

International Islamic University
Islamabad
Faculty of Usuluddin
Department of Comparative Religions



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية اسلام آباد
كلية أصول الدين
قسم مقارنة الأديان

A Voyage in Search of the "True Religion":

*A Study of Maryam Jameelah's Conversion to Islam and her Critique of
Western Civilization*

Submitted by:

Zohaib Ahmad

Reg #:

202-FU-PhDCR-F14

Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad

Co Supervisor:

Dr. Muhammad Akram

International Islamic University Islamabad

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work present in the following dissertation is my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged and that the thesis is my own composition. No part of the thesis has been previously presented for any other degree.

Date _____

Zohaib Ahmad

DEDICATION

To my grandparents for all their efforts to teach their children.

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I share my deep appreciation to the family of Ms. Maryam Jameelah (late) for granting me the privilege to access her personal archives. The access to this material provided me to have a more in-depth study of her thoughts and ideas. I pay my deepest gratitude to Muhammad Yunus Aziz as well, who not only accommodated me in Lahore but also, in spite of his old age, personally traveled with me to the various libraries and arranged interviews with Jameelah's family. My elder brother, Muhammad Usama Akram, must also be thanked especially for his photographic skills that allowed me to capture thousands of pages from Jameelah's library in no time. It is not the first time when my brother surprised me with his professional abilities, however.

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PREFACE

It was summer 2014 when after submitting my MS research dissertation, I was first introduced to the letters of Ms. Maryam Jameelah which were translated and republished by Colonel (R) Ashfaq Hussain. The story presented in those letters immediately caught my attention and I started exploring more and more writings of her. Later on, I decided to register my doctoral research work to understand the nature of the connection between her conversion and her criticism of Western civilization. Afterwards, when I went to Lahore to visit her family, I found more than 4000 unpublished pages in her personal library. Fortunately, her family allowed me to capture all that material which had remained unveiled to not only national but international academia as well. Those were various sorts of writings including letters written to Jameelah which could roughly be grouped into the following types:

1. Letters of well-known scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Muhammad Hamidullah, and Kenneth Cregg.
2. Letters of Euro-Americans who were either converted to Islam or had an interest in it.
3. Letters of the editors, publishers, translators, reviewers, and students.
4. Invitations of national and international conferences.
5. Letters from Islamic missions of different countries.
6. Letters from her family members and friends.

Apart from the letters, those pages also included unpublished manuscripts of Jameelah's writings which she did not want to be published in her life. From a birthday card to a scholarly book, she preserved almost everything in her personal library. All that new material provided metadata and an impetus to carry out the current research work.

This work is divided into five chapters. Each chapter is further divided into two parts. The first part of the first chapter consists of the research proposal and methodological framework. In this regard, Lewis Ray Rambo's heuristic stage

model of conversion is mainly used to analyze the process of religious change of Jameelah. The second part of the first chapter briefly introduces types, motifs, and definitions of religious conversion along with the concept of conversion to Islam. The first part of the second chapter presents a brief story of her life in chronological order. The second part of the second chapter is devoted to understand the social, historical, theological, and cultural dimensions of her conversion. The third chapter presents analysis, findings, and application of Rambo's stage model on her conversion. The first part of the fourth chapter investigates the development of her thoughts and ideas whereas, in the second part, her criticism towards the modern western ideas is discussed. The fifth chapter presents her criticism of the Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam along with the suggestions to Muslims. This thesis ends with a conclusion.

This dissertation contains many Quranic *Ayaat*. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of the Holy Quran is used for this purpose. This research work uses Chicago 16th footnote style for references and bibliography.

ABSTRACT

Maryam Jameelah is an American Jewish lady who, after her conversion to Islam, migrates to Pakistan on the invitation of Abul A'la Maududi. She is studied mostly as a scholar of modern Western thought. Less information is available regarding her conversion, however. Her writings indicate that her criticism of Western civilization is directly connected to her conversion. Therefore, this research aims to analyze her conversion and its relationship with her criticism of Western civilization. Notably, the complexity of the analytical study of any conversion process is augmented due to the involvement of various underlying motifs, events, and types of conversion. Therefore, Lewis Ray Rambo's heuristic stage model of conversion is used for understanding of psychological, sociological, historical, religious, and anthropological aspects of her conversion. Rambo uses the inter-disciplinary approach to formulate his heuristic model that consists of seven stages including context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences. This research finds out that adopting many religious traditions, groups, and movements, Jameelah is converted multiple times in her life. Her 'multiple conversions' reveal that it is her quest for the complete satisfaction that moves her from one religious fold to another. Her study of Islam provides her such satisfactory answers that end the process of her multiple conversions. After converting to Islam, she does not convert to any other religion. During her life in Pakistan, she is inclined towards Sufism and starts practicing it. Analysis of her 'multiple conversions' figures out that findings related to the context, crisis, and quest stages of Rambo's model are almost the same in each of her conversion process whereas some differences are observed in other stages of her conversions.

Regarding her criticism of Western civilization, it is observed that during her life in America, she feels the strong impact of secular culture on religion. Numerous factors such as the Reform Judaism especially the work of Moses Mendelssohn, the Western mood of living, the industrial revolution, love of natural beauty, the nonobservant attitude of parents, the genocide of red Indians, and love of classical music make her hate modernism and Western civilization. She claims

that modernism or westernization are two sides of the same coin. When she discovers that, being influenced by the theory of evolution, modern scholars are trying to deny the presence of ideals such as permanence and absolute truth in the real life, she decides to spend the rest of her life in defending them by criticizing modern philosophies. In sum, her criticism of Western civilization can be divided into two types. Firstly, she criticizes Western civilization and its impact on Islam by evaluating its philosophical foundations. Secondly, she criticizes the reformers of Islam through hundreds of her book reviews. Moreover, she criticizes both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam alike maintaining that Islam does not need any sort of reforms or changes. She suggests embracing traditional orthodoxy in all world religions.

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Transliteration Table

Urdu Characters	IPA Symbol	Urdu Characters	IPA Symbol
ا	a	ب	b
پ	p	ت	t
ٹ	t̪	ث	th
ج	j	چ	ch
ح	h	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	d̪
دھ	dh	ر	r
ڑ	r̪	ز	z
س	s	س	s
ش	sh	ص	ʃ
ڈ	ɖ	ط	ʈ
ز	z̪	ع	e
گھ	gh	ف	f
ق	q	ک	k
گ	g	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
و	w/v	ہ	h
ی	i	ے	y
ں	ɳ	ھ	h
ف	o	ی	yi
ی	y		
Aspirated Consonants			
پھ	bh	پھ	ph
تھ	th	تھ	th
چھ	jh	چھ	ch
دھ	dh	دھ	dh
رھ	rh	کھ	kh
گھ	gh		
Long Vowels			
آ	ā	ی	ī
و	ō	و	ō
اے	é		
Short Vowels			
ا	a	ا	ɪ
و	u		

Diphthongs			
و	aw/au	ى	ay
اے	ai		
Doubled			
وَّ	uwwa	يَّ	iyya

Table 1: Transliteration Table

Chapter One: Research Proposal and Understanding of Religious Conversion

Part One: Research Proposal

Introduction

In 1962 CE, a newly converted Muslim lady left the comfortable lifestyle of America and opted for Pakistan. She did not have enough funds to buy an air ticket, however, she managed to travel by sea. Her name was Maryam Jameelah (May 23, 1934- Oct 31, 2012), formerly known as Margaret (Peggy) Marcus. She is the author of eleven books and hundreds of book reviews on the Western and Islamic culture, civilization, and history. Many of her articles and books have been translated into Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, German, Bengali, and Bahasa Indonesia. Born to a non-observant Jewish family¹ in New York and traveled to Pakistan on the invitation of Abul A'la Maududi,² (1903-1979) she spent more than fifty years in Pakistan and never returned to America. From her earlier days, she was not satisfied by her own faith and started studying different religions.

The purpose of life remains a mystery for Jameelah during her childhood and adolescence. Moreover, she is not content with many answers provided by the Old Testament as of the Hereafter and the role of Hebrew prophets. According to her understandings, the Jewish daily prayer book hardly mentions Hell. She provides the list of prophets who, according to the Old Testament, are rapists and "threaten Bani Israil because of their sins with divine punishment by defeat, destruction of their property, persecution and ... exile at the hands of their enemies, but no mention is ever made that they will be condemned by God on the Day of Judgment and be doomed to Hell-fire."³ She writes that when Job (peace be upon him) recovers from his long illness by praying God, he is rewarded by all his property and wealth but nothing has been mentioned concerning his reward in the Hereafter (Job: 42). Jameelah notes that there is only mention of materialistic things

¹ John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 54.

² Islamic scholar, journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist leader, and political philosopher.

³ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1993), 52-53.

in the story. She regards this materialism as a great danger for the whole human race.

She believes that before Zionism, there has never been such a long-lasting hatred among Jews and Muslims. Zionists were struggling for land and not for religious purposes. The victory of Zionists over Muslims is not the conquest of Judaism over Islam rather "Zionism has proved that Arab nationalism is no match for Jewish nationalism."⁴ Furthermore, she warns about the impact of the contemporary materialism which she thinks is occupying the Western countries and spreading towards the East under the name of modernism. In her book, *Islam and Modernism*, she quotes Ibn Khaldūn⁵ (1332-1306) saying that mostly a defeated nation tries to adopt the culture and habits of the victorious nation. Sometimes they adopt it unconsciously and think that by doing it, they are revitalizing themselves.⁶ She asks that why are Muslims doing such things? although, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade Muslims to imitate others.

For Maryam Jameelah, what Muslims are getting from West under the title of modernism is nothing but the culture of Jews and Christians. She is against the modernistic approach to the study of Islam. Many modernists such as Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), in his scientific approach, Qasim Ameen (1863-1908), in his advocacy of feminism, Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000), in his idea of modern Islam, suggest reforms in Islam and conclude that Islam must be reinterpreted to address the needs of modern age. However, Maryam Jameelah rejects these notions viewing Modernity or Westernization as not being universal or global. She thinks that "'international culture' or 'modernism' is simply one-way traffic from the West; Europe and America involved wholly in export and Asia and Africa only in

⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁵ Arab Muslim historiographer and historian regarded to be among the founding fathers of modern sociology.

⁶ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan & Sons, 1988), 25.

import."⁷ Therefore, she suggests that Muslims must develop their own methods and theories according to their culture and civilization.

In the preface of her book, *Islam and Orientalism*, she says that the ultimate goal of "Islamic Institutes" and "Islamic Research Centers" in West is not to dig out the hidden knowledge of the Holy Quran but to prove "Islam only to enable its enemies to destroy it."⁸ Similar to traditional Muslim Ulema, she is also against Christian mission schools and hospitals in the Indian Subcontinent. In this regard, she advises not to ban the work of Orientalists but to write scholarly refusals of their ideas.⁹ She argues that Muslims should study their own culture and history to find out the solutions for the modern age. The life work of previous Muslim scholars can guide Muslims towards practical solutions. Since she was converted from Judaism to Islam, therefore, throughout her study of Islam and other religions especially Judaism and Christianity are in-depth and comparative. A study of her conversion, as well as its relationship with her major ideas, is vividly needed.

Literature Review

In *Makers of Contemporary Islam* edited by John L. Esposito and John Obert Voll, published by Oxford University Press in 2001, a companion to modern Islamic scholars. Life and ideas of Maryam Jameelah are shared with readers in a separate article entitled *Maryam Jameelah: A Voice of Conservative Islam*. Esposito has divided this article into two parts. In the first part, he discusses a brief biography of Jameelah along with her arrival to Pakistan and argues that from her childhood she was fascinated by the Orient.¹⁰ The author views that the cruelty of Zionist forces made her write her first novel on a Palestinian refugee at the age of twelve. Later on, after accepting Islam, she came to Pakistan. In the second part, the author introduces her major ideas about Western society, Islam, modernism and,

⁷ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life* (Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1990), 10.

⁸ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan & Sons, 1981), 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰ Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 55.

women. The author concludes that she advocates classical or traditional Islam. For Esposito, she believes that history should not be "criticized or modified in any substantive way but fully embraced."¹¹ She is against the modern Muslim modernists and revivalists for their use of Western ideas. Moreover, she is a staunch supporter of Ulema. As early as 1976, she started addressing Western and Muslim feminists. She sets out to prove the inherent superiority of Islamic teachings on polygamy, divorce, and, purdah. Esposito met with Jameelah who also reviewed some of his works. His letters to Jameelah are still preserved in her personal library. However, he did not keep any correspondence in this regard.¹² This article shows Esposito's in-depth study of Jameelah and provides a summary of her life and views.

Maryam Jameelah: Al-muhājirah min al-Yahūdiyyah ilā al-Islām wa min America ilā Bākistān Baḥsan ‘anil-Ḥaqīqah wal-Īmān was written by Zakir Aazami and published in 2010. This book is divided into two parts. In the first part, the author writes the biography of Maryam Jameelah mainly from her published letters and translates some of them into the Arabic language. In the second part, he reviews her selected works. The main purpose of the author is to write a biography of Jameelah for the Arab world to make it aware of her major works and conversion from Judaism to Islam. Aazami contacted Jameelah whenever he found any difficulty in understanding her thoughts. His letters along with the manuscript of his book are still preserved in her personal library. He concludes that, after reading the Holy Qur'an, she finds the answer to her question about the life of the Hereafter and learns that the purpose of present life is achievement and not enjoyment. He views her as a perfect example for modern Muslim women.¹³ Azazmi drafted an excellent biography of her for the Arab world but missed some important aspects of her life. Although the Holy Qur'an was the biggest inspiration for the conversion

¹¹ Ibid. 58

¹² John L. Esposito, e-mail message to author, February 3, 2016.

¹³ Zakir Aazmi, *Maryam Jameelah: Al-muhājirah min al-Yahūdiyyah ilā al-Islām wa min America ilā Bākistān Baḥsan anil-Ḥaqīqah wal-Īmān* (Damascus: Dār-ul-Qalam, 2010). 7

of Maryam Jameelah to Islam as she herself wrote extensively about it,¹⁴ there were many other factors behind her conversion. In the second chapter of the present research work, those factors have been discussed in detail.

Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa ‘Ilmī Khidmāt, a thesis written by Fatimah al-Zahra from the faculty of Islamic Studies, Punjab University Lahore, 2010. The research work is divided into four chapters. In the first two chapters, the researcher drafts a biography of Maryam Jameelah both from her writings and interviews. The third chapter presents a summary of her writing. The final chapter is, however, the most remarkable part of this research as it contains the rare interviews of Jameelah and her contemporaries. Although al-Zahra's work is more like a hagiographical study, it seems the only source about the views of Maryam Jameelah on issues such as Taliban.

The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism written by Deborah Baker and published by Graywolf Press in 2011. Baker is a biographer and essayist who undertook this research as a biographical work to know how she became Maryam from Margret? Furthermore, she also tries to analyze Jameelah's views about Jihad and women as well as her relations with Maududi. The author has collected her notes mainly from Maryam Jameelah's letters which have been archived in the New York Public Library. The author wants to know that whether any change happened in the views of Jameelah after 9/11.

Did she watch the city she had once known so well fall to pieces? Had she changed her mind about the evils of the West or did she remain resolute? Could she help me make sense of 9/11 and the war on terror that followed, or would she see me as her sworn enemy?¹⁵

The book is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the author tries to construct the story of Jameelah from the letters archived in the New York

¹⁴ See. *Why I Embraced Islam and How I Discovered the Holy Quran* by Maryam Jameelah.

¹⁵ Editor, "Graywolf Press Reading Group Guide: *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism*," [https://www.graywolfpress.org/sites/default/files/The Convert.pdf](https://www.graywolfpress.org/sites/default/files/The%20Convert.pdf). accessed March 21, 2016.

Library. In the second chapter, she discusses the ideas of Maududi and the "Jihadi Islam" of the 20th century. In the third chapter, she narrates the story of her meeting with Jameelah in Pakistan. This book was a 2011 National Book Award finalist. The title of the book is *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism*. One can view that she came to Pakistan by her own will and with the permission of her parents. Baker answers this question by saying "my publisher came up with the subtitle Exile and Extremism. My subtitle was *A Parable of Islam and America* which doesn't raise the question of exile."¹⁶ She also rephrased the letters of Jameelah admitting this act as an unorthodox approach.¹⁷ Baker's conclusion is also surprising when she said: "She (Maryam Jameelah) seemed to have one set of rules for herself, and another set of rules for her sister Muslims."¹⁸ Jameelah was a strong opponent of feminist movements and rejected the views of Qasim Ameen in this regard. She, herself obeyed the rule of purdah and married to Mohammad Yusuf Khan who already had a wife. From her life, it seems difficult to claim that she was having "one set of rules for herself, and another set of rules for her sister Muslims." It seems that Baker simply generalized Jameelah's ambivalent response towards birth control¹⁹ when she was drafting the conclusion.

"Maryam Jameela's Thoughts On Western Civilization", *The Companion* January 2013 vol: 07 issue: 08. This short research article has been divided into two parts. In the first part, the author discusses the criticism of Jameelah on Muslim

¹⁶ Deborah Baker, e-mail message to author, July 3, 2014.

¹⁷ Deborah Baker, *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2011), 134.

¹⁸ Deborah Baker, e-mail message to author, July 3, 2014.

¹⁹ According to Baker, initially Jameelah was not in favor of birth control and had written about it but in her later life she herself did not follow what she said. In various letters to the German convert Fatima Grimm (a close friend of Maryam Jameelah), Jameelah discussed this matter at length. She was initially not in favor of birth control. However, after years of discussion with Grimm on this matter, she changed her opinion and favored it under some conditions such as health issues. For more details, see Fatima Heeren Sarka, "Fatima Heeren Sarka To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1972).

reformers and revivalists. For the author, she argues that "Islam itself can be used to reform the Muslim society"²⁰ thus there is no reason to use Western imported ideas. Muslims reformers should end up their apologetic approach and ponder over Islamic history to find out solutions for the problems generated by materialism and modern philosophy. She also criticizes "Mawlana Maududi for his political orientation and complained of his reformist attempts."²¹ In the second part, the author elaborates her views about feminism and finds that she is against modern feminist movements and regards it as a propaganda against Islam. The author argues that it is the life of Maryam Jameelah which taught her that Western society was lacking in spiritual feelings and for that reason she was against contemporary materialism.

