muslim as anyone else. One does not need to abandon one for the other – Islam is just as present in the West, if not more, as any other country containing Muslims. We are all well aware of the fact that a Muslim is not just one who dresses and eats and acts like an Arab, or a Pakistani or an Indonesian. Yet, this issue is one of many that converts have trouble coming to grips with, due to the continuing bombardment of media denoting a distant discrepancy between the Muslim and the West.*²⁴

Hence, Islam transcends all boundaries of nationality, class and culture, and there is no contradiction between being a Westerner and a Muslim. The transcendence of Islam is expressed in the last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor does a black have any superiority over the white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood.

Everyday Life of Converts

Islam is better defined as *deen*, a way of life, rather a religion as it encompasses the intricate aspects of daily life.²⁵ Muslims must live in accordance with Islamic guidelines. Peachy states, “Islam deals with every aspect of life, spiritual and physical, its jurisprudence is based on creed, instruction, worship and ordinances dealing with social, economic and political transactions...”.²⁶ Further, he expounds that Islam enjoins good character expressed in good manners for all circumstances, for example on eating, sleeping, dressing, travelling, greeting among others. Evidently, conversion to Islam may engender considerable changes to one’s lifestyle, particularly with regard to diet, drinking habits, dress etiquette and religiosity; particularly the five daily prayers would have a significant impact on the Muslims convert’s daily life. To find out to what extent the daily life of the convert have been impacted since embracing Islam, a question pertaining to the effect conversion on their daily life was put forth. The responses attained reveal the considerable change that converts made to their daily life. The following are some of the responses:

“In so many ways, I have learnt so much and have so much to learn. It has affected me in most things I do, the way I eat, the way I shower, how I treat people, prayers I say to myself before sleeping, eating and showering. Ramadan has a huge effect on my day, I guess this is the time I feel most spiritual”(Tracey).

“I’m fulling practising Alhamdulillah, so I’m trying to live according to the Shariah, and bring my actions in line with what is halal” (Jaylan).

“Observing prayers, helping others, as a parent consciously educating our son” (Saftiyah).

“My days now are not spent on this earth but on striving to fulfil what I was created to do, worship Allah to the best of my ability” (Maryam).

“Prayers, thinking about life, wearing the hijab” (Aysha) and May stated, “having the intention clear”.

“It puts your day in order, Islam makes you cautious, that is, whether you’re doing good or bad, you know there is a Watcher over you” (Khadija).

“I must be aware of my behaviour, dress and actions and beliefs as a Muslim” (Fatima).

Conversion to Islam has affected the daily life of the converts in many significant ways. Even the basic daily routine aspects of their life like eating, dressing and becoming more self-conscious with regard to their behaviour demonstrates their transformation. These not only involve adopting new practices like prayer and fasting, but also entail leaving previous habits that are against the basic principles of the religion of Islam. The male converts relayed similar responses describing the impact converting to Islam had on their daily lives. Some of them include:

“I now base my day around the worship of Allah, being mindful of Him, and at the same time staying away from things that benefit me not” (Abdulshaheed).

“My life revolves around worship inshallah in a proper way” (Dawud).

“Salat for example, stopping to pray wherever so I can keep up with my prayers (Abdulsamad)

“How could it be otherwise? Prayer in particular, food and drink” (Ridwhan).

“Now I worship God where as before I was simply lost without realising it” (Hamza)

“Prayer, stopping work to pray, time adjustments. In reality Islam does not change your lifestyle to an extent where it gives a person hardship, all you do is a few adjustments” (Murat).

Not surprisingly, the most significant change reported by the converts is the obligatory five daily prayers. Their daily life now revolves around worship; hence they lead their lives according to

Islamic guidelines. Practising Islam in Australia has its difficulties. Imran describes the benefits and difficulties that he needs to deal with being a Muslim convert:

I would say the government system, and the employment nature and the banking sector and everything else has a definite clash with our religion, it's not easy to take time off work to make your required prayer time. I don't think employers are welcoming and understanding of it. That's the first point I want to make. I guess, secondly, the nature of obtaining home loans and the interest charge is once again a contradiction of our faith. However, the fact the Australian way of life is that we are very welcoming of all religions, that there is no distinction towards sex, race and religion is a very good thing to have, and I think by far we are a very lucky country, that we are open and not have hostilities that other countries have, and being I guess a young country, that is only to our benefit.

Previously taken for granted aspects of life, such as dealing with interest and obtaining home loans become a dilemma for the Muslim convert. Having time off to pray the daily prayers can be difficult in situations where the employer may not be accepting of it. However, generally with Australia celebrating its ethnic and religious diversity, the daily life of converts as well as other Australians is mostly devoid of hostilities manifest in other countries. Imran faced some challenges with his father, but in particular he experienced difficulties with access to his son from a previous relationship as a result of his conversion to Islam, he explains:

Family has been hard to say the least. My father is a staunch Atheist. He is against all religions to say the least. My son from my previous relationship, there is definitely tensions there, they're worried you know that I am going to try to force my son to convert, there was even issues about stopping access but I've consulted legal advice and I've basically reiterated my legal stance of what race or religion I am, and if I want to be a practising Muslim or Atheist or Buddhist or whatever else I want to be, they can't stop me from having access to my child, but there are massive issues there. With, colleagues, I'd have to say very good. I work with a very Australian bunch of guys, they are understanding of the Islamic culture. We're allowed to all leave at the same time for Friday prayers, so there's no issue there, so I take about two hours off on a Friday as a result. My colleagues have been sensational. And I left my other place of employment as a result, so I could you know look for a place that is more willing and understanding.

