

## **I did not know anything about Islam**

A many Muslim women scholars and experts in various field gathered and discuss the current issues. Of those, Principal of Imam Mahdi Islamic School in Australia, Zeinab Taylor Rizavi gave her speech in this regard, approaching the conference scope from her perspective.

Zeinab Taylor Rizavi, in an exclusive interview with Taqrib News Agency delineate the hows she converted to the religion of Islam, clarifying related issues in answering the questions.

Q: When did you convert to Islam and please tell us about the whys made you convert to the religion of Islam?

A: I have a Muslim for nineteen years. Growing up, I did not know anything about Islam. Nothing about Prophet Muhammad; so, once I came to know was when I read some books about Prophet Muhammad. Then I realized the continuance of all the religions that have come before. I think it was actually very easy to accept Islam.

Q: Regarding the importance of unity among Muslims, what do you expect from this conference?

A: This very important that Muslim women from different communities gathered in this conference saying that we should be united. They say it's outside influences that actually making us not be united. So it is encouraging all women to have unity and work together.

Q: Regarding the article you delivered in this conference which dealt with the growth of Islam in Australia, how do you appraise the role of women in inviting people to the divine religion of Islam?

A: To tell the truth it's not so much. If you want to go out in western countries and in Australia, inviting people, they don't like that. They don't like you to go out and preach. It's more that we should be receptive, so if someone comes to you, prepare to help that. You have to listen where they come from. If they come from Christianity, you

should talk about Christianity. If they come from Judaism, you talk about Judaism. If they come from no religion, you tell them about religion but nothing should be by force.

Q: What problems at the moment Muslim population wrestling with in Australia?

A: We actually have problems with Wahhabis at the moment. Wahhabis are very much in control. We have many problems with them. They are too dangerous for Sunni and Shia brothers. Their ideology I mean, they say we are all from the Sunni. They taking a way the Sunni sects, they dismiss Hanafi, Hambeli and Maleki. They dismiss it. And they say we should be together, Sunni. Through such way they try to teach you their ideology. B the first thing in their ideology is to hate Shia and this is the danger.

Q: Can you tell us a gist of what you tackle and highlight in your article?

A: What I just said was what was happening in Australia. There are a lot of new Muslims in Australia. There is a growth of Islam in Australia. But the fact that, one the Wahhabis have a lot of control. So, 19 years before, there was a lot of unity between Shia and Sunni. But because of the Wahhabism now it's very separate like Sunni won't come to Shia communities anymore because they are taught that we are like something else.