Orientalism and Christian Missionaries: A Critique on the View of Maryam Jameelah, a thesis written by Naheeda Siddique from the Department of Comparative Religions, International Islamic University Islamabad in 1995. The focus of the researcher is to evaluate how orientalism and Christian missionaries organized and developed in India. In addition to that, she discusses the critique of Maryam Jameelah on orientalism and Christian missionaries. She finds that Jameelah tries to refuse orientalism and Christian Missionaries "but she is unable to suggest the countermeasure. Her remarks are impassioned in satiric style."²² Overall this work serves the researcher's purpose; what she ignores, however, is to get the core of Maryam Jameelah's ideas (her plea to stick to the traditional teachings of world religions). Her opinion about the writing style of Jameelah seems plausible. However, her thesis has hardly touched other works as it mostly refers to Jameelah's *Islam and Orientalism*.

²⁰ Saifudheen Kunju, "Maryam Jameela's Thoughts On Western Civilization," *The Companion* 07, no. 08 (2013): 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²² Naheeda Siddique, "Orientalism and Christian Missionaries: A Critique on the View of Maryam Jameelah" (International Islamic University, 1995), 57.

Maryam Jameelah had been alive when this research was undertaken but the researcher did not try to meet her (in her whole thesis Siddique did not mention that she met Jameelah). Maryam Jameelah lives seventeen years after this research work and many works in terms of articles, biographies, book reviews and translations are published afterwards. Moreover, hundreds of unpublished letters which are addressed to Maryam Jameelah and available in her personal library are still another reason to undertake a fresh research work on this subject.

Research Questions

Maryam Jameelah's forefathers were followers of Moses Mendelssohn's²³ (1729-1786) *Haskalah* Movement.²⁴ After the reform of Mendelssohn, a number of German Jews converted to Christianity including his own children.²⁵ Although Mendelssohn's reform might not be the only reason of Jewish conversion, it left a deep impact on the German Jewry.²⁶ Similar to many Jews, Jameelah's parents also became the members of Unitarian Church. The case of Jameelah was unique in the sense that she embraced Islam and took the pain of migration to Pakistan. What motivated her to embrace Islam? Why did she prefer Islam over other faiths? Why did she migrate to Pakistan? This research intends to focus on the following questions:

1. What motivated her to embrace Islam?
2. With her Western background, how does she look into Islam responding to the west?
3. What is her understanding of modernism and westernization?

²³ German Jewish philosopher of eighteenth century, considered as one of the fathers of modern Jewish philosophy and a pioneer of modern Judaism.

²⁴ Jewish Enlightenment Movement of eighteenth century.

²⁵ Chaim Schloss, *2000 Years of Jewish History: From the Destruction of the Second Bais Hamikdash Until the Twentieth Century* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2002), 217.

²⁶ Moses Mendelssohn and Michah. Gottlieb, *Moses Mendelssohn: Writings on Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible* (New England: Brandeis University Press, 2011), xi.

4. What is the relationship between her conversion and criticism of Western civilization?

Methodological Framework

Maryam Jameelah has written a number of books, articles, and book reviews. To understand the ideas of Jameelah, it seems necessary to understand her first. Therefore, her biography is presented in descriptive form summarizing different aspects of her life. This entails the chronological study of her life. Although it is not exhaustive, it is sufficiently detailed providing the necessary contextual background in which her thought seems to be situated. This approach can potentially allow us to peer into her life to better understand reasons for her choice of Islam as a religion and herself as a proponent of it.

This research also includes the critical analytical study of Maryam Jameelah's writings and the views of others who know her. Therefore, interviews with persons who know her are important in this regard. Since no theory or method of conversion is universally applicable and vast enough to embrace every aspect of conversion, it is hard to understand the process of religious change in the life of a person. However, in order to understand Jameelah's conversion, Lewis R. Rambo's Model of Conversion would be mainly used. Rambo's stage model allows us to understand the psychological, sociological, historical, and anthropological aspects of religious conversion, on the one hand, and it does not break its connection with the religious dimension of conversion, on the other.²⁷ The research will begin first by laying out the theory of conversion and its theoretical models and then, later, apply it to Jameelah's conversion.

Lewis R. Rambo's Stage Model of Conversion

Lewis Ray Rambo (1934) is currently serving as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Psychology at San Francisco Theological Seminary, California.²⁸ He has

²⁷ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 7.

²⁸ Rambo received his B.A. degree from Abilene Christian University. He obtained his Master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School and later earned his Master of Arts and Ph.D. from the

conducted research on conversion in the various parts of the world including Israel/Palestine, Korea, Japan, China, and the United States. He has interviewed various converts and applied interdisciplinary approach emphasizing the religion to develop his model of religious conversion.²⁹ He provides a model of conversion which investigates the impact of personal, social, cultural, and religious aspects of religious change that he thinks are essential components for the study of human religious change.

Rambo argues that while studying the phenomenon of conversion, one should study it as a process rather than as a single event. He adds that conversion is contextual and therefore, "it influences and is influenced by a number of relationships, conditions, expectations, connections, and situations... Factors behind the conversion process are multiple, interactive, and cumulative."³⁰ For Rambo, religious conversion is dynamic in its nature, therefore, it is expanded to various institutions, events, ideas, and experiences.³¹ To understand the religious conversion of a person or a group, one needs to understand it as a dynamic entity.

University of Chicago in the field of Religion and Psychological Studies. He published his book *Understanding Religious Conversion* (Yale University Press) in 1993. His most recent publication is the *Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (co-edited with Charles Farhadian) 2014. Lewis Ray Rambo, e-mail message to author, March 23, 2016

²⁹ Lewis R. Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " *Pastoral Psychology* 38, no. 1 (1989): 50; Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 11; Lewis R. Rambo, "Theories of Conversion: Understanding and Interpreting Religious Change," *Social Compass* 46, no. 3 (1999): 264.

³⁰ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 48; Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 5; Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, "Converting: Stages of Religious Change," in *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies*, ed. Christopher Lamb and M. Darroll Bryant (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 1999), 24.

³¹ Christopher Lamb and M. Darroll Bryant, "Introduction: Conversion: contours of controversy and commitment in a plural world," *ibid.*, 7; Lewis R. Rambo and Steven C. Bauman, "Psychology of Conversion and Spiritual Transformation," *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 5-6 (2012): 880.

He adopts the term "converting" to identify the process of religious change. However, in a personal email to the author, Rambo suggests the term reverting/embracing for the study of religious change in a Muslim.³²

He believes that empirically there is no fundamental difference between the conversion in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.³³ He provides a heuristic stage model which serves as a framework to arrange the collected data in order to better understand the nature of conversion. This model consists of seven stages which include context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences. A summary of this model is given below.

Context: The Ecology of Religious Change

According to Rambo, similar to other organisms in an ecosystem, culture to has a life history. When a culture collapses, a potential change happens in the core myths, rituals, and, symbols of that culture. They are broken down and then reconstructed in such a way that may lead to new strategies and phenomena. People revitalize their visions to enhance and maintain their lives according to these new strategies.³⁴

Context, he views, is not merely a stage but an entire social, cultural, religious, and personal environment in which the whole process of conversion takes place. It is the ecology of a conversion process which is comprehensive and connected to other stages of conversion. He divides the context into two main categories: *macrocontext* and *microcontext* that are mutually connected to each other in a number of ways.³⁵

³² Lewis Ray Rambo, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2016

³³ Lewis R. Rambo, "The Psychology of Conversion," in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. H.N. Malony and S. Southard (Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), 162.

³⁴ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 23.

³⁵ In one of his earlier articles, *Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change*, Rambo also adds a third category of context, *mesococontext* that intermediates among macro and micro context. However, later, in his book *Understanding Religious Conversion* he proposes only

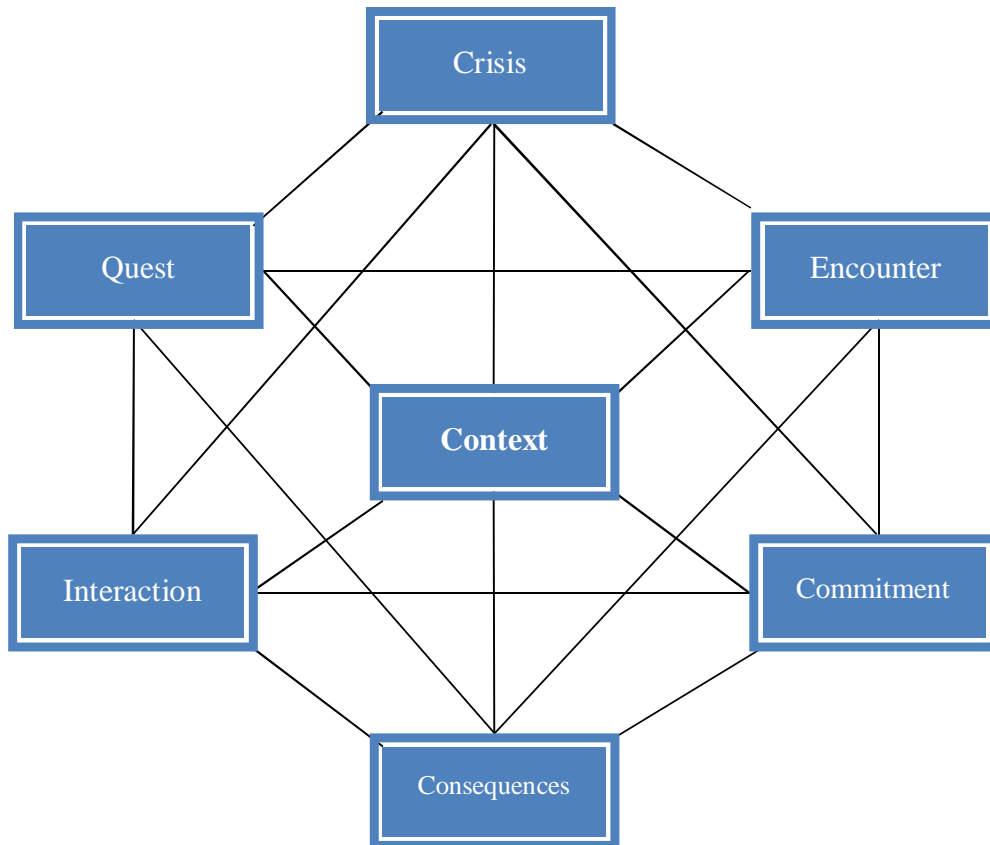


Figure 1: A systemic stage model of Rambo's model of conversion.³⁶

1. Macrocontext: refers to the world environment such as political, social, economic systems, religious organizations.
2. Microcontext: refers to the personal environment such as family, friendship, personal life, kinship.

Crisis: Catalyst of Religious Change

Context can give birth to external or internal religious, psychological, political or cultural crisis in the life of a convert. It refers to the problems generated in the life of a person that motivate conversion. It is a form of disequilibrium in social, cultural, personal, or religious life that may act as a catalyst in the process

two categories of context. For details, see. Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 52.

³⁶ Rambo suggested a similar model for every stage of conversion.

of religious change. Major catalysts are shown in Figure 2. Rambo suggests to give a special importance to the crisis stage.

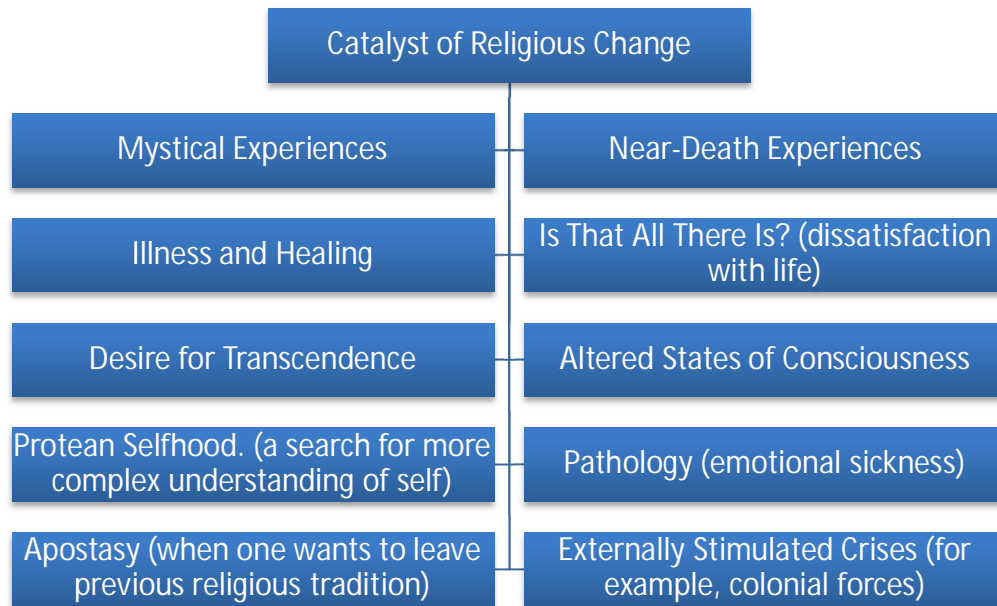


Figure 2: Catalysts of conversion according to Rambo's Stage Model.

He adds that sometimes crisis can be seen as a "response of a person to powerful preaching that convicts him or her of sin, starting a process of self-exploration and a search for salvation."³⁷ They may also come from an individual or an event. The crisis of change can give rise to a number of religious options which have been ignored previously by the potential convert.

Quest: The Active Search for New Religious Options

It refers to the stage when a convert actively searches for new religious options to fill the void in life. Any sort of crises such as dissatisfaction of previous religious tradition can raise the question of the quest in the life of an individual. It can also be because of someone's search for a higher understanding of a particular religious phenomenon. Quest stage includes different ways in which an individual

³⁷ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 53.

respond to the crisis. Rambo proposes to check three major factors that are involved in the quest stage:

1. Response style: Whether an individual respond actively or passively towards the conversion.³⁸
2. Structural availability: It refers to the freedom of a person to move from one religious tradition to another.
3. Motivational structures: A important factor in understanding "[w]hat motivated the individual to convert?"³⁹

Encounter: Meeting of Advocate and Convert

This stage explores the meeting of *Dā'ī*, missionary or advocate of a certain religious group with the convert. Rambo notes that while studying a religious conversion, scholars mostly focus only on the converts but advocate too plays an important role in the converting process.⁴⁰ Therefore, he thinks that the study should be multidimensional, taking care of both advocate and the convert. The role of an advocate is important as it can shape the experiences of a potential convert. Advocate uses a number of strategies and dialectics to ensure the conversion. For example, religious groups try to gather around at the public places seeking potential converts. The missionary strategy of advocate consists of four main aspects: the degree of proselytizing, the strategic style, the mode of contact, and the benefits of conversion.

Interaction: Creating New Identities

This stage also refers to the interaction between the advocate and the potential convert. In this stage, the convert becomes more interested in a specific religious group or tradition and decides to meet with advocate regularly. For Rambo, in this stage, the convert learns more about the teachings, lifestyle, and

³⁸ For Rambo, conversion is both active and passive. It is more like a "both/and" rather than a "either/or" factor. See. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 45.

³⁹ Rambo and Farhadian, "Converting: Stages of Religious Change," 27.

⁴⁰ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 66.

demands of a religion. This stage also talks about the significance of the advocate in providing the convert a model for the new way of life. Rambo advises that "we must examine the degree of passivity and activity of the potential convert and the degree of manipulation and persuasion used by the advocate."⁴¹ The major element of this stage is encapsulation which refers to a self-created environment that allows the convert to experience new religious ideas according to the strategies of the new religious group. He uses Arthur L. Greil and David R. Rudy's theory of encapsulation⁴² and proposes its three major categories: physical encapsulation, social encapsulation, and ideological encapsulation. In this stage, the convert is expected to learn about the changes that are expected to happen in his/her life. For example, information about the prohibition of alcohol and the concept of *purdah* in Islam.

Commitment: Consolidating New Spiritual Orientations

A crucial stage in the life of a convert is when he/she takes the decision. At this stage, sometimes special rituals or public demonstration of conversion is also required. For example, *shahādah* is performed in Islam. According to Rambo, on the one hand, rituals, by their power, shape the experiences of a convert, and on the other hand, they ensure the entrance of a convert into a new group.⁴³ Rambo notes five common elements in the commitment stage that includes "decision making, rituals, surrender, testimony manifested in language transformation and biographical reconstruction, and motivational reformulation."⁴⁴

Consequences: Results of Conversion

The final stage of Rambo's model refers to the effects of conversion on the life of an individual. For Rambo, convert is usually aware of the effects of the conversion. Therefore, he advises to give serious consideration to the experiences

⁴¹ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 56.

⁴² For details, see. Arthur L. Greil and David R. Rudy, "Conversion to the World View of Alcoholics Anonymous: A Refinement of Conversion Theory," *Qualitative Sociology* 6, no. 1 (1983).

⁴³ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 58.

⁴⁴ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 124.

of a convert. This analysis might be seen from a convert's point of view or from an outsider's perspective. He advises two more levels of analysis at this stage: the group's assessment of valid conversions and the researcher's understandings of the results.⁴⁵ Rambo divides consequences into social, historical, psychological, and theological consequences. He observes that the conversion process does not end at this stage, it sometimes requires a longer period to affect the life of a convert.

Rambo's model is useful not only to examine both internal and external elements of the complicated and multi-dimensional process of human religious change but also helps to know the nature of the connections among these elements. Rambo tries to use data of the last three decades to put forward a non-judgmental and unbiased model of conversion.⁴⁶ Therefore, Rambo's model allows for a new and more holistic analysis of the process of religious change including that of Islam.

⁴⁵ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 59.

⁴⁶ For a detailed review of Rambo's model of conversion, see Machalek *Review of Lewis R. Rambo, Understanding Religious Conversion* 1994.

Part Two: Understanding Religious Conversion

Involvement of a number of elements, events, motifs, and strategies in the process of religious change provide a number of ways to understand it. One simple way is to find, analyze, and describe various types and characteristics of religious conversion. The other ways can be the description of a conversion from the convert's point of view or from the outsider's perspective. Since no work can be entirely objective in its nature, Rambo suggests to give a serious consideration to the personal criteria of an individual or a group under review. After understanding the process of conversion, he advises two more levels of analysis: the group's assessment of valid conversions and the researcher's understandings of the results.⁴⁷ Therefore, to trace out connections among various elements of Maryam Jameelah's process of conversion, this part will present a review of selected definitions of religious conversion along with its types, on the one hand, and the Islamic concepts of conversion, submission, and *Dīn al-Fitrah* on the other hand. This will allow us to know how far someone has to go in order to be considered a convert?

Types of Religious Conversion

Rambo divides religious conversion into the following types:

1. *Apostasy*, or *defection* that refers to a religious change which does not involve in the acceptance of a new religious option. It is a state when someone rejects his/her faith and adopts a non-religious attitude. For example, becoming an atheist.
2. *Intensification* that refers to the acceptance of a religious tradition to which an individual or group was previously attached. This new commitment becomes the central focus in the life of convert. For example, the affection of a Jew for Judaism.
3. *Affiliation* that refers to the full attachment of a person or a group to a new religious community or organization from no or minimal previous commitment. For example, affiliation with New Religious Movements such as the Unification Church.

⁴⁷ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 59-60.

4. *Institutional transition* that refers to the change of community within one major religious tradition. For example, from Sunni to Shiite sect in Islam.
5. *Tradition transition* that refers to a major shift from one religious tradition to another. For example, from Buddhism to Christianity.⁴⁸

Definitions of Religious Conversion

Selecting a term to define the process of religious change along with all its types and forms is a complicated task. Fortunately, scholars extensively discussed this phenomenon in order to provide a better understanding of it. Therefore, the aim of this section is not to generate a definition of religious conversion. Instead, it intends to analyze selected definitions of religious conversion to the degree of their being related to the conversion of Maryam Jameelah. This will let us select a working definition of religious conversion for the current research work.

In its simplistic meanings, religious conversion "is the name for all forms of 'religious change'."⁴⁹ It can also be defined as a process in which an individual or a group renounces its religious orientation for the sake of a new religious ideal.⁵⁰ Moreover, it can be a transition of religious identity "from a non-religious to a religious life."⁵¹ From a theological perspective, it can be defined as the "total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations..."⁵² From the viewpoint of the psychology of religion, William James (1842-1910) writes: "To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience

⁴⁸ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 13-14.

⁴⁹ Christopher Lamb and M. Darroll Bryant, *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 1999), 7.

⁵⁰ Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman, *Islam: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 21.

⁵¹ Maha Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The Voices of British Converts" (The University of Leeds, 2002), 42.

⁵² R. T. Lawrence, "Conversion, II (Theology of)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Thomas Carson and Joann Cerrito (New York: Gale, 2003), 235.

religion...by which a self...becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."⁵³

Lewis Rambo suggests that scholars should consider the psychological, sociological, anthropological, and religious dimensions of conversion in order to understand personal, social, cultural, and religious dimensions of a conversion. Therefore, by combining all four disciplines, he proposes the definition of conversion as "a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and experiences."⁵⁴ Rambo adds that history is also an important factor in shaping the process of religious conversion. He notes that the religious aspect of conversion is often ignored by the scholars. He thinks that a secular thinker does not want to be the subjects of a transcendental being for he thinks that it may lead him consider himself as a finite creature. Therefore, the religious dimension of conversion may be ignored at that time. Rambo suggests that: "in order to be phenomenologically true to the conversion experience, we must take the religious sphere seriously."⁵⁵ The absence of method and obscure exploration of the role of religion in the conversion process are the other reasons pointed out by Rambo in this regard.

Motifs of Religious Conversion

Rambo agrees with John Lofland and Norman Skonovd's findings of conversion motifs⁵⁶ who offer six major motifs of conversion. On the one hand, these motifs are fundamental to find out the reasons behind a religious conversion, and on the other hand, they have the potential to explain various experiences, themes, events, and goals of different types of conversion. These six motifs are as follows.

⁵³ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 150.

⁵⁴ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 5.

⁵⁵ Rambo, "Conversion: Toward a Holistic Model of Religious Change " 50.

⁵⁶ For details see. John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, "Conversion Motifs," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20, no. 4 (1981).

1. The *intellectual* motif that refers to the person's search for knowledge growth through books, articles, television media, or active participation in religious rituals.
2. The *mystical* motif that refers to visions, dreams, voices, or any kind of supernatural experiences of a person.
3. The *experimental* motif which refers to the active participation of a person to experience the powers of a particular religion practically.
4. The *affectional* motif which refers to the interpersonal bonds and personal experiences of being loved, nurtured, and affirmed.
5. The *revivalism* motif that refers to the crowd conformity to induce behavior.
6. The *coercive* motif which refers to the extreme pressure on a person which makes him/her convert by brainwashing, programming, psychological terror, or deprivation of food.⁵⁷

Conversion in Islam

Unfortunately, there are few theoretical works available on conversion to Islam. Therefore, it is difficult to trace out the complex patterns, elements, events, and characteristics of the process of conversion to Islam. Maha al-Qwidi, in her Ph.D. thesis, claimed that historically, there were two ways of conversion:

1. The way of al-Fitrah that refers to the love, devotion, and strong individual personal conviction to the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
2. The way of Power that refers to the political power of Islam which provides a set platform for conversion.⁵⁸

Rambo also observes that the case of Islam is unique in the sense that, in the past, there were no full-time professional missionaries in Islam.⁵⁹ However,

⁵⁷ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 14-16.

⁵⁸ Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The Voices of British Converts," 69.

⁵⁹ It should be taken into account that Rambo provides examples of various world religions in order to better describe his model of conversion. Since, the case of conversion presented in this

Islamic conquest set the stage for Islamization of both the individuals and the societies. Soldiers played a vital role in this regard. Although they were not direct agents of conversion, they made it possible for Muslim merchants to travel around the globe. He adds that "[t]hrough intermarriage and the establishment of Muslim institutions, the conversion process was initiated."⁶⁰ He further adds that in some parts of the world, Sufis and religious teachers were initiators of this process. Richard Eaton⁶¹ rejects theories such as the "political advantage theory," "religion of the sword theory," "religion of social liberation theory" in the case of conversion to Islam in the Indian subcontinent. He observes records of names and mosque buildings and argues that "Islam spread gradually and in greater numbers in areas peripheral to brahmanical Hinduism."⁶²

Research of Eaton shows that in Indian subcontinent conversion to Islam was more like a gradual process rather than a sudden event of mass conversion which indicates that the case of conversion to Islam seems different from place to place. Muhammad Ishaq Bhatti discusses the mission of 25 *Ṣaḥābah*, 42 *Tābi'ūn*, and 18 *Ṭaba' Tābi'īn*⁶³ who came to the Indian subcontinent at the beginning of Islam.⁶⁴ Therefore, it might be assumed that in the Indian subcontinent, the process was initiated by such religious masters and traders and later the conquest of Muhammad Bin Qasim in 712 CE, and work of Sufis accelerated it. Rambo seems correct in his judgment about the missionary institutions in Islam. Islam did not

research is of a Jewish convert to Islam, therefore, Rambo's observations related to Judaism and Islam are mainly focused.

⁶⁰ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 70.

⁶¹ Richard M. Eaton is Professor of History at the University of Arizona.

⁶² Anna Bigelow, "Muslim-Hindu Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 282.

⁶³ *Ṣaḥābī* (plural *Ṣaḥābah*) refers to the companions, disciples, scribes, and family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). *Tābi'ūn* are the generation who born after the death of Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). *Ṭaba' Tābi'īn* is the generation after the *Tābi'ūn* in Islam.

⁶⁴ Muhammad Ishaq Bhatti, *Baresagheer Mein Musلمانon kay Awleen Naqoosh* (Lahore: Maktbah Salfiyha, 1990), 48.

have the professional full-time missionaries in the past if one compares it with the religions such as Christianity. The absence of professional missionary and simple procedure of conversion in Islam makes it hard to expound not only the number of converts or new Muslims⁶⁵ but also the theoretical patterns of conversion as well.

Shahādah in Islam

For a non-Muslim, the entry to Islam is *shahādah*. There is no need of special ceremonies or rituals to become a Muslim. When one accepts Allah Almighty as the only God and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His last messenger, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or race, he/she becomes the member of Muslim *Ummah*. The Holy Quran uses the verb *aslama* to represent obedience to Allah and *riddah* for apostasy. Therefore, to discuss the process of conversion in Islam, it will be sufficient to understand the word "Islam" itself. The Arabic language provides multiple meanings of the word "Islam" which includes submission, peace, and heaven. Moreover, it is also one of the names of Allah Almighty.⁶⁶ The Holy Quran also uses the word *dīn* to describe Islam as His only true religion. (Al-Quran 3:19)

According to Ibn Kathir,⁶⁷ (1300-1373) "Islam" was the religion of all the prophets.⁶⁸ Although the Holy Quran uses the derivatives of the word Islam or Iman⁶⁹ to describe the religion of various prophets,⁷⁰ it makes it clear that neither

⁶⁵ Shryock Andrew, "German Converts to Islam and Their Ambivalent Relations with Immigrant Muslims," in *Islamophobia Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, ed. Shryock Andrew (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 173.

⁶⁶ Ahmad Abd Al-Wahhab, *Al-Islām wa al-Adyān al-Ukhrā* (Cairo: Maktbah al-Tūrāth al-Islamī, 1992), 11.

⁶⁷ Ibn Kathir was one of the most influential Islamic scholars, historian, *faqih* and commentator of the Holy Quran.

⁶⁸ Ismail Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm Lil-Hāfīz ibn Kathīr*, vol. 2 (Riyadh: Dār Al-Tayyibah, 1999), 25.

⁶⁹ The famous *Hadīth-e-Jibrīl* provides a comprehensive definition of *dīn* on the one hand, and it distinguishes Islam from Iman and *Ihsān* on the other hand.

⁷⁰ For example, the Holy Quran uses the word Muslim to describe the religion of prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). See Al-Quran 22: 78

were they Christians nor the Jews.⁷¹ Therefore, on the one hand, Islam makes it as part of its faith to believe in all the prophets and their books, and on the other hand, it distinguishes itself as a distinct religion of all prophets.⁷² It should be noted that when someone wants to become a Muslim, he/she is required to testify two things: acceptance of Allah Almighty as the only God and acceptance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the last messenger of Him. Although, Jews and Christians are monotheists, according to Ibn Kathir, they are not Muslims as they do not testify the prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁷³

The Concept *Fitrah*

Due to its direct connection with Islam, *fitrah* or the Islamic concept of human nature is an important notion to understand the phenomenon of conversion. For Muslims, it is the pattern on which man is created. A *Hadīth* by Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him), a companion of the Holy Prophet, reports that:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ أَوْ يَنْصَرَانِهِ أَوْ يَمَجْسَانِهِ ---⁷⁴

"Every child born on *fitrah*. It is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian or Magian..."

⁷¹ See Al Baqarah: 132; Aal Imran: 67; Yunus: 72; Yunus: 84

⁷² Maha al-Qwidi, in her PhD thesis, argues that there is also a grammatical distinction of the name "Islam". Since, grammatically the name Islam is a verbal noun, it has a unique verbal power behind it which makes it prominent among the religions such as Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism. For details, see Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The Voices of British Converts," 64.

⁷³ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm Lil-Hāfīz ibn Kathīr*, 2, 26.

⁷⁴ M. Ismail Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. M. Muhsin Khan, vol. 2 (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers & Distributors, 1997), 267.

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated the *hadith*, he also recited *Al-Rūm:30* to explain the meanings of *fitrah* and its connection with Islam.⁷⁵

”فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ“

"So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created, man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation."

According to the concept of *fitrah*, every human is a born Muslim and it is the primordial nature of man to submit his will to Allah Almighty.⁷⁶ Ismail al-Faruqi argues that Islam is "*Ur-Religion* or *Religio Naturalis*"; it is *dīn al-fitrah* or natural/original religion. Allah gifts man with the *fitrah* or *sensus numinis* by which he recognizes Him as holy and transcendent. *Fitrah* is something different from the reason and science. It is something natural that both Muslims and non-Muslims possess by birth. This very quality allows humans to understand their own or any other religion critically and religiously.⁷⁷

Selection of Terminology for Conversion to Islam

The Holy Quran does not provide specific terminology to describe the process of conversion. However, it explains both final states of religious change under the terms *aslama* and *riddah*.⁷⁸ Therefore, selecting a terminology to describe the process of conversion in Islam is a bit complicated task. Some researchers argue that by keeping in view the concept of *fitrah*, the new Muslims prefer the word

⁷⁵ Ismail Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm Lil-Hāfīz ibn Kathīr*, vol. 6 (Riyadh: Dār Al-Tayyibah, 1999), 314.

⁷⁶ Ali and Leaman, *Islam: The Key Concepts*, 40.

⁷⁷ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islam And Other Faiths* (Markfield: The Islamic Foundation, 1998), 139.

⁷⁸ Ibn Ishaq, biographer of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), also maintained the verb *aslama* to describe the process of conversion of various converts to Islam. For details, see Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq and Aḥmad ibn Farīd ibn Aḥmad Mazīdī, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah* (Bayrūt: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyah, 2000).

reversion to explain their process of religious change.⁷⁹ Marcia Hermansen⁸⁰ notes that the word conversion "lacks a radical moment of 'snapping' or a total rejection of the previous identity."⁸¹ Conversion narratives that she has studied contain accounts of feeling a sense of recognition or returning in them. Therefore, she preferred the word reversion to describe the process of religious change. As it has been mentioned in the first part that in a personal email to the researcher, Rambo also suggests the word reverting/embracing to study the process of conversion in Muslims. However, Maryam Jameelah mostly adopts the term "conversion" and "to embrace" to describe her process of religious change in all of her writings. Moreover, she conceptualizes the term *shahādah* to explain her event of embracing Islam. Therefore, current research work prefers the usage of the terminology of conversion/converting to explain her acceptance of Islam.

⁷⁹ Tuba Boz, "Religious Conversion, Models and Paradigms," *Epiphany: Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011): 130.

⁸⁰ Marcia Hermansen is serving as professor of Islamic studies at the Theology Department, Loyola University, Chicago.

⁸¹ Marcia Hermansen, "Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 1 (1999): 79.

Chapter Two: Brief Life Sketch of Maryam Jameelah and Dimensions of Religious Conversion in her Life

Part One: Brief Life Sketch of Maryam Jameelah

It is not the aim of this part to draft a long and detailed study of Maryam Jameelah's life and times. However, to better understand her thoughts and ideas, it seems necessary to mention briefly the context and milieu from which she came. She had a habit of writing lengthy letters to her family and friends. Later, she compiled those letters into the form of two books *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth* and *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country* as her autobiographies. In these letters, she aimed to provide her readers with all essential details revealing the ups and downs of her life, the pain, and sufferings that she faced during her conversion and migration. In a letter to Mrs. Sadia Goher (translator of her book *Memories of Childhood in America*), she writes that these letters describe "the restlessness of my soul, the internal struggle, and agony that a woman went through in her search for the path of truth."⁸² Therefore, on the one hand, these autobiographies offer necessary contextual background for the current research work, and on the other hand, they allow us to peer into her life to understand the factors which left a momentous bearing on her whole life and shaped her ideas.

Family Background and Early Life

Margret Marcus (former name of Maryam Jameelah), an American Jew, who was born in the height of The Great Depression⁸³ which was gripping the whole country at that time. However, her parents were wealthy enough to afford a maid and a nurse to take care of her. She spent her childhood, adolescence, and youth in Larchmont, a suburb near the New York City. Her ancestors had migrated from Germany to the United States between 1848-1861 for purely financial reasons. Her family name, Schwab, was taken from their native town in Germany. Similar

⁸² Maryam Jameelah, *Haqq kī Talāsh*, trans. Sadia Gohar (Lahore: Matba' Khawāfīn Magazine, 2006), 4.

⁸³ The Great Depression was an economic recession that began in October 29, 1929 and affected not only America but other European countries as well.

to other Jews, the Schwab family also adopted American household wholeheartedly. Peggy, as the parents of Margret Marcus used to call her, wrote that they were not practicing important Jewish rituals such as Hanukkah and Yom Kippur. However, her family used to celebrate Easter and Christmas with the full ceremony.⁸⁴ They were followers of a famous German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn's *Hashkala* movement. She herself noted that it was not only the America where they assimilated into the Christian society but also in Germany, they integrated into the larger Christian majority⁸⁵ which was not an uncommon practice among the German Jewry of that time.⁸⁶ Since her family members were the followers of Moses Mendelssohn, she identified them as reform Jews who would worship in Reform Temples⁸⁷ rather than synagogues.⁸⁸

Although Schwab family had strongly integrated itself into the Christian community, they managed to preserve their pure Jewish identity or race⁸⁹ and never

⁸⁴ Maryam Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1989), 9-11.

⁸⁵ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1978), 3.

⁸⁶ Marion A Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany 1618–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 84.

⁸⁷ Reform Temples offer prayer in non-Hebrew languages for both men and women of Christians and Jewish Community. Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), a *Maskilim* established first Reform Temple in connection with his school in Germany. For details, see. Harris Franklin Rall and Samuel Solomon Cohon, *Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 78.

⁸⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 11.

⁸⁹ It is interesting to note that throughout their history, Jews lived a scattered life with no single language or common land until the mid of 20th century but they had one thing in common; they maintained themselves as a separate community. Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986) who was also a contemporary of Maryam Jameelah argued that Jewish racialism played a key role in this regard as they were the first racialist of history. By keeping their race pure, Jews were able to preserve their Jewish identity. The case of her family also confirms Al-Faruqi's theory. For more details on Jewish racialism, see. Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Christian Ethics: A Historical*

married to Christians.⁹⁰ Izic M. Schwab, her grandfather, was an active member of Freemason organization. He was also a member of Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.⁹¹ Peggy's father, Herbert Marcus, was also a member of that group but he was not as active as his father. However, similar to many American Jews, her parents joined Ethical Cultural Society⁹² and later, following the footsteps of their daughter Betty and her husband, finally, the Unitarian Church. Maira Marcus, Peggy's mother, was a social worker and an active member of a Zionist organization, *Haddasah*. Her father was also a staunch supporter of Zionism and used to give donations to United Jewish Appeal⁹³ whenever possible.⁹⁴ Zionism never appealed to Peggy, moreover, a relation with *Mizrachi Hatzair* distanced herself from Zionism once she realized that this organization was doing nothing but promoting propaganda and hostility between Jews and Arabs.⁹⁵

From her earliest days, she was fond of reading books and drawing pictures. Her mother found her as a conservative child who used to complain about the absence of spirituality in the home. Peggy expressed her views about the childhood saying that it was different from the childhood of usual American kids in many ways. She had no interest in dancing, pop music, and gay parties. America where the dance was considered a requirement to make friends and to get respect in the

and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 52-53.

⁹⁰ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 3.

⁹¹ Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, also known as Shriners International, (established in 1870) consists upon the members of the Masonic Order and Freemason organization.

⁹² Ethical Culture Movement was founded by Felix Adler (1851-1933) to unite humanity on common concern for ethical values.

⁹³ The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was a Jewish philanthropic organization founded in 1939 to work for the betterment of humanity.

⁹⁴ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 49.

⁹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, ix.

society, she found it disrespectful and unpleasant.⁹⁶ She never touched alcohol in her whole life while her other family members used to drink wine or liquor occasionally. She was a great admirer of classical music and very fond of listening to Arab music. Umm Kulthum, the famous Arab singer, was her favorite.

Education

Similar to other fellow children, she first joined playgroups and then began her educational career with the Elementary School education. While she was in the Elementary School, she joined Noise Camp for Modern Dance, a summer camp where she learned swimming, horse riding, and stitching. The only thing she hated in that summer camp was the dance classes which her teachers never liked about her.⁹⁷ She learned history, science, literature, mathematics, and arts. Although she received secular American education in the community public schools, she started taking interest in religious studies early. At the age of twelve, she was well aware of Arabs and started writing her first novel *Ahmad Khalil*, a tale of a Palestinian refugee and his family. She earned her graduation at the age of eighteen and started dreaming of becoming an artist and an explorer. However, her parents never liked their daughter's idea of drawing sympathetic pictures of Arabs and asked their Peggy to take interest in the American culture instead.

Peggy Marcus wanted to travel to the east and observe the culture of the Arab world and Muslims. She was of the view that American Jewry lost its identity by adopting the Christian culture. Therefore, she was enthusiastic to stop the Christianization of the East.⁹⁸ In September 1952, she secured admission to the University of Rochester but could not continue the education due to the nervous breakdown that made her leave the university in the very first semester. However, after the rehabilitation, she started learning painting at Art Student League in New York College. Meanwhile, she learned the French language at Berlitz School of

⁹⁶ Umm Kulthum, "Muhtarima Maryam Jameelah: Khatoon-e-Islam," *Mahnama Batool* 1974, 16.

⁹⁷ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 35.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

Languages. She also studied English, Spanish, Greek, Latin, and a little Hebrew when she was in school. After her arrival to Pakistan, she studied Urdu as well. However, to build her academic career, she preferred English language. In spring 1953, she joined New York University and developed her interest in anthropology and religion. She studied a course on Judaism and Islam which motivated her towards religious studies.

At that time, she became conscious of her own religion showing a great interest in orthodox Judaism and decided to find her roots.⁹⁹ She joined many religious organizations such as Young Women's Jewish Association, *Mizrachi Hatzair*, the youth group at the Orthodox Synagogue in Mamaroneck, Bahai movement and so on to quench her religious thirst. In 1953, the second attack of nervous breakdown took her to a mental hospital for more than two years that put an end to her formal education. She mentioned her religious education in an interview to an Indian magazine *Hijāb* saying: "I obtained entirely on my own efforts."¹⁰⁰ Of course, she was talking about the many years of her childhood and adolescence, she spent in America reading almost every available book on the Orient in the New York Public Library.

The Emergence of Crisis and Acceptance of Islam

Her nervous breakdowns brought pain and satisfaction in her life, at the same time. On the one hand, declining health multiplied the suffering and restlessness of her life, and on the other hand, it brought her closer to her future religion. She started reading George Sale's (1697-1736)¹⁰¹ translation of the Holy Quran which her mother borrowed from the New York Public Library on her request. She noted that, in his translation, Sale was just trying to falsify the Holy Quran by proving that it was borrowed from Judeo-Christian sources. She did not find the Holy Quran appealing at that time and considered it just a bit better than

⁹⁹ Ibid., 84.

¹⁰⁰ Editor, "Maryam Jameelah: Answers Questions," *Hijab* 1970.

¹⁰¹ Famous Christian thinker, Orientalist, practicing solicitor, and clergyman.

the stories of the Holy Bible.¹⁰² The outdated rendering and lengthy out of context footnotes made her think of the subjectivity of the translator. She thought that "this man is prejudiced; so his translation must also be prejudiced."¹⁰³ At that time, she was well aware that she was reading a translation and not the original text as she mentioned it repeatedly in her books.

She intended to find another translation of the Holy Quran preferring the one written by a Muslim. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's¹⁰⁴ (1875-1936) *Meanings of The Glorious Quran* caught her attention and made her think Islam as the only true religion "absolutely sincere, honest, not allowing any cheap compromises or hypocrisy."¹⁰⁵ After reading Muhammad Asad's¹⁰⁶ (1900-1992) *The Road to Mecca*, her connection with Islam grew even stronger. However, she took the final decision of her conversion when she was discharged from the mental asylum after her second nervous breakdown.

Peggy had written extensively about her childhood providing the details of the factors which brought restlessness, crisis, agony, and isolation in her life. However, at the same time, those factors also led her to find "The True Religion" she was seeking for. The first of those factors was her assumption about the behavior of her parents. She believed that it was her parents who by supporting Zionism and not listening to her views about Arabs and Red Indians, bringing the agitation and sickness in her life. However, later, in an interview to a local Pakistani Magazine *Peghām*, she said initially, she thought her parents did not nurture her properly and did not provide her with the necessary love and care but afterwards, she found herself incorrect in her judgment of their love, devotion, and dedication.

¹⁰² Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxi.

¹⁰³ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 90.

¹⁰⁴ A famous Muslim scholar, translator, and journalist who converted from Christianity to Islam.

¹⁰⁵ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 91.

¹⁰⁶ A notable Muslim scholar, traveler, thinker, reformer, and diplomat who converted from Judaism to Islam.

Therefore, after her marriage, she wrote a letter to her parents seeking their forgiveness. That letter brought love and satisfaction not only to her parents but to herself as well.¹⁰⁷ The second factor was the anti-Semitic attitude of Christians towards Jews during Christmas and other important Christian rituals which were a common practice among Christians of that time.¹⁰⁸ However, some Christian fellows also protected her when other shouted and yelled at her.¹⁰⁹ Such incidents intrigued her to take more interest in religious studies.

The surrounding American culture proved to be the third major factor of her sheer discontent. She was not fond of dancing and pop music while her family and friends wanted to see her mingling and enjoying with her other fellows. She failed to fit her model of a religious person into the cultural and social norms of America.¹¹⁰ Esposito noted that she was an unusual child whose "intellectual/religious orientation often ran counter to her culture's norms and expectations."¹¹¹ The fourth factor was the behavior of other fellow Jews towards her. As mentioned earlier, she belonged to a reformed Jewish family which was not observing many important Jewish rituals. Whenever she met an Orthodox Jew, his/her severe criticism made her feel terrible about her own non-observant religious attitude.

Her extensive reading habit might also be considered as another factor. She never left her habit of reading books even in the most complex periods of her life. For example, during the night of her first nervous breakdown, she started reading George Sale's translation of the Holy Quran. She read the whole book in three

¹⁰⁷ Farzana Cheema, "Kirdār Sazī say Aham Koī Chīz Nahīn: Mohtarma Maryam Jameelah say aik Interview," *Peghām*, April 1998 1998, 48.

¹⁰⁸ Anti-Semitism prevailed throughout American history and Christianity was one of the major factors behind its existence. For more details see, Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), viii-ix.

¹⁰⁹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 18.

¹¹⁰ Fatimah Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dini wa Ilmi Khidmat" (Punjab University, 2010), 16.

¹¹¹ Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 54.

consecutive days and nights which left her half dead. She adds that "[a]lthough I was only nineteen, I felt as weak as a woman of eighty. I never recovered my full strength or energy afterwards."¹¹² Moreover, she wrote her masterworks during her pregnancies. Umer Faruq Khan, the author of the introduction of her book *Modern Technology and the Dehumanization of Man*, regarded community public libraries and the New York Public Library as her second home.

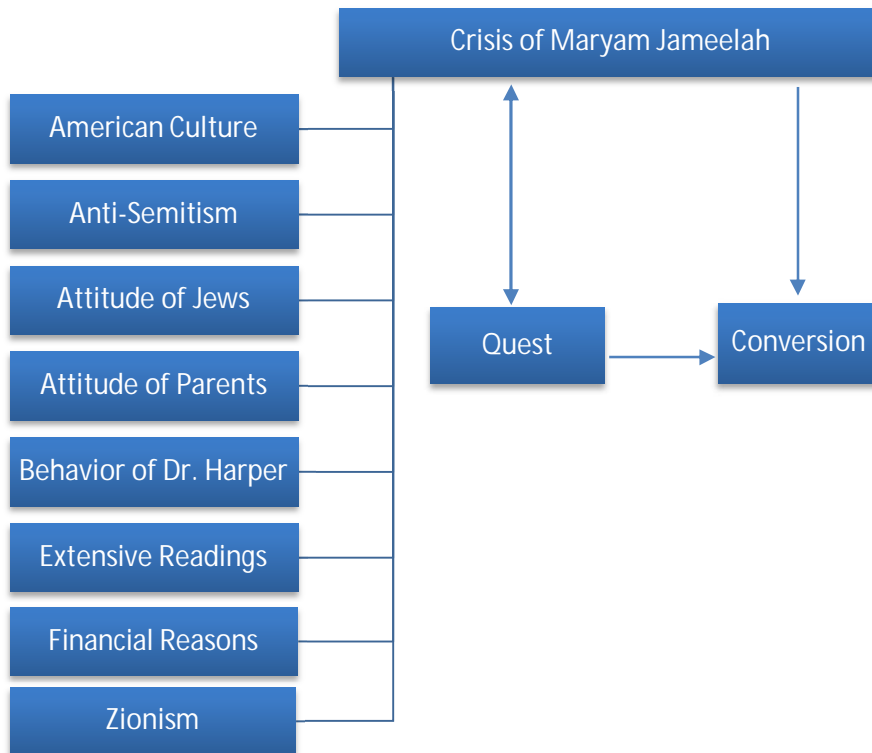


Figure 3: Connections between crisis, quest, and conversion of Maryam Jameelah.

Her crisis did not leave her alone even when she was going through the treatment of her psychological problems. According to her, treatment of doctor Harper (a Freudian analyst) failed to provide solutions to her problems. Whenever she told him about her views on singing, dancing, modern art, cinema, or Islam, doctor Harper considered it as another confirmation of Sigmund Freud's¹¹³ (1856-1939) psychosis. He was of the view that the real problem of Peggy Marcus was

¹¹² Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxi.

¹¹³ Famous Jewish neurologist who is considered as the father of psychoanalysis.

her horror of the opposite sex which was keeping her away from the society. Once he asked her, why at the age of nineteen, she was still a virgin and living a life of a Nun? The question made the girl angry and she broke the glass of his bookshelf and behaved roughly. However, afterwards she felt ashamed and begged for his forgiveness. During her visits to doctor Harper, she also noted that these were not only the religious persons who were bigoted and orthodox in their views but also "those who call themselves scientists and doctors are no less addicted to it."¹¹⁴

She found herself so depressed, alone, and weak that she started thinking of committing a suicide. However, a hadith of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped her to do that. Two years (1957-1959) stay in the mental hospital made her think deeply about the nature and essence of Islam. In the hospital, she decided to embrace Islam. She started meeting with different Muslim families and joined various Islamic centers in New York after her rehabilitation. After a careful assessment, finally, she announced her *shahādah* on the 'Eīd ul-Adhā of May 24th, 1961 at The Islamic Mission, in the presence of Daoud Ahmad Faisal (imam of Brooklyn mosque and head of Islamic Mission) and two other witnesses. Faisal also proposed her new name and she became Maryam Jameelah from Margaret Marcus. Maryam Jameelah's acceptance of Islam was not a shock to her father because similar to many other Americans, he also considered religion a private matter of individuals. All he thought was the preference of Jameelah of the Arab culture to the American culture. But her mother took the matter much seriously and contacted with a rabbi at the conservative synagogue. The young Rabbi satisfied her mother and made a settlement saying: "Islam was the nearest thing to his own faith."¹¹⁵

Hijrah

During her visits to various religious organizations, she started writing letters to different people throughout the world. Initially, she wrote letters to the young people in Arab World intending to enlarge the circle of her pen-friends.

¹¹⁴ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 101.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

However, their westernized mode of living, immaturity, and hostility against Islam provided her with the opportunity of contacting prominent Muslims scholars of that time. For Jameelah, the most important and inspiring letters, however, were the replies of Abul A'la Maududi. From the very first letter of Maryam Jameelah, Maududi too noticed the brilliance, awareness, and maturity of her personality and writings.

Although, Jameelah did not declare her Islam when she started writing to Maududi, inclination toward Islam was quite prominent in her letter and was noticed by Maududi.¹¹⁶ Therefore, he did not focus much on her conversion and advised Jameelah to formally announce *shahādah*.¹¹⁷ Maududi also observed her problems and, therefore, invited her to Pakistan to live with him as her adopted daughter. Their correspondence stretched over a period of almost seventeen months, from 5 December 1960 to 18 April 1962, in which she extensively discussed her ideas about Islam and other world religions. She accepted the invitation of Maududi two years later and planned to move to Pakistan. On Maududi's advice, she requested her parents to give her the permission of *Hijrah*. In spite of the high tone of her letter, they respected the wish of their daughter and wrote a letter to Maududi affirming their permission.

She noted several things during her journey and wrote to her parents in detail. She paid small visits to different Muslim countries which provided her the opportunity to observe the reaction of Muslims towards the new converts to Islam. Moreover, the disrespectful and rude behavior of the ship captain and some other passengers allowed her to think about the reason that why Islam restricted a woman

¹¹⁶ Abul Ala Maudoodi and M. Jameelah, *Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1969), 4.

¹¹⁷ Najmus Sahar, "Maghrbī or Islāmī Tehzībūn main 'Orat kā Muqām: Maryam Jameelah kay Afkār kā muṭāla'ah," *Tahqīqāt-e-Islāmī* 34, no. 1 (2015): 75.

to travel alone.¹¹⁸ She regarded her migration as *Hijrah*. In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty considered it as one of the qualities of believers saying:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوُوا وَتَصَرَّوْا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ-

Those who believed and left their homes and strove for the cause of Allah, and those who took them in and helped them - these are the believers in truth. For them is pardon and a bountiful provision. (Al-Quran 8: 74)

Therefore, the *Hijrah* of Maryam Jameelah was regarded as a celebrated event by the Muslims. Her ship, The Hellenic Touch, took one and a half month to the harbor at Karachi seaport where she was received by the members of *Jamaat-e-Islami*.¹¹⁹ The news of her arrival to Pakistan was published in the prominent newspapers. After a brief stay at Karachi, she finally went to Lahore where she joined Maududi's family.

Consequences

She was welcomed warmly as a family member. She was under the guardianship of Maududi's wife who was to teach her the requisite experience to be a Pakistani woman. Maududi also arranged a teacher to teach her Urdu language. She initially enjoyed the life of Lahore, however, the consequences emerged soon, mostly because of the difference in the orientations. Some sort of hatred was developed among Jameelah and the children of Maududi. They complained that she was spying on them.¹²⁰ Maududi also found her a bit tough to handle as she demanded a lot of time and attention. Of course, She also had her reservations about Maududi and his family which she often wrote to her parents in America.¹²¹ In

¹¹⁸ Maryam Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country* (Lahore: Adbiyat, 2012), 52.

¹¹⁹ *Jamaat-e-Islami* is an Islamic social and political movement which was founded by Abul Ala Maududi in 1941.

¹²⁰ Siddique, "Orientalism and Christian Missionaries: A Critique on the View of Maryam Jameelah," 11.

¹²¹ Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country*, 125-27; 272-75.

1963, the symptoms of her old disease returned. Therefore, Maududi sent her to Pattoki for rehabilitation.

Jameelah enjoyed the life in Pattoki and regarded it as the most satisfactory period of her life. She said: "This is what I wanted - and found - in Pattoki where I lived for almost a year."¹²² She showed a great love and respect towards Rai Nimat Ula and Khursheed Bibi (her adopted family in Pattoki) who regarded her as their daughter and helped her in her times of need until their death. Unfortunately, her rehabilitation process was failed, and she was sent to a *Pāgal Khāna* (mental hospital) in Lahore. She found the life of *Pāgal Khāna* in Pakistan much better than her stay of the mental asylum in America. She had her own cubical room and was permitted to keep her books and other stuff. The life of *Pāgal Khāna* also allowed her to observe firmness of relationships among the people of Pakistan.

Before her arrival to *Pāgal Khāna*, she wrote to a journalist Shaheer Niazi telling him about the attitude of Maududi towards her and asked for his help. Niazi assured Jameelah that Maududi was trying to kill her and that is why he sent her to Pattoki. On the advice of Niazi, Jameelah renounced the guardianship of Maududi. But when Niazi, did not come for her help, she realized her mistake and requested Maududi for his protection once again. She said, "I then realized what Shaheer Niazi had been up to and that my only hope was in Maulana Maudoodi who would forgive me and accept responsibility for me once more."¹²³ Maududi offered his guardianship under some conditions this time. Under those conditions, Jameelah was offered a new home, a maid, choice of life partner, and freedom of her literary carrier. However, this time Maududi did not find Jameelah fit to join his home. He said "[w,]ith the attitude on both sides, I advise you not to insist on meeting them (Maududi's family) for the present."¹²⁴ However, he sought a settlement between Jameelah and his family after some time. He advised her to think carefully and

¹²² Ibid., 25.

¹²³ Ibid., 291.

¹²⁴ Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Abul Ala Maudoodi To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1965).

inform her parents, hospital authorities, and the American consulate clearly whether to accept his guardianship or not. Jameelah accepted the offer of Maududi and shifted to her new home.

Marriage

Pāgal Khāna was indeed a lucky place for her in the sense that it introduced Jameelah to her future husband, Muhammad Yusuf Khan who also took care of her during her stay at the mental hospital. After her rehabilitation, she consulted with Maududi and accepted the marriage proposal of Yusuf Khan who already had a wife. Her marriage was delayed since the Pakistani Family Law Ordinance was amended and imposed some conditions on polygamy. Next day, after getting necessary permissions from his first wife Shafiqa, Muhammad Yusuf Khan married with Maryam Jameelah. Maududi himself performed the ritual of *Nikah* and Jameelah shifted to a home that she liked most upon her arrival in Lahore.¹²⁵ News of her marriage was published in the prominent newspapers of Pakistan. Jameelah's marriage brought satisfaction not only to her but to her parents as well. They also visited their daughter in her new home. Jameelah lived a satisfactory life after her marriage and there never happened a conflict between her and Shafiqa. In an interview, Safia Qarni¹²⁶ said that "Shafiqa was literally Shafiqa ("kind") who accepted her as co-wife and fulfilled many responsibilities along with her."¹²⁷ Author of these lines also caught the glimpse of this phenomenon when he met with Jameelah's daughter and stepsons during the course of this research work.

Death

Maryam Jameelah died on October 31, 2012, at the age of 78 due to a sudden heart attack. She left five children: Ayesha; who died in the childhood, Halimah Sa'adia, Khalid Farouq Khan, Haider Farouq Khan, and Marya Khanum.

¹²⁵ Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country*, 109.

¹²⁶ A senior member of *Jamaat-e-Islami* and one of contemporaries of Maryam Jameelah.

¹²⁷ Fatimah Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt" (University of Punjab, 2010), 21.

She had written 11 books, 23 booklets, more than 100 book reviews, and a few research articles. A brief summary of her life and works is shown in Table 2. Orya Maqbool Jan,¹²⁸ who met Muhammad Yusuf Khan and found him in agonizing pain, crying like children on her death, reported that the last wish which she made before her death to Yusuf Khan was to bury her beside her co-wife, Shafiqah.¹²⁹ The voyage of a Jewish convert finally came to an end and she settled on Islam; on her "True Religion".

¹²⁸ A famous columnist, writer, poet, and civil servant from Pakistan.

¹²⁹ Orya Maqbool Jan, "Aik Mujāhidah kī Maut," *Daily Dunya*, November 3, 2012.

Year	Event/Work
1934	Birth.
1952	Graduation. Admission in the University of Rochester. First nervous breakdown.
1953	Admission in New York University.
1956	Second nervous breakdown.
1957	Admission in mental asylum in America.
1960	Started corresponding with Abul A'la Maududi.
1961	Acceptance of Islam.
1962	Published <i>Islam Versus the West. Hijrah</i> to Pakistan.
1963	Admission in "Pagal Khana". Marriage.
1966	Published <i>Islam and Modernism</i> .
1967	Published <i>Islam in Theory and Practice, Islam Versus Ahl-Kitab Past and Present</i>
1968	Published <i>Ahmad Khalil: The Story of a Palestinian Refugee and His Family</i> .
1969	Published <i>Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah</i> .
1976	Published <i>Modern Technology and the Dehumanization of Man and Westernization and Human Welfare</i> .
1978	Published <i>Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern way of Life</i> , second edition.
1979	Published <i>Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences</i> (Two Volumes), revised edition.
1981	Published <i>Islam and Orientalism</i> , revised edition.
1989	Published <i>Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth</i> .
1990	Published <i>At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country</i> .
2012	Death.

Table 2: Life and Works of Maryam Jameelah, a brief timeline.

Part Two: Dimensions of Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

This section aims at finding, analyzing, and describing various events involved in the converting process of Maryam Jameelah. Analysis of social, theological, and cultural dimensions her conversion will allow us to find the reasons of her decision to convert, on the one hand, and bring forth the events which encouraged or discouraged her conversion on the other. Moreover, it will also help us to describe, understand, and analyze the micro and macro context under which the process of conversion takes place.

Social and Historical Dimensions

German Jewish Background

In 1746 CE, a Jewish boy was expelled from Berlin as he found guilty of carrying a German book for his friend.¹³⁰ The book was for Moses Mendelssohn; one of the founding fathers of Reform Judaism. Mendelssohn's reform movement left a deep mark on the later generations of German Jews. The reform of Mendelssohn initiated mass apostasy of German Jews. Thus, orthodox Jewish rabbis put a ban on the work of Mendelssohn.¹³¹ However, his reform movement, economic difficulties of Jews, advocacy of the German government for secular studies, resulted in shutting down the traditional Yeshivas of Germany.¹³² Maryam Jameelah noted the impact of Mendelssohn's reform on her family and surrounding Jewish community. She wanted to write a research work¹³³ on the followers of

¹³⁰ Emanuel Schreiber, *Reformed Judaism and Its Pioneers: A Contribution to Its History* (Carolina: BiblioBazaar, 2012), 14.

¹³¹ Meir Hildesheimer, "The Attitude of the Hatam Sofer toward Moses Mendelssohn," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 60(1994): 148; Louis Jacobs, *What does Judaism Say About ...?* (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), 75.

¹³² The only traditional institution that remained open in Furth was the Yeshiva of Rabbi Wolf Hamburger (1770-1850). For detailed discussion, see Steven M. Lowenstein, "Joseph Ben-David's Hungary and Mendelssohn's Berlin," *Jewish History* 11, no. 1 (1997): 127.

¹³³ In his Master's dissertation (*Marginalization and Reform of Religion: A Comparative Study of Moses Mendelssohn and Syed Ahmed Khan*), the researcher compared the approaches and ideas of Moses Mendelssohn and Syed Ahmad Khan which they used to reform their people. However, when he registered his research work, he was not aware of Maryam Jameelah.

Moses Mendelssohn, Syed Ahmed Khan,¹³⁴ (1817-1898) and Shaikh Muhammad Abduh¹³⁵ (1849-1905) who she thought, used the Western-imported ideas for their reforms.¹³⁶ She was aware of the mass conversions of German Jews¹³⁷ and, therefore, turned against the reform movement of Moses Mendelssohn. She wrote that "This was the result of Mendelssohn's modernist movement! These men may have been among my illustrious ancestors. I am not proud of them."¹³⁸ Similar to other Jews, her parents and some other family members also joined the Unitarian Church. It was Maryam Jameelah, who by converting to Islam, adapted to an entirely new way of life.

Two centuries before her birth, it was forbidden for German Jews to learn or teach languages other than Hebrew or Yiddish.¹³⁹ Reading a sacred book of any other religion was taboo for them. The reform of Mendelssohn made it possible for German Jews to use languages other than Hebrew and Yiddish.¹⁴⁰ Because of the absence of traditional Rabbinic leadership and "rigid communal structure", the mission of Reform Judaism was more successful in America compared with

¹³⁴ Syed Ahmed Khan was an educationist, ardent reformer, historian and theologian of Indian subcontinent.

¹³⁵ Shaikh Muhammad Abduh was a Muslim jurist, religious scholar, reformer and one of the fathers of Islamic modernism.

¹³⁶ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 194.

¹³⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Militant Islam*, by Godfrey H. Jansen. *Muslim World Book Review* 1, no. 2 (1981) 19; Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 28.

¹³⁸ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 113.

¹³⁹ Gertrud Reershemius, "Jewish Culture and Literature," in *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. M. Konzett (Chicago: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 532.

¹⁴⁰ Mendelssohn translated Pentateuch into German language for the first time. It was tough and challenging to write a book in any language other than Hebrew or Yiddish at that time, for it was hard to find a German speaking Jew in Yiddish speaking Jewish community and it was not easy to write a German book among the orthodox Jewish society.

Germany.¹⁴¹ Being a reform Jew, it was normal for Jameelah's mother to provide her with the translation of the Holy Quran. She noted the deep influence of the Holocaust on her surrounding American Jewry as well. She observed that persecution at the hand of Nazis made them nonobservant of their religion.¹⁴² However, the impact of American social and cultural milieu still could be added as another factor for such a big change in her family.

Her autobiographies indicate that her father, Herbert Marcus, had a little interest in religion. Similar to Marcus, she also never paid attention to religion unless she was reminded by some children who would tease her being a Jew as mentioned in the first chapter. These events motivated her to give serious consideration to the religious studies. It was noted by Fatimah al- Zahra that these events led Maryam Jameelah towards the comparative study of religions. She was curious to know about Judaism, Christianity, and their mutual relationship.¹⁴³ Mendelssohn too was intrigued in the study of comparative religions by such events.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, it is concluded that dissatisfaction from Reform Judaism led Maryam Jameelah to ponder over other religious alternatives and provided her *intellectual* motif of converting.

Increasing Atheism and Absence of Muslim Missionaries

Maryam Jameelah's unusual changing religious surroundings might also be considered as another factor which influenced her life and conversion. However, she was not the only one who went through such circumstances. At that time, atheism was gradually replacing religion that brought a lot of changes in the American societies. In a personal letter to Jameelah, Batoul Angell Morchid, a Christian convert to Islam, figured out some important observations regarding those

¹⁴¹ Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 20.

¹⁴² Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, vii.

¹⁴³ Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 6.

¹⁴⁴ Abram S. Isaacs, *A Story of the Early Days of Moses Mendelssohn* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1910), 28.

changes. On the one hand, similar to Rambo, she suggested to give serious consideration to the context of conversion, and on the other hand, she provided her observations about the impact of socio-cultural changes on the religious people of America in mid-nineties. She wrote:

Furthermore, in your (Maryam Jameelah's) case, a consideration about the time and environment when you embraced Islam should not be ignored. In the late 50ies and early 60ies US and Europe was going through a lot of changes, a new kind of modern times had started, and along with it morality and social care was going down. A lot of people disliked this changing, and many religious Christians cried out loud on both TV and newspaper, but to deaf ears. This new kind of freedom and so called liberty was all obsessing the mind of people, and those who criticized it on religious ground, were mocked at.¹⁴⁵

She further added that at the time of her conversion, few Muslims were living in America. Therefore, she found nothing strange in Jameelah's *Hijrah*. She wrote, "[n]o wonder a Righteous person in the 60ies would urge to find a Muslim community he or she would feel a belonging ... in fact; in that case, a hijra would be compulsory."¹⁴⁶ Similar to Morchid, Munirah MacLean-Kreps, a Western convert to Islam, also pointed out the same problem. She thought that the scarcity of Muslim community caused difficulties in Jameelah's conversion. She regarded her conversion as an unusual rare event among the Americans of that time.¹⁴⁷ In his very first letter to her, Abul A'la Maududi also observed the scarcity of Muslim community around her and asked her to join his family.¹⁴⁸ Al-Zahra also concluded that, although Jameelah met some pious Muslims, none of them inspired her. Thus,

¹⁴⁵ Batoul Angell Morchid, "Batoul Angell Morchid To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 2011).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ In a personal letter to Jameelah, she commented about the difficulties of Jameelah's conversions. For details, see Munirah MacLean Kreps, "Munirah MacLean-Kreps To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1998).

¹⁴⁸ Maryam Jameelah and Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1969), 6.

the absence of Muslim community/missionary caused a delay in her conversion to Islam.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, it is concluded that the absence of an advocate was one of the factors which prolonged her converting process.

The World Wars and their Aftermaths

When Maryam Jameelah was born, America was suffering from The Great Depression and echoes of World War I were being heard. She observed the hatred of Americans for Turks and Arabs which intrigued her to read more about Arabs and Islam.¹⁵⁰ The next big event which shaped her life was World War II. The aftermaths of the war left a great impression on her. Similar to the whole of American society,¹⁵¹ the war brought the moral and spiritual crisis in her life. She herself was a witness of the destructions caused by World War II that might also cause her to abhor the surrounding culture and civilization.¹⁵²

Because of her sympathetic attitude towards Arabs, one night her father argued with his daughter and provided social, ethical, and political arguments to convince her to think otherwise. On the one hand, by informing her about the low moral values of Muslims, he tried to prove the superiority of Judaism and Christianity over Islam. On the other hand, he told her that Muslims had supported Nazis in order to kill the Jews during the World War II. She wrote that "[a]nd then he told me about the terrible riots in Palestine in 1920, 1929 and 1936-1938 and

¹⁴⁹ Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 13.

¹⁵⁰ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 34.

¹⁵¹ She argued that the aftermaths of the both World Wars brought moral crisis in European and American societies. For details, see Maryam Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1984), 125.

¹⁵² Although, she did not write much in the autobiographies about the impact of the wars upon her, in her some later publications she could not help giving her judgments about it. For details, see Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 297; Maryam Jameelah, *Westernization and Human Welfare* (Delhi: New Crescent, 1997), 40.

how the Arabs tried to massacre all the Jews."¹⁵³ She was so convinced by the arguments of her father that she gave up the idea of writing her first novel *Ahmad Khalil* and promised to her "Jewish God" to become a good and loyal Jew. However, she failed to fulfill her promise and just after three days, she started reading about Arabs and Islam once again.

Impact of Zionism

Another factor that accelerated her converting process was the impact of Zionism on the American culture.¹⁵⁴ When in the mid-20th century, the Israel-Palestinian conflict resulted in the formation of a new Jewish state, being a reform Jew,¹⁵⁵ Jameelah was full of joy and happiness. She thought that by that new change, brotherhood among Jews and Muslims would be more possible to promote. She started dreaming about the Golden Age of Jews which once emerged under the rule of Muslims in Spain and Cordoba during the 9th century. She said: "I was very excited by the prospects that the Jews and Arabs would cooperate and together create a new Golden Age such as occurred in Spain."¹⁵⁶ However, the massacre of peaceful Muslims at Deir Yassin¹⁵⁷ and specially *Nakba*, the 1948 Palestinian

¹⁵³ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 40.

¹⁵⁴ Maryam Jameelah noted that it was World War II that put America under the pressure of Zionism which was instrumental to promote the hatred among Arabs and Jews. See Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 12.

¹⁵⁵ A large number of Orthodox Jews were against this new Jewish state as they thought that it must be achieved through the divine intervention only. Therefore, unlike American Reform Jewish community, Orthodox Jews did not support Zionism. For details, see Dana Evan Kaplan, *American Reform Judaism: An Introduction* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 16; Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948*.

¹⁵⁶ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Palestinians took the mass killing of peaceful Muslims at *Deir Yassin* in 1948 as a symbol of destruction of whole Palestine. For details, see Matthew Hogan, "The 1948 Massacre at Deir Yassin Revisited," *Historian* 63, no. 2 (2001): 1; Donald E. Wagner and Walter T. Davis,

exodus, resulted in the hatred of Jameelah for Zionists.¹⁵⁸ She noted that almost every available book on the conflict between Palestinians and Jews in the nearby libraries portrayed Muslims as backward while Jews as progressive. However, she never found their arguments convincing. Moreover, a relation with a Zionist organization *Mizrachi Hatzair* also triggered her to think that "What had I in common to share with them? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!"¹⁵⁹ When the American Jewry supported Zionism rather than Arabs, she felt terrible about it and no longer considered herself a Jew at heart.¹⁶⁰ As mentioned in the first chapter, her parents were strong supporters of Zionism and often argued with Jameelah to discourage her reading about Arabs and Islam. However, the more they discouraged her the more she read about Muslims. Therefore, the increasing conflict between them resulted in their separation.¹⁶¹ Her hatred of Zionism and sympathy with Muslims grew even stronger afterwards.

Theological Dimensions

Discovery of the Holy Quran

Although music was Maryam Jameelah's favorite subject at school, since her early days, she was not fond of pop and jazz music. Her mother noted that she was a great lover of classical music instead. One day, by chance, she heard Arabic music on the radio which motivated her to buy the records of celebrated Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum. The records she bought also

Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2014), 206.

¹⁵⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁶⁰ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 4.

¹⁶¹ Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 9-10; Maryam Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1971), XI; Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 171.

included the recitation of the Holy Quran. Although she could not understand it, she was overwhelmed by listening to the recitation of the *Surah Maryam* in the melodious voice of Umm Kulthum. Despite the negative attitude of her family, friends, and teachers towards Arabic music, she did not hold herself listing to it for hours. Arabic music was not the only thing which drew her attention. She was also a lover of Greek, Turkish, and Armenian programs.

Her initial interaction with the Holy Quran owed much to her interest in Arab music but it did not take her too long to find the solutions to her problems in it as well. She noted that after listening to the Holy Quran, there began an "exploration of heart"¹⁶² which later motivated her to read it.¹⁶³ She found the Quranic conception of God more relevant to her disposition.¹⁶⁴ After rejecting George Sale's translation of the Holy Quran, she managed to find Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's *Meanings of The Glorious Quran*. This new translation transformed her entire worldview. In an interview, she said:

This translation proved to be a startling revelation to me. My conception of religion was shattered apart. Christianity restricts a person to the private matters

¹⁶² Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Voice Of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song And Egyptian Society In The Twentieth Century* by Virginia Anielson. *Muslim World Book Review* 19, no. 1 (1998) 30.

¹⁶³ According to Ibn Ishaq, conversion of Umar ibn Al-Khattab (peace be upon him), a companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), was also a result of direct inspiration from the Holy Quran. After listening to the Holy Quran, there began an exploration in his heart and he could not help reading it which in turn inspired him to embrace Islam. However, his conversion was more like a sudden event rather than a process. For details see, Ibn Ishāq and Mazīdī, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, 222-23. Moreover, Zenita, a classmate of Maryam Jameelah, who also converted to Islam after reading the Holy Quran, narrated the same story of her own conversion. However, later, Zenita renounced Islam and became an atheist.

¹⁶⁴ Marcia Hermansen noted that similar to Maryam Jameelah, Noorudeen Durkee, a Western convert to Islam, also referred to those *āyāt* of the Holy Quran that are related to the nature of God, Afterlife and patience. Similar to Jameelah, Durkee also found the Quranic *āyāt* compatible with his temperament. For details, see Hermansen, "Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims," 78.

of life while Islam governs every aspect of it...another striking feature of the translation is its usage of the word Allah instead of God which is the most comprehensive word for this purpose.¹⁶⁵

Through Pickthall's *Meanings of The Glorious Quran*, she realized that George Sale's translation was mostly unjust and unfair. Therefore, she refused to use the translation of non-Muslims.¹⁶⁶ However, after reading Pickthall's translation, she also went through some other translations of the Holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali¹⁶⁷ (1872-1953), Muhammad Ali Lahori,¹⁶⁸ (1874-1951) and Abdul Majid Daryabadi¹⁶⁹ (1892-1977). Although she was not completely satisfied with those translations, she found Daryabadi's commentary helpful, especially the parts dealing with the comparative religions. However, Pickthall's translation remained to be her favorite and she recommended it for the potential converts. After reading *Miskhāt-ul-Masābīh*, a book of *Hadīth* studies, she was convinced that the Holy Quran must be a divine revelation and not a result of any intellectual efforts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The most convincing proof of the authenticity of the Holy Quran for her "was its satisfying and convincing answers to all the most important questions of life which I could not find elsewhere."¹⁷⁰ She studied the original Arabic text of the Holy Quran when she came to Pakistan.¹⁷¹ The Holy Quran was instrumental to answer her questions

¹⁶⁵ Kulthum, "Muhtarma Maryam Jameelah: Khatoon-e-Islam," 16.

¹⁶⁶ Maryam Jameelah, *Why I Embraced Islam* (Lahore: Taj, 1982).

¹⁶⁷ A British Muslim scholar and an eminent translator of the Holy Quran.

¹⁶⁸ A famous religious scholar, theologian, translator, and founder of the Lahori branch of the Ahmadiyya movement.

¹⁶⁹ A famous Muslim scholar, theologian, researcher, commentator, and translator of the Holy Quran.

¹⁷⁰ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxiv.

¹⁷¹ She went through original Arabic text of the Holy Quran thrice under the tutelage of her husband Muhammad Yusuf Khan. Marya Khanum, interview by Zohaib Ahmad, Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, November 22, 2016.

about the concept of God, the purpose of life, the Hereafter and the Hebrew Prophets.

Concept of God

Although she was a born Jew, the existence of Yahweh's transcendence remained unknown to her for quite some time. In her *Memories*, she did not only provide the evolutionary process of her conception of God but also focused on the context and environment that shaped her understanding. Her family used to celebrate Christian festivals which played a vital role in her initial conception of God. She conceptualized God as an old man with a long beard and as the crucified Christ which she used to watch at Metropolitan Museum of Art. Although she had no inclination towards Trinity,¹⁷² it was Michelangelo's¹⁷³ (1475-1564) Creation and Original Sin which led her to think of God as an anthropomorphic entity. Her anthropomorphic conception of God was a major factor which motivated her towards atheism.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, her family household, the influence of Reform Judaism, Zionism, and the attitude of some teachers also led her towards atheism. She remained atheist for quite some time. However, after her conversion to Islam, she noted that in spite of their "negative theories", and refutation of religious doctrines, atheists could not provide any alternative for human spiritual needs. The unfulfillment of these needs, according to her, may lead humans to insanity or committing suicide.¹⁷⁵

Her discovery of the Holy Quran introduced her to Eternal and Ever Alive Allah. She quoted various *āyāt* of the Holy Quran in her *Memories*, mainly for discussing the concept and nature of God and the Hereafter. She found the Quranic

¹⁷² Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 11.

¹⁷³ An Italian sculptor, painter, architect, poet, and engineer who left an overwhelming influence on modern Western art.

¹⁷⁴ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 92.

¹⁷⁵ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 45.

conception of God more relevant to her disposition. She claimed that the Quranic representation of God was universal whereas the Jewish notion of God was limited.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, she noted that the conceptualization of God was one of the needs of human beings. It is not possible for humans to achieve the highest ethical and moral ideals without knowing the source of these values. Therefore, she thought that the absence of source would result in the degeneration of morality into utilitarianism, opportunism, and expediency which posed a danger of extinction to the human race.¹⁷⁷

The Concept of the Hereafter

Although there are some indications about Hereafter in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁷⁸ a clearly-defined concept of Afterlife remained a mystery for Jews. It was the Graeco-Roman world which shaped the Jewish conception of the Hereafter. Therefore, it was difficult for the rabbis of Post-Biblical age to defend the doctrine of the resurrection.¹⁷⁹ Similar to other Jews, the questions about the Afterlife also caused problems for Maryam Jameelah. Being a child, she had a great fear of death which motivated her to think about the life of this world and the Hereafter. She was unable to find much about the Hereafter in the Holy Bible, Jewish daily prayer book, and the Talmud. The absence of a clear conception of the Hereafter in Judaism was among the reasons which intrigued her to read the sacred books of other religions.¹⁸⁰ Although her family, friends, and some teachers discouraged her to peruse the doctrine of the Hereafter, she thought that the absence of the concept of the Hereafter would render the whole system of morality and ethics baseless. The study of the Holy Quran reminded her that the modern man was not the first

¹⁷⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 3.

¹⁷⁷ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 107.

¹⁷⁸ For example, Psalms 28:1, 88:5, 6:5 and Job 28:22, 30:23.

¹⁷⁹ Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2003), 456.

¹⁸⁰ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxiv.

who had renounced the concept of the Hereafter (Al-Quran 45: 24-25). Therefore, her belief in the Hereafter strengthened afterward.

The Holy Quran helped her in concluding that the ultimate purpose of life was achievement and not enjoyment. She wrote that "[t]he purpose of life is to please God through implicit obedience... and earn eternal salvation in the Hereafter. According to Islamic teachings, life is not a pleasure trip but an examination."¹⁸¹ The Quranic conception of the Hereafter motivated her to ponder over the question of the purpose of life. While she was striving for the answer, she also discovered Abul A'la Maududi's article *Life After Death* which was translated into English by Prof. Dr. Khurshid Ahmad.¹⁸² Maududi's article provided her with a clearer understanding of the issue. In fact, for her, it was among the best and most convincing writing she ever read on the subject.¹⁸³

She drew various comparisons to bring forth her understanding of Jewish and Christian views about the Hereafter on the one hand, and Islamic presentation of the Afterlife on the other. She compared the New Testament's and the Holy Quran's concept of the Hereafter and concluded that although the New Testament had mentioned the Hereafter, its concept seemed unclear and ambiguous in comparison to the Holy Quran.¹⁸⁴ She also compared Jewish and Islamic prayers and concluded that Islam kept a balance between the life of this world and the Hereafter whereas Judaism stressed only upon the worldly life. These conclusions helped her in the selection of her "True Religion".

¹⁸¹ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

¹⁸² A famous Pakistani thinker, member of senate, Islamic scholar and regarded among the pioneers of modern Islamic economic and jurisprudence. He was among the persons who received Jameelah when she arrived at Pakistan. Jameelah remained in contact with him throughout her academic career as well.

¹⁸³ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxv.

Presentation of Prophets in the Hebrew Bible

The Old Testament's presentation of Hebrew Prophets was a big question before Maryam Jameelah that could also be understood as a sequel to her concept of the Hereafter. She claimed that the Old Testament stories of Hebrew prophets such as Noah, David, Solomon (peace be upon them) were unjust. According to the Old Testament, the prophets commit horrible sins such as rape, cheating, idol worship and murder. She doubted the authenticity of the stories of the Old Testament and thought that the Old Testament had presented prophets as sinners but it had never mentioned their punishment neither in this world and nor in the Hereafter.¹⁸⁵ She also maintained that the Old Testament's portrayal of prophets had proved Judaism as a materialistic religion. Validating her point, she provided the analysis of the story of Holy Prophet Job (peace be upon him) as depicted in the Old Testament. She found that after his recovery from a long illness and suffering, God rewarded him with all the worldly things. She added that "but note that nothing whatever is mentioned concerning his reward in the Hereafter."¹⁸⁶ Therefore, she thought that the Old Testament's emphasis on this world had led the Jews only to focus on the life of this world. The overwhelming desire of Jews for their success in this world moved them away from the life of the Hereafter and brought them closer to their nationalist thought.

Not long after her acceptance of Islam, once she went to Brooklyn Mosque to offer the Friday Prayer where she met with Samuel Kostelwitz, a Jew who came there to understand Islam. While preaching him the message of Islam, she presented comparisons of Hebrew Prophets as mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Old Testament. She concluded that, opposite to the Old Testament's depiction of the prophets as rapist and sinners, the Holy Quran described them as the "genuine

¹⁸⁵ Jameelah quoted various verses of the Old Testament in her later writings which led her to draw this conclusion. For details, see. *Ibid.*, 34-35.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

prophets of God and absolves them from all these crimes."¹⁸⁷ Moreover, she also drafted the classical example of the Holy Prophet Ismail (peace be upon him) and the Holy Prophet Isaac's (peace be upon him) sacrifice in order to convince Mr. Kostelwitz. She argued that by presenting the status of Hagar (peace be upon her) equal of Sarah (peace be upon her), Islam presented a more convincing and genuine version of the story. Therefore, it can be said that by comparing the different parts of the Old Testament with their counterparts in the Holy Quran, she achieved multiple objectives. On the one hand, she convinced herself to embrace Islam, and on the other hand, she used her personal experiences and intellectual abilities to advocate Islam.

Cultural Dimensions

Interest in Arab Culture

Maryam Jameelah was gifted with the fascination about the knowledge of historical relationships between Jews and Muslims by a reformed Jewish Sunday School. When she found that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was the ancestor of both Hebrews and Arabs, she started taking interest in the study of Arabia in order to know the roots and nature of connections among Jews and Muslims. It was not very late when she found the records of Umm Kalthum that practically engaged her with Arab culture. Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca* strengthened her ties with the Arab world beyond measures. Asad's description of Arabia, rejection of the Western civilization and presentation of traditional Islamic culture strongly motivated her to follow his path.¹⁸⁸ Despite the criticism of her family and teachers, she studied every available book on Arab history and civilization in the nearby libraries. However, the libraries were not enough for her. Therefore, she started buying books from Oriental bookshops to read more and more about Islam and Arabs.

¹⁸⁷ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 188.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

Her keen interest in art motivated her to sketch the Arab culture in her drawings. Her parents, teachers, and friends tried to stop her to draw the pictures of Arabs with no luck. Interest in Arab culture compelled Jameelah to write her first novel *Ahmad Khalil* at the age of thirteen that also reveals the intensity of the impact of Arab culture on her early thought.¹⁸⁹ According to Fatima Grimm, *Ahmad Khalil* played a vital role in her converting process. She wrote that "... never forget that this very 'Ahmad Khalil' brought you to Islam and made you what you are today."¹⁹⁰ It was her study of Arab culture and civilization which introduced her to Islam and Muslims. Her study of Islam disclosed to her that "it was not the Arabs who had made Islam great but the other way around,¹⁹¹ I wanted to know as much about this faith as I could."¹⁹² Later, she started dreaming to live and adopt an ancient, simple and traditional culture. As mentioned in the first chapter, in the preface of her book, *At Home in Pakistan*, she said that "This is what I wanted - and found - in Pattoki where I lived for almost a year." It should be taken into consideration that in Pattoki, she spent a simple life without almost any of the modern facilities. Therefore, her *Hijrah* was directly connected with her study of Islam and the Arab culture.

¹⁸⁹ The researcher also watched the drawings of Jameelah she drew for her novel *Ahmad Kahlil*. Therefore, he saw nothing strange in Fatimah al-Zahrah's selection of title "The Painter of Arabs" for Maryam Jameelah. See Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 37.

¹⁹⁰ Fatima Heeren Sarka, "Fatima Heeren Sarka To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1968).

¹⁹¹ Muhammad Asad concluded the same thing in his famous book *The Road to Mecca*. He said, "it was not the Muslims that had made Islam great: it was Islam that had made the Muslims great." For details, see Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2004), 193. However, conclusions of both converts are also near to Al-Hujurāt: 17, "They make it a favour unto thee (Muhammad) that they have surrendered (unto Him). Say: Deem not your Surrender a favor unto me; but Allah doth confer a favour on you, inasmuch as He hath led you to the Faith, if ye are earnest."

¹⁹² Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 3.

It also seems worthwhile to mention here that Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan,¹⁹³ (1924-2015) wrote a letter to Maryam Jameelah questioning about her conversion process. He asked: Why does one want to convert to Islam and what is the actual process? What exact change do converts feel after becoming a Muslim? Moreover, he also wondered that she could have lived a pious life in the society she was living in. Why did she migrate to Pakistan?¹⁹⁴ Despite the researcher's extensive endeavor, he could not find the reply to that letter. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that discovery of the missing reply might also reveal some other factors which impacted her conversion and migration.

Hate of American Culture

Her interest in Arab culture was one of the reasons for her inclination towards Muslims and Islam. Arab music intrigued her towards the study of the Holy Quran. However, it was not only the Arab music which caught the attention of Maryam Jameelah, she was listening to Greek, Turkish, and Armenian music as well. Her revulsion of modern music and alcoholic dance parties distanced her from American culture. Moreover, the genocide of aboriginal Red Indians in North America¹⁹⁵ led her to dislike American culture and civilization. Not only in her *Memories* but also in some of her other writings,¹⁹⁶ she revealed the impact of the killing of Red Indians on her converting process. She used to read the stories and play games about Indian tribes in her childhood. She always sought to defend the

¹⁹³ Islamic scholar, thinker, and politician who also served as the president of Azad Kashmir multiple times.

¹⁹⁴ Abdul Qayyum Khan said that he did not only meet with Muhammad Asad but also with various other converts to Islam and asked the same questions with no luck. Therefore, he wrote to Maryam Jameelah to get the answers of his questions. For detail, see Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, "Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1972).

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Merton and M. Basil Pennington, *Thomas Merton: I Have Seen what I was Looking for : Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York: New City Press, 2005), 164.

¹⁹⁶ In one of her edited books *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, she devoted an entire article to this issue.

Red Indians because she thought that "white men's" conquest of America murdered the natural beauty of the land.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, she used to argue with her mother that America should be returned to native Indians and Palestine to Muslims.¹⁹⁸

She also felt terrible about the marginalized status of Black Americans and used to draw it in pictures. She thought that "white men" treated them inferior just because of their race. She was of the view that it was the Western civilization which nurtured and matured racial prejudice.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, she started hating the Western civilization and the "white race". However, she also thought that there were certain "white men" who did wish to give equal status to colored races. In fact, in her own family, she found ambivalent responses towards the black race. But for her, those people were no more than a drop in the ocean. Therefore, it is concluded that the genocide of aboriginal Red Indians, the inferior status of Black Americans, hatred of modern Western music, and dance parties distanced her from American culture and accelerated her process of conversion and migration.

¹⁹⁷ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 27; 50.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁹⁹ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, 383.

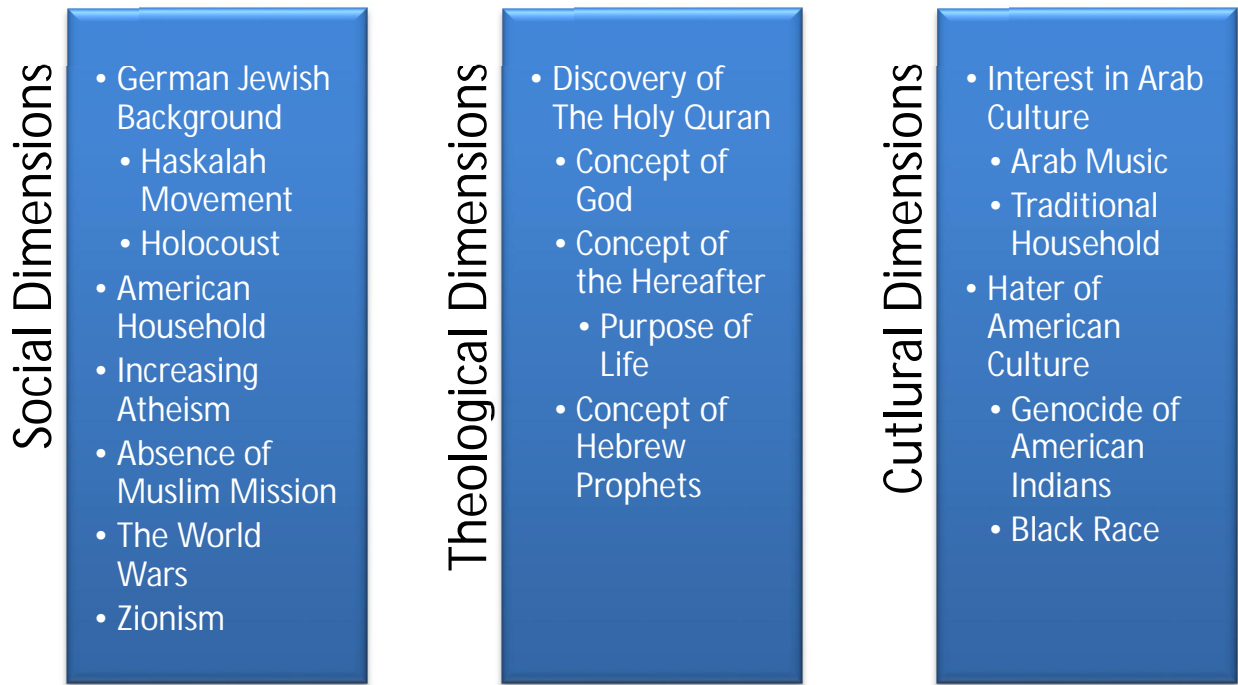


Figure 4: Dimensions of Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

Chapter Three: Conversions of Maryam Jameelah

Part One: Understanding Conversion of Maryam Jameelah

In one of Maryam Jameelah's unpublished works, the researcher has managed to find a manuscript in which she drafted an analysis of her conversion along with the motives and reasons of her bitter attitude towards the Western civilization. She had written answers to the questions that she never shared with anyone in her life and never wanted to share with anyone until her death. However, she granted permission for its academic use for those scholars of oriental religions and cultures as well as Pakistanis residing in England who want to analyze the "first-hand knowledge of the experience of an American-Muslim convert."²⁰⁰ She herself titled that manuscript as *My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975*. It was written in the last week of February 1975, therefore, it contains information about the most dreadful and productive period of her life. This document will be referred to by the same name as given by her in current research work.

Personal Narratives of Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

This section will discuss the role of certain individuals in the conversion process of Maryam Jameelah.

Muhammad Asad

Although she never met Muhammad Asad, her extensive study of Asad's writings left an unparalleled mark on her life, conversion, and literary work.²⁰¹ She vowed to follow his footsteps. Similar to Asad, Jameelah was also a German Jew, brought up in a non-observant Jewish family, a critic of Zionism²⁰² and Western civilization, a convert to Islam, a lover of Arab culture, and finally a resident of Pakistan. She mentioned repeatedly in her writings about the encouragement and motivation that she received from Asad's *The Road to Mecca* for her conversion

²⁰⁰ Maryam Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1975).

²⁰¹ Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 12; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Islam at the Crossroads*, by Muhammad Asad. *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 4 (1985) 41.

²⁰² See Muhammad Asad's views on Zionism, Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 93.

and migration.²⁰³ One still can trace the influence of Asad's work on her conversion by finding the copy of *The Road to Mecca* in her personal library that is, however, slightly amended. The amendment did not surpass the first page though, that now looks as under.

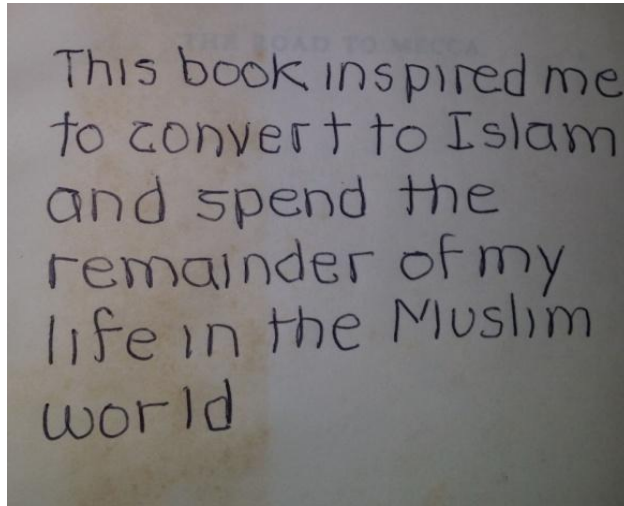


Figure 5: Maryam Jameelah's views about Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca* written in her own handwriting.

In her *My Life Story*, she compared her conversion to Muhammad Asad's process of religious change and concluded that although there were similarities in their conversions, there were some differences as well. She wrote:

The psychological factors which led to his conversion, his rejection of the Western culture and everything it stands for, his opposition to the modernization of Muslim lands and the theme of his writing are the same as mine... It must be remembered that we are separated by more than a generation in age. When Muhammad Asad first encountered the Muslim world as a young man, Western influence may had not gone beyond its preliminary stages... by the time I went to

²⁰³ Maryam Jameelah, *A Great Islamic Movement in Turkey: Badee-u-Zaman Said Nursi* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1981), 3; Jameelah, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 41; Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 109; 68; 210.

live in Pakistan thirty years later under the deluge of foreign influences, the Muslim world had been transformed beyond recognition...²⁰⁴

She provided a multi-faceted comparison of Muhammad Asad's life with her own life. On the one hand, she drafted her thoughts about their voyage of conversions respectively and, on the other hand, she provided the readers with the comparison of both the American and German societies where they used to live. It is evident that the work of Muhammad Asad did not only advocate her to convert to Islam but also equipped her with the necessary tools to study the modern Western civilization. She understood the conversion of Muhammad Asad at two levels: first, his acceptance of Islam and second, his rejection of the Western civilization. Similarly, she also portrayed her conversion as a case of her acceptance of Islam and as a case of her rejection of the Western civilization. She did not only analyze the context, events, and factors that were involved in their conversions but went beyond that by presenting the post-conversion analysis of their religious change. She wrote that:

When I accepted the invitation of Maulana Maudoodi to live in Pakistan, I dreamed of immersing myself in the Oriental environment described with such exquisite literary style in Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca*. When I embraced Islam, this meant to me not only a change of faith but even more important, a transference of my allegiance from Western to Islamic civilization. I hoped to find in Pakistan a genuine Islamic society; I felt then as I do now, an intense need to live in an Islamic atmosphere.²⁰⁵

Therefore, through her migration, she intended to achieve multiple objectives. First, she wanted to join a Muslim community and second, she wished to live a simple and traditional life. But she wrote, with a great sorrow, that neither in Pakistan nor in any other Islamic country, she was able to observe a "genuine Islamic society". She wrote that the society, she was looking for, is now "only be found in history books." It should be taken into consideration that Maryam

²⁰⁴ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

Jameelah's concept of "genuine Islamic society" was also influenced by Muhammad Asad's depiction of the Islamic household. Asad drafted his conceptions about the Muslim communities after observing various Islamic societies during his several journeys. Therefore, when she was analyzing the similarities and differences in their conversions, she gave a special consideration not only to the environment, she was raised in, but also to the society, she later migrated to. The difference of gender, Asad's journeys to various Islamic countries, and the impact of modernism and Westernization on the Muslim societies were the major factors that she traced out as the dissimilarities in their conversions.

It is pertinent to mention here that Marcia Hermansen analyzed the conversions of Muhammad Asad, Maryam Jameelah, and Noorudeen Durkee along with some other converts to Islam in her article *Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims*. After a detailed analysis, she explained that, in general, European and Euro-American converts were not agreed to the "shortcomings of their personal lives before becoming Muslim, but rather wish to describe the failings of Western society which led them to seek something better and more meaningful."²⁰⁶ However, she observed that Jameelah had provided more details about her conversion process than most of the converts, she had studied. Hermansen noted her confessions and maintained that Maryam Jameelah was "more than confessional about her personal issues—but in her letters—not in her other works."²⁰⁷ Hermansen however, did not mention why the confessions of converts were necessary to understand the conversion process.

²⁰⁶ Hermansen, "Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims," 78.

²⁰⁷ Marcia Hermansen, e-mail message to author, April 27, 2016.

Abraham Isaac Katsh

Maryam Jameelah was a student of Professor Abraham Isaac Katsh,²⁰⁸ (1908-1998) a rabbi who was teaching at New York University at that time. She studied a course "Judaism in Islam" under his supervision. It was him who helped her to believe in the doctrine of the Hereafter as a necessary Jewish belief rather than a mere superstition.²⁰⁹ However, when she compared the concept of the Hereafter offered by the Talmud and the Holy Quran, she found the Quranic conception of the Hereafter more relevant to her disposition. Katsh's lectures also encouraged her to renounce atheism and Judaism. He argued that materialism and atheism were the main causes of the lack of morality in the society. The ethical monotheism preached by Judaism and Islam was the foundation of all the goodness.

She found his arguments relevant to her thought and therefore, turned her attention away from agnostic humanism.²¹⁰ However, when he tried to prove the superiority of Judaism over Islam by presenting a verse to verse comparison of the Old Testament and the Holy Quran, his arguments were not strong enough to convince Maryam Jameelah. She thought that Katsh himself was aware of the truth of Islam as his many conclusions were in favor of it but his emotional attachment to Judaism and Jewish people restrained him to renounce Judaism and to embrace Islam.²¹¹ During the lectures of Katsh, she made up her mind to convert to Islam. According to her "[a]lthough Professor Katsh has tried to prove to his students why Judaism is superior to Islam, paradoxically, he has converted me to the opposite opinion."²¹² Therefore, Esposito also included Abraham Katsh along with

²⁰⁸ Professor Abraham Isaac Katsh was rabbi and a scholar of Hebrew and Arabic languages. He authored many books on the comparative analysis of Judaism and Islam such as *Judaism in Islam: Biblical and Talmudic Backgrounds of the Koran and Its Commentaries*.

²⁰⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, xi.

²¹⁰ Agnostic humanism or secular humanism is a philosophy which emphasizes that human beings can be ethical and moral without accepting any religion.

²¹¹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 106.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 108.

Muhammad Asad in his list of those two Jews who led Jameelah to renounce Judaism and to embrace Islam.²¹³

Meetings with Muslims in America

She spent almost two years in the different mental hospitals after her second nervous breakdown. In those hospitals, she had enough time to ponder upon her past experiences to discover more about her "True Religion." However, when doctors made it clear that she would never be recovered from her illness, she vowed that "if ever I recovered sufficiently to be discharged, would embrace Islam."²¹⁴ Halimah, a Muslim woman living in the Syrian quarters of New York, sent her a copy of *Meanings of The Glorious Quran*. The gift of Halimah reminded her to think about the Muslim community of New York. After getting discharged from the hospital, she planned to find and meet the Muslim community in order to learn more about Islam. Some important individuals she met were:

Dr. Mahmud F. Hoballah

She went to Washington D.C. where she met Dr. Mahmud F. Hoballah (1903-1974) who was serving as the director of The Islamic Center at that time. She informed him about her wish to embrace Islam. During their meetings, he made it clear to Jameelah that Islam is an intellectual as well as an emotional religion. If she wanted to embrace Islam, she must understand it intellectually and emotionally. Five hours of discussion with him resulted in her satisfaction with the truths of Islam.²¹⁵

Daoud Ahmad Faisal and Khadija Faisal

She also met Shaikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal (1891), head of The Islamic Mission of America, who was also serving as Imam of Brooklyn mosque at that time. Shaikh Faisal and his wife Khadijah Faisal played a pivotal role in the process

²¹³ Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 56.

²¹⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, xi.

²¹⁵ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 157.

of her conversion. She used to discuss with Shaikh Faisal her religious experiences with Shaikh Faisal and learned from him the customs of Muslims from him. She learned to perform *Salat* under the tutelage of his wife Khadijah who also served as the witness to her *shahādah*. She started offering prayers before her formal acceptance of Islam and used to go to the mosque for *Jumma* prayers as well.²¹⁶ Later, she announced her *shahādah* at the hand of Shaikh Faisal who also changed her name from Margret Marcus to Maryam Jameelah. Deborah Baker observed that it was Shaikh Faisal who convinced her to convert to Islam.²¹⁷

Abul A'la Maududi

She did not include Abul A'la Maududi in the list of those persons who intrigued her process of conversion, but she was thankful to him for providing her an opportunity to live and prosper in a Muslim society. In the preface of her book *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, she wrote that "Maududi had no need to persuade me to adopt Islam as I was already on the threshold of conversion and would have taken the final step even without his knowledge."²¹⁸ However, as it has been mentioned in the second chapter, Maududi's article *Life After Death* firmed her believe in Islam and the Hereafter. He also observed that Jameelah was on the threshold of Islam, therefore, he opened his very first letter saying: "*Assalām alaīkūm*" (literally Peace be upon you), the peculiar Muslim way of greeting. He noted that her firm belief in the oneness of God, acceptance of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as His last messenger, faith in the Holy Quran, and the Hereafter portrayed her as a "genuine Muslim." Therefore, he suggested to her to announce *shahādah* and change her name.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Ibid., 162.

²¹⁷ Deborah Baker, *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2012), 86.

²¹⁸ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, ii.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 5.

Finally, in her fifth letter, she told him about her acceptance of Islam and the new name.

From her letters, he observed the active nature of her conversion. He himself was an active *Dai'*; well aware of the consequences that usually emerged during the course of *Dawah* and conversion. Therefore, by his letters, he advised her to avoid possible consequences and advised her "not to try to convince everybody, especially those who do not care to listen..."²²⁰ Moreover, he also suggested her to assimilate into an Islamic community. He was perhaps the first person who informed her about those restrictions of Islam which she was not aware of.²²¹

Why Islam?

Similar to other Reform Jews, almost every member of her family adopted a new faith. The case of her conversion was unique in the sense that unlike her family, she embraced Islam rather than Christianity, Baha'ism or Hinduism. Why did she prefer Islam? Why did she say that Islam "is the only true religion"?²²² She made it clear in her writings that her inclination towards Islam was not the result of any mystical experiences or dreams; her personal experiences were sufficient enough to convince her.²²³ As it has been discussed earlier that although, during her religious quest, Jameelah inclined towards the philosophies of agnostic humanism and atheism, lectures of Katsh's and Quranic conception of the life of this world and of the Hereafter encouraged her to renounce them. Her preference for Islam to other religious traditions is quite prominent in her writings. An analysis of the reasons for her rejection of other religious traditions will be helpful to know the causes of her selection of Islam.

It is evident that non-observant behavior of Reform Jews distanced her from the Reform Judaism. But why did she renounce the whole Jewish creed rather than

²²⁰ Ibid., 29.

²²¹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 222.

²²² Ibid., 91.

²²³ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 3.

converting to Orthodox or Traditional Judaism? One quick answer to this question could be the rigid attitude of those Orthodox Jews whom she met in her childhood. However, in her writings, she also revealed many other reasons which discouraged her to remain in the Jewish fold. For example:

1. Unavailability of the clear conception of the Hereafter in Judaism.
2. Unavailability of the universal spiritual message in Judaism.²²⁴
3. The Jewish conception of Chosen People.²²⁵
4. The Jewish conception of Nationalism and Racialism.²²⁶
5. The Jewish conception of born-Jew.²²⁷
6. Subordination of Jews to the philosophies of materialism.
7. Oppression of Arabs at the hand of Zionists.²²⁸

She also drafted the reasons that discouraged her to embrace Christianity which is as follows.

1. Concept of Trinity
2. The anthropomorphic conception of God.
3. Priesthood and Monasticism.²²⁹
4. The ambiguity of the concept of the Hereafter.
5. Subordination of Christians to materialism and atheism.
6. The concept of Original Sin.
7. Christian persecution of Jews for one thousand five hundred years.

²²⁴ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 8.

²²⁵ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *They Must Go!*, by Rabbi Meir Kahane. *Muslim World Book Review* 4, no. 3 (1984) 32.

²²⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 29.

²²⁷ Maryam Jameelah claimed that Judaism is a tribal religion and only concerned with the Jewish people. She added that "[t]he converted Jew by marriage is always suspect and never fully accepted by the born-Jew. So long as he is considered loyal to his people, even the atheist remains within the Jewish fold." Jameelah, *They Must Go!*, 32.

²²⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 2.

²²⁹ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 8.

8. Christian support of Zionism.
9. Acceptance of Secularism on principle.²³⁰

She also joined various organizations such as Ethical Culture society, *Mizrachi Hatzair*, Young Women's Jewish Association, the youth group at the Orthodox Synagogue, and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab's *Bahai* movement of New York. Fatima al-Zahra assessed that it was perhaps Jameelah's dissatisfaction of "Western religions" which motivated her to know more about "Eastern Religions".²³¹ However, she provided other reasons for her inclination towards Baha'ism. She joined *Bahai* movement mainly because of its Islamic origin and its concept of oneness of mankind. But when she found the failure of the implementation of these ideas in Baha'ism, she distanced herself from it.²³² She rejected Buddhism and Hinduism because of their "exotic philosophies" and denial of the realities of the material world.²³³ She added that:

...originally all the great religions were one, but as time passed they became corrupted. Idol worship, the idea of reincarnation, and the caste system began to permeate Hinduism; pacificism and monasticism became characteristic of Buddhism; ancestor worship of Confucianism; the doctrine of original sin, the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus resulting in an anthropomorphic conception of God and the atonement by the alleged death of Jesus on the cross, of Christianity and the exclusive Chosen People idea of Judaism.²³⁴

Since her childhood, she noticed the dominance of materialistic conception of life on American culture. The question of the purpose of life led her to consider that the materialistic concept of life had no concern with the life of the Hereafter.

²³⁰ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XI.

²³¹ Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 8.

²³² Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, ix.

²³³ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XI.

²³⁴ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 5.

Therefore, she wanted to adopt a civilization which could keep a balance between the life of this world and the Hereafter. Neither Baha'ism nor Judaism or Christianity satisfied her. She thought that apart from Islam other world religions contained only the fragments of distorted truths but only Islam contained the whole of it.²³⁵ She did notice the strong impact of materialism on the Muslim communities as well.²³⁶ But she found the solutions in the traditional teachings of Islam. It is evident that along with the writings of Muslim scholars such as Muhammad Asad and Abu A'la Maududi, her own experiences with various religious traditions also encouraged her to embrace Islam. Through her comparative study of religions, she noted various notions that made her prefer Islam to other religious folds. She admired the following concepts of Islam.

1. The concept of God.
2. The concept of the Hereafter that led her to find the purpose of life.
3. The concept of balanced life.²³⁷
4. The concept of *Taqwa* rather than race.
5. The universalism of Islam.

Although she failed to find her ideas in Judaism, she wanted to embrace a religion near to it. The reason she provided for her selection was the training she received from her surrounding environment. She thought that the relationship between Islam and Judaism was stronger than Islam and Christianity.²³⁸ Therefore, she said "I did not embrace Islam out of any hatred or shame for my ancestral

²³⁵ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

²³⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 70-71.

²³⁷ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1.

²³⁸ For example, the concept of monotheisms, rejection of priesthood, cultural atmosphere, love of the creator. For details, see Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 7.

heritage or my people... I am now a Muslim by faith but I will always remain a Jew by the birth-a fact of which I am neither proud nor ashamed."²³⁹

Inner Dimension of Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

Maryam Jameelah's inclination towards the spiritual dimensions of religion had been evident since her childhood. Finding the American environment incapable of satisfying her thirst for spirituality, it was perhaps the "white man's materialistic outlook"²⁴⁰ that motivated Jameelah, during her youth, to complain about the absence of spirituality in her home.²⁴¹ Her ten-year-long journey to Islam was, in fact, largely an attempt to cope with this materialistic outlook which she was so strongly trying to denounce in her writings, labeling it a hideous disease.²⁴² Apparently, her *Hijrah* also proved to be ineffective in satisfying her spiritual thirst.

Letters to Jameelah from a pen friend, Zeba Siddiqui, in the early nineteen-eighties, reveal that Jameelah turned towards Islamic spirituality, known as *Taşawwuf* or Sufism to find spiritual fulfillment. The unavailability of Jameelah's letters to Siddiqui makes it difficult to understand and analyze the nature and process of her inner conversion. However, enough material remains available to give a limited description of it. What is clear is that in her investigation of Sufism, Jameelah developed an interest in the well-known sheikh of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, Nazim al-Haqqani²⁴³ (1922-2014). However, it is not known whether or not she became his disciple.

It is significant that, in a letter to her parents, dated April 24, 1962, Jameelah expressed her views about several modern Muslim scholars. She was convinced that scholars who rejected *Hadith*, *Sunnah*, the four schools of *Fiqh*, Sufism, the orthodoxy of the *ulema* and other Islamic sciences are mistaken in their

²³⁹ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 196.

²⁴⁰ Jameelah, *Westernization and Human Welfare*, 26.

²⁴¹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 7.

²⁴² Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 307.

²⁴³ Mehmet Nazım Adil or Nazim al-Haqqani was Turkish Sufi saint of Naqshband order.

assessments. Consequently, she criticized Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab²⁴⁴ (1703-1792) for holding Sufism responsible for the decline of Muslims.²⁴⁵ Later, however, her views about ‘Abd al-Wahhab changed. Contrary to the views of many scholars,²⁴⁶ in her magnum 'opus, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, she claimed that Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab "was not opposed to *Taşawwuf* as such", but rather that he was against exaggerated reverence of Islamic saints, symbols, graves, shrines and other forms of what he termed *shirk*. However, when ‘Abd al-Wahhab realized that it was not possible to eradicate such practices, he denounced Sufism in its entirety.²⁴⁷

Islam in Theory and Practice also contains a section entitled "Supplication To the Holy Prophet Muhammad" that begins "*As salam alaikum ya rasul allah*"²⁴⁸ meaning, "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah"; a common salutation to the Prophet (peace be upon him).²⁴⁹ This section of Jameelah’s book also contains many other salutations to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). In a letter to Maryam Jameelah, Robert Abd al-Rahman, an American convert, expressed doubts about the validity of such salutations and suggested that she should remove that section of the book as he assumed that Jameelah’s inclination toward Sufism had motivated her to write this salutation. Al-Rahman argued that apart from the

²⁴⁴ A famous Muslim scholar, theologian, preacher and reformer.

²⁴⁵ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 214-15.

²⁴⁶ Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 83; William Rory Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2015), 30; Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2005), xviii.

²⁴⁷ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 119-20.

²⁴⁸ Moreover, the tone of the article suggests that Maryam Jameelah was inclined towards the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* schools of thought which is also referred as a Sufi movement. For details, see *ibid.*, 411-15.

²⁴⁹ Sayyid Nurjan Mirahmadi, Hedieh Mirahmadi, and Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Healing Power of Sufi Meditation* (USA: Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2005), 64.

salutation's wording, the "title itself can be considered 'shirk' since it is directed TO²⁵⁰ the Prophet."²⁵¹ Al-Rahman also suggested certain books to Jameelah and advised her to evaluate Sufi teachings in the light of the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah*. Jameelah found the criticism of Abd al-Rahman valid and distanced herself from the salutation.²⁵² However, she did not renounce Sufism and defended it in her subsequent book reviews.²⁵³

Later, some of Jameelah's pen friends played a vital role fostering her undeclared attraction toward Sufism, in particular, Zeba Siddiqui, who also sent her some books on the subject, which are still preserved in her library. Among them was the biography of Nazim al-Haqqani, about whom Jameelah wrote:

A supreme guide to the
spiritual life, One who
follows this will insha'allah
be successful in this life
and in the eternal life
Hereafter!

Figure 6: Maryam Jameelah's views about the biography of *Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani*.

Other acquaintances of Jameelah also encouraged her attraction towards Sufism. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who himself wrote extensively about the spiritual teachings of world religions, wrote, "I also pray that gradually you become more acquainted with Sufism and the esoteric teachings of Islam which in their

²⁵⁰ Emphasis is from the author.

²⁵¹ Robert Abd Al-Rahman, "Robert Abd Al-Rahman To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1994).

²⁵² Robert Abd Al-Rahman, "Robert Abd Al-Rahman To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1995).

²⁵³ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and The West (Dissertations Series I)*, by Emad Eldin Shahin. *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 3 (1995) 19.

metaphysical dimension contain all intellectual answers to the aberrations of the modern world."²⁵⁴ Fatima Grimm also encouraged Jameelah to think about Sufism and criticized those scholars who were against it. She said that "[h]ow dare one say so generally that Sufism is bad only because some manifestations of it showed a distorted practices?"²⁵⁵ Besa Mazhar encouraged her to adopt the Sufi practice of *dhikr-ullah*.²⁵⁶ Similarly, Muhammad Yousuf Ahsan also wrote Jameelah a letter in which he suggested the practice of *dhikr*.²⁵⁷

After 1980, Jameelah restricted her literary works to the publication of her two autobiographies and book reviews. In her book reviews, she criticized scholars, including Muhammad Asad²⁵⁸ and Abu A'la Maududi²⁵⁹ who opposed Sufism.²⁶⁰ Jameelah was of the view that certain Sufi orders, such as the *Darqawīyah* and *Naqshbandīya* "to this day combine the deepest spiritual dimension of *Tasawwuf*

²⁵⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1972).

²⁵⁵ For details, see Fatima Heeren Sarka, "Fatima Heeren Sarka To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1974).

²⁵⁶ For details, see Besa Mazhar, "Besa Mazher To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1984).

²⁵⁷ For details see. Muhammad Yusuf Ahsan, "Muhammad Yusuf Ahsan To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1985).

²⁵⁸ Jameelah, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 40.

²⁵⁹ Jameelah, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and The West (Dissertations Series 1)*, 19.

²⁶⁰ For example, Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Understanding Islam and Dimensions of Islam*, by Frithjof Schuon. *Muslim World Book Review* 6, no. 4 (1986) 10; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Islam Against the West*, by William L. Cleveland. *Muslim World Book Review* 7, no. 2 (1987) 63; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi: His Spiritual Heritage And Legacy*, by Martin Lings. *Muslim World Book Review* 15, no. 2 (1995) 18; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Rabia: The Mystic and her Fellow-Saints*, by Margaret Smith. *Muslim World Book Review* 16, no. 2 (1996) 42.

with strict adherence to the *Shari'ah*"²⁶¹ without a doubt referring indirectly to Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani's of the *Naqshbandi* order.

The non-availability of the letters written by Jameelah and the concealment of her inclination toward Sufism has left a few doors open to the understanding of nature and the process of her inner change. On the basis of currently available sources, it can be concluded that her attraction to Sufism was an attempt to quench the spiritual thirst that she felt since her childhood, encouraged by trusted friends. Finding inner peace and fulfillment in orthodox Islamic spirituality, Jameelah not only allied herself with it but also defended it.

²⁶¹ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Knowledge And The Sacred*, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Muslim World Book Review* 4, no. 1 (1983) 20.

Part Two: Findings Related to Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

Study of Maryam Jameelah's life and conversion reveals some important insights that can be helpful for future studies of the process of conversion - to Islam particularly and to the world religions generally. Moreover, the current study recommends considering the fact that Rambo's stage model of conversion is formulated in a cultural environment which was different from the environment of many Muslim countries. Asiyah az-Zahra, in her study of Dusun ethnic group in Brunei Darussalam, observes the cultural specificity of Rambo's stage model. In order to validate her point, she reformulates Rambo's stage model and applies it to understand the conversion process of Dusun ethnic group. Later, she finds the modified model more supportive to understand their conversion process rather than the original one. "Addition of the new concepts of contextual components and of the culture-free definitions of the stages" allows her to observe the flexibility of Rambo's stage model on the one hand and its cultural specificity on the other.²⁶² However, Jameelah is an American convert, therefore, it is possible that the findings which are observed during current research work may not be equally valid for the Muslim converts of other countries and cultures. Moreover, it should also be noted that the context, environment, and events that shape her conversion (for example, the World Wars and Arab-Israel war) are rare phenomena and influences her whole process of conversion.

During the course of the present research work, it is observed that in its very nature, the process of religious conversion is religious. Up to some extents it can be measured through the study of psychological, sociological, anthropological, or historical factors which shape and nurture it. However, to make it phenomenologically true, focus on its religious and theological dimensions is essential. Most of the factors which shape Maryam Jameelah's conversion are theological issues. The study of her religious change also validates the importance of historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, religious, and

²⁶² Asiyah az-Zahra Ahmad Kumpoh, "Conversion to Islam: The Case of the Dusun Ethnic Group in Brunei Darussalam" (University of Leicester, 2011), 265.

theological dimensions of conversion. It also verifies Rambo's suggestion to understand conversion as a process rather than a single event.

Multiple Conversions of Maryam Jameelah

Study of her life reveals the possibility of multiple processes of conversion in the life of a single convert.²⁶³ Timeline of her 'multiple conversions' is shown in Figure 7.

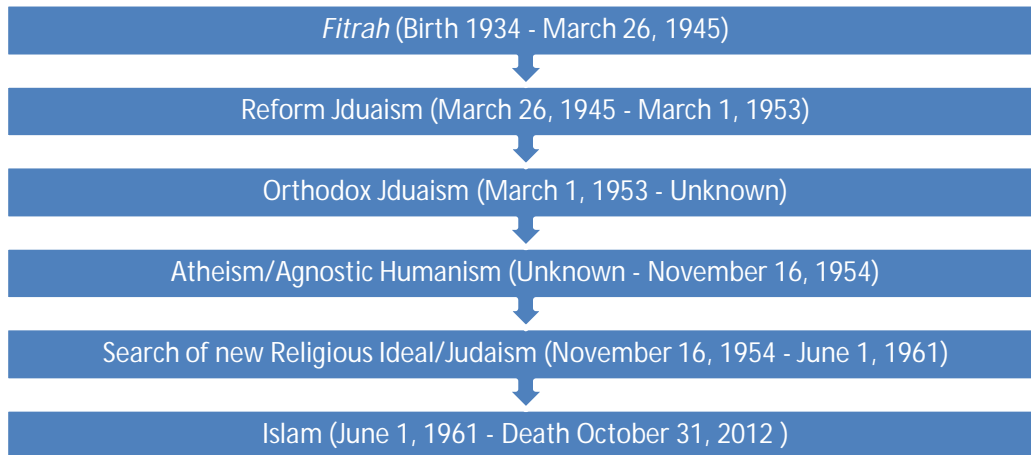


Figure 7: Depiction of multiple conversions of Maryam Jameelah.

During her voyage, she at least converts:

1. From *fitrah* to Judaism/Reform Judaism.
2. From Reformed Judaism to Orthodox Judaism.
3. From Orthodox Judaism to atheism/Agonistic humanism.
4. From atheism to a state of the search for a new religious ideal.
5. From a state of search to Islam.

Moreover, it also points out the possibility of the formulation of a religious state in which an individual while searching for a new religious ideal does not break his/her connection with atheism. For example, when she was professing atheism, she was also searching for an "absolute truth" which, she thought, alone can give

²⁶³ It was not only Maryam Jameelah who went through 'multiple conversions'. Many of her friends and relatives also experienced conversion more than once in their lives. Even her parents were converted multiple times.

meanings to the human life. She felt that her search for "absolute truth" had a sense of religiosity in it.²⁶⁴

Conversion studies that use Rambo's stage model often ignore to find the possibilities of 'multiple conversions' in the life of an individual. For example, Maha Al-Qwidi, Asiyah az-Zahra, Dong Young Kim and Grace Milton in their Ph.D. dissertations²⁶⁵ applies Rambo's stage model to understand the conversion processes of various converts. Although they have managed to provide important findings in their studies, none of them depict any valuable information about the possibility of 'multiple conversions' in their respondents. Of course, the overlooking of this possibility may be because of the difference in aims and objectives of their researches. Moreover, studies that collect their data from surveys are concerned with various converts at the same time, therefore, comparatively, it is hard to look deeper into the life of every convert to find out the availability of 'multiple conversions' on the one hand, and application of Rambo's stage model on each converting process on the other. Various limitations such as unavailability of time and data (on the part of convert or researcher) also create hurdles in such types of conversion studies.

Consideration of the possibility of 'multiple conversions' can provide a number of new ideas and options for conversion studies. For example, during the current research work, it is noted that some of the reasons which distance Jameelah from Judaism also cause her to be dissatisfied with Christianity. But the reasons which motivate her towards atheism were different from the reasons that lead her towards Bahaism or Islam. Therefore, consideration of the availability of 'multiple

²⁶⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 1.

²⁶⁵ For details see. Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The Voices of British Converts."; Dong Young Kim, "Rambo's Interdisciplinary Approach to Religious Conversion: The Case of St. Augustine" (Boston University, 1990); Kumpoh, "Conversion to Islam: The Case of the Dusun Ethnic Group in Brunei Darussalam."; Grace Milton, "Understanding Pentecostal Conversion: An Empirical Study" (The University of Birmingham, 2013).

conversions' will be helpful to find out the answer to the important questions such as: what motivates an individual to convert? What are the features of a certain religious fold that encourage or discourage an individual to embrace it or leave it? The multiplicity of conversion processes in her life also reveal some of the complexities that can be involved in the study of a single convert. However, the possibility of rich data generated from each conversion process also allows to better understand, analyze, and describe such complexities.

It should be taken into consideration that her initial years at Pakistan and most of the life that she spends in America portray her as a restless soul; always searching, complaining, objecting, questioning, reading, and noting almost everything she had encountered with. It was her active nature that motivates her to question about the absence of spirituality in her home; to write down her first novel Ahmad Khalil; to study extensively about her roots and world religions; to read various translations of the Holy Quran; to join different religious organizations; to search for new religious ideas and to correspond with her pen friends throughout the world. Therefore, it is possible that the multiplicity of conversion processes in the life of Maryam Jameelah is the result of her active participation in her conversion. Rambo discusses the case of St. Augustine and regards him as an active agent of his conversions. Rambo comments that Augustine's search for salvation took him from North Africa to Italy and according to some scholars, he "experienced a series of conversions before he finally embraced the Roman Catholic Church."²⁶⁶ Rambo's depiction of the case of St. Augustine also confirms the possibility of 'multiple conversions' in the life of active converts. Therefore, the ratio of 'multiple conversions' in both active and passive converts should be checked in the future researches to verify it.

As it is mentioned earlier that the reasons which lead Jameelah to convert to Islam were different from the reasons that motivate her towards atheism, therefore, it is possible that search for only one process of conversion or ignorance

²⁶⁶ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 58.

of 'multiple conversions' may result in the mixing of data of various conversions. Although, Rambo does not write much about the possibility of 'multiple conversions', his stage model is equipped with the necessary tools to deal with it. Consideration of this feature will be helpful to formulate the "Thick Description"²⁶⁷ that he recommends to develop a rich understanding of the conversion process.

Maira Marcus, the mother of Maryam Jameelah, notes that through the stories of Bible and Sunday school textbooks, she got introduced with the tragic history of Jews. She takes a great interest in it that results in her fervent interest in the study of religion.²⁶⁸ Later, her fear of death, search for her "roots", the fascination of Arab culture, and *Nakba* in Palestine accelerate her interest in the study of world religions. She goes through various states of religious change in the search of her "True Religion." However, she does not show a single indication of embracing any other religion after her *shahādah*. The question of the settlement of an individual on a certain religious faith is as important as the concept of conversion itself. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of her conversion process demands an inquiry to the questions such as Why did she settle on Islam? What satisfied her to stop the long process of her 'multiple conversions'?

Through the comparative study of 'multiple conversions', it is relatively easy to know the factors which settle an individual in a certain religion. For example, comparative analysis of those factors of her 'multiple conversions' that encouraged or discouraged her to embrace or refuse various faiths reveal the answer to these questions. The common elements in her voyage clearly indicate that it is her struggle to trace out the purpose of life that motivates her to join various religious

²⁶⁷ Thick Description is that which can explain not only the human behavior but its context as well.

Rambo is agreed with Clifford Geertz understanding of Thick Description that, he thought, is rich, complex and complete in its depiction. For details see. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Basic Books, 2006).

²⁶⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 7.

organizations and intrigue her to embrace various religious faiths. Whenever she studies any religion, she opts to inquire how that particular religion explains the purpose of life in this world and in the Hereafter. Similarly, she also searches for the notion of "absolute truth" and "permanence" in the world religions throughout her conversion processes.²⁶⁹ When she finds the answers to her questions in the Holy Quran and the *hadith*, she embraces Islam. Therefore, it can be said that although, the so-called theories of conversion to Islam (such as "political advantage theory," "religion of the sword theory," and "religion of social liberation theory") manage to produce some ideas on mass conversions, they leave deficiencies in answering some important questions as to the settlement of a convert on a certain religion.

Subsequent Conversions of Maryam Jameelah

Study of her conversion processes verifies the availability of subsequent conversions or the series of inclinations that she shows towards a certain religion. She took almost ten years to officially announce her *shahādah*. During that time, she went through many emotional, psychological, social and religious states of continuous religious change. Dividing the conversion process into the various stages prove its effectiveness to understand the changes that happen during her 'multiple conversions'. Her dissatisfaction from Reform Judaism motivates her to embrace Orthodox Judaism multiple times in her life.²⁷⁰ Similarly, she notes a series of her subsequent conversions to Islam before the formal announcement of her *shahādah*. For example, the very first time when she was reading Pickthall's translation of the Holy Quran she could not stop herself saying that "this is the only true religion." She also adds that she never knew the Guidance until she reads the opening of the second *Surah* of the Holy Quran.²⁷¹ After her second nervous breakdown, when she was in the mental hospital, she vowed to embrace Islam. However, after her rehabilitation, she finds it better first to find out and meet

²⁶⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 1.

²⁷⁰ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 31; 84.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

Muslims community to learn more about Islam. She starts offering five daily prayers in the Arabic language before the *shahādah*. While writing the preface of her only novel Ahmad Khalil, her son, Umer Farooq also reveals another indication of her subsequent conversion to Islam. He notes that when in 1948, she started writing Ahmad Khalil she was an atheist. However, by 1961, her emotional attachment to Ahmad Khalil was so intense that "she become a fervent Muslim in all but name."²⁷² Moreover, Maududi's assessment of her as a "genuine Muslim" also provides another example of it.

Fitrah and Conversion

Study of her 'multiple conversions' allows to trace out not only the state of *fitrah* in her life but also verifies that how Iman could be seen as a part of it. Moreover, it also confirms that she was born on *fitrah* but her parents and the surrounding environment intrigued her towards other religions. In her booklet, *Why I Embraced Islam*, she said that:

Since I have, I believe, always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament, even before I knew there was such a thing as Islam, my conversion was mainly a formality, involving no radical change in my heart at all. Rather I only had to make official what I had been thinking and yearning for many years.²⁷³

Scholars of conversion studies observe the consistency of similar answers from Muslim converts. Most of the converts to Islam thought that they were Muslim by birth. Marcia Harmensen, in her study of Muslim converts, noted the consistency of similar notions among the converts, across gender and generation.²⁷⁴ Similarly, Kate Zebiri, in her study of British Muslim converts, observes that most of the

²⁷² Maryam Jameelah, *Ahmad Khalil: The Story of a Palestinian Refugee and his Family* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1979), vi.

²⁷³ Jameelah, *Why I Embraced Islam*, 15.

²⁷⁴ Hermansen, "Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims," 80.

converts, she had studied also replied in affirmative to this question.²⁷⁵ Some scholars also maintain that the concept of *fitrah* leads most of the converts to prefer the term "reversion" to describe their process of religious change to Islam.²⁷⁶ Moreover, instead of "reversion" the term *fitrah* or "to embrace" is also used by some converts.²⁷⁷

Jameelah never uses the term *fitrah* or "reversion" in any of her writings. To describe her process of religious change, she mostly uses the terms "to embrace" or "conversion". However, clear indications of the state of *fitrah* can be observed in her life. Neither the concept of Trinity nor the concept of limited "Jewish God" was able to satisfy her. She was always searching for an "absolute truth" even when she was professing atheism. When she studied the Holy Quran, she found the Quranic concept of Allah more relevant to her disposition. She identified that "I always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament." She never touched alcohol, always tried to wear modest dress and never liked the gay parties. She did not know that she was a Jew until some kids found that out and started teasing her. She said, "I never knew I was Jewish until some of the kids here in Larchmont Acres found this out before I did and began teasing me about it"²⁷⁸ According to Imam Al-Nawawi²⁷⁹ (1233-1277), the state of *fitrah* exists in the life of an individual until one become conscious of his/her belief.²⁸⁰ Therefore, it can be said that before the period of the recognition of her Jewishness, she was in the state of *fitrah*.

²⁷⁵ Kate Zebiri, *British Muslim Converts: Choosing Alternative Lives* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 15.

²⁷⁶ Boz, "Religious Conversion, Models and Paradigms," 130; Zebiri, *British Muslim Converts: Choosing Alternative Lives*, 15.

²⁷⁷ Al-Qwidi, "Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: The Voices of British Converts," 213.

²⁷⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 15.

²⁷⁹ A famous Muslim scholar, jurist, *muhadith*, biographer, historian and theologian.

²⁸⁰ He also quoted a *hadith* narrated by Abu Kuraib (peace be upon him) which states that: "Every child is born but on this *Fitrