

my conversion to Islam was the happiest moment in my life

Ecille Lauron who journeyed to Islam from atheism and moved up to Shiism studied at Philippine Christian University (PCU) in Manila and then at Jose Rizal University of Mandaluyong. In response to few questions, she tells us about her journey towards the light.

Ms Lauron please speak about the stages you passed by to come to the Islamic declaration and from moving from non-believing to believe in Islam.

Assalamun Alaikum my dear brothers and sisters in faith and all readers.

I am Noor Fatima (my Islamic name); I am a convert from the Philippines.

Well, my conversion to Islam was the happiest moment in my life. I was not really a religious person before Islam came to me...I had never met any Muslim in my childhood and teens years. Until such time, I faced burdens which I felt that I cannot overcome without talking to God. But then again, the guts that I had to have guidance from God, lead me and gave me much confusion. So, I had to do research. I researched about different religions and read their principles and their ways of life. And then I read about Islam and it really caught my heart and attracted me. So I wanted to learn more about Islam and read about it more and more. Here, I would like to suggest special books to non-Muslims like the history of Islam—that is the first one I would like them to read, in the sense that without it they would never understand us Muslims. Then, the books about Jesus and Mary in Islam.

Learning about Islam was the first step, the next step was meeting Muslims to see how to live Islam. I was not a Muslim yet and for my studies I had to move from my village to a city. There I met a Muslim and after few months of asking and seeing his life, I asked him how to help me to become a Muslim. He guided me to declare my Shahada(declaration that I believe in Islam and Prophet Muhammad). It was the happiest moment of my whole life, but it was also very hard

because I did not know what my family's reaction would be. Any way I gave it a try.

The more I got into Islam I studied more and more, by reading the life of Prophet Mohammad s.a., I was really amazed and overwhelmed. His patience in all situations, in front of people, towards the believers and non-believers, even towards the haters as well, his golden knowledge, his wide understanding, at the same time his fears of Allah and his eagerness to preach the words of Allah! All were great and caught me, I really loved him and those features of him that really motivated me to believe him and have deeper belief in Islam.

You mentioned that mostly studies and researches helped you convert to Islam, now I would like to ask you what specific features did you find within Islam that caught your attention and changed your mind from non-Muslim to a Muslim, while there are atheist and ommanists media domineering did you also study other human schools to compare and choose the best?

For me various things shaped my faith in Islam like having Muslim friends, reading Islamic books, watching Islamic channels, discussing about the religion with non-Muslim friends. With my studies and researches I think Western world lacks so much which does not satisfy you; the west lacks discipline and implementation of a perfect way of life like what Islam teaches.

To decide the best, we should not and never be judgmental to what we merely see or hear without going into deep learning or dogging deep reasons to it. There are a lot of criticism and propaganda against Islam and Muslim world...but, if we are just a good judge -I mean, a fair listener, observer, speaker and researcher to every issues will recognize at last that how perfect Islam is in every aspect. We will realize how pure and good Islam teaches us everything. I have seen individuals and groups criticizing Islam, and they are bias that's why in my own little way, I give short but straight to the point advice, for them to ponder so they could reflect on that sometimes. A system like Islam is needed in all places. As for my own perspective, even now I can see that there are media and systems that which are bias and that somewhat drag and influence those people who definitely are weak

and uncritical in grappling issues of the society, which are leading them to atheism. And I would like to propose friendly religious discussions.

And also, I would show everyone that Islam is a thing not to be ignored—by doing what Islam is teaching, by being a good person in words and in deeds, in a way that some will realize and imitate how favorable Islam is with every human being.

Islam is logical itself. It is not just a mere religious thing but it is the best way of life, and we all know that. So, I guess, Islam can give people or can make them logical and critical-minded in terms of getting benefits intellectually.

As for the last question, you already pointed that you were not a religious person before studying about Islam; I would like to know how did you accept and get used to have Islamic hijab (head and body covering for ladies)?

At first, I was not really comfortable with it because I wasn't used to it, it was something pretty new for me and in my community people are not really open to this kind of wearing and covering. But Alhamdulillah! In a month, with solemn prayers, I was able to manage and now, I am very comfortable wearing hijab. When I wear it, I feel beautiful and proud. Amazingly, I am not comfortable anymore, without hijab.