Imran's experience illustrates the way some converts negotiate or manage the different responses to their conversion in the various spheres of life, including with family, friends, employments and various institutions. This may involve changing their place of employment or consulting legal advice to deal with the family's negative response to their conversion. The converts have to deal with such changes at an individual and social level, thus highlighting the impact of conversion on every-day life.

Conclusion

Converting to Islam has a significant impact on everyday life and thus identity both on a personal and social level is drastically changed. Although, some of the converts in this study stated that their personality has remained the same to a large degree, and that they only made some adjustments to their character in order to live according to Islamic principles. This notion of

adjusting one's identity instead of a total transformation upon converting to Islam is reflected in the Muslim convert's understanding of the term 'revert', that is, rather than changing completely, one is in fact returning to their nature (*fitrah*).

The personal and social dimension of conversion is epitomized in the declaration of faith when Muslim converts choose to share such an intense moment publicly among other Muslims at the Mosque instead of the privacy of Imam's office or at home in the presence of a small number of people. Joining the transnational community, the *ummah* further reflects the social dimension of conversion and the impact becoming Muslims has on one's social identity. The political climate in which this study was undertaken may have heightened the supposed inherent conflict between being Muslim and a Westerner.

The converts to Islam who encountered challenges in their daily life practice, which included prayer and dietary requirements, in most cases managed such conflicts and misunderstandings and negotiated their new lifestyle with their family and colleagues. The experiences of the converts to Islam shed light on the personal and social dimensions of religious conversion, identity transformation and everyday life highlighting the fact that while there are political and media spin that strongly contend for the incompatibility of Islam and the West, Australian converts to Islam manage such misunderstanding and will help to dispel such simple dichotomous views and stereotypes.

Notes

¹¹ Ali Kose, *Conversion to Islam: A Study of Native British Converts*, (London & New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996), 1.

² See Ali Kose, "Post-conversion Experiences of Native British Converts to Islam", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5. No. 2. (1994): 195-206; Anne S. Roald, *New Muslims in the European Context: The Experience of Scandinavian Converts*, (Boston: Brill Publishers, 2004); Maha Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The voices of British Converts", (MA dissertation, Leeds: University of Leeds, 2002).

³ Tuba Boz, "Religious Conversion, Models and Paradigms," *Epiphany: Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2011): 128-145.

⁴ Yassin Mohamed, *Human Nature in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1998), 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mahmoud Dhaouadi, *New Explorations into the Making of Ibn Khaldun's Umran Mind*, (Kuala Lumpur, A.S. Noordeen, 1997), 108.

⁷ Nicole Bourque, "Being British and Muslim: Dual Identity Amongst New and Young Muslims" in *University Lectures in Islamic Studies*, ed. Alan Jones vol. 2. (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 1998), 98.

⁸ Yasien Dutton, "Conversion to Islam: The Qur'anic Paradigm." In *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies*, ed. Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant, (London: Cassells, 1999), 152.

⁹ See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995); M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali*, (New Delhi: Adam Publishers 2003).

¹⁰ Dennis J. Parrucci, Religious Conversion: A Theory of Deviant Behaviour in *Sociology of Religion* 29(3) (1968):144-154.

¹¹ Ali Kose, op. cit., 128.

¹² Yasien Dutton, op. cit., 153.

¹³ Saalih ibn Fawzaan Al-Fawzaan, *The Declaration of Faith*, (United Kingdom, Message of Islam, 1998), 33.

¹⁴ Ali Kose, op. cit., 97.

¹⁵ Yasien Dutton, op. cit., 154.

¹⁶ Roy F. Baumeister, *Identity: Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 248.

¹⁷ Ibid, 246.

¹⁸ See Michael S. Northcott, "Sociological Approaches," in *Approaches to the Study of Religion* ed. Peter Connolly. (London and New York: Cassell 1999), 193-225).

¹⁹ Ali Kose, op. cit., 125.

²⁰ Ibid, 127

²¹ Virgil B. Gillespie, *The Dynamics of Religious Conversion*, (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1991), 73.

²² Ali Kose, op. cit., 126.

²³ Nicole Bourque, "Being British and Muslim: Dual Identity Amongst New and Young Muslims" in *University Lectures in Islamic Studies*, ed. Alan Jones vol. 2. (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 1998), 17.

²⁴ Asiya N. Rodrigo, "Understanding the Needs" in *Insight page 1* (1998) Available at: <http://www.ifew.com/insight/13037rvt/necessry.htm>, (accessed February 1, 2012).

²⁵ See Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*. Trans. and edited by Khurshid Ahmad, (U.K: Islamic Foundation, 1980).

²⁶ William S. Peachy, *A Brief Look Upon Islam*. (Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 1999), 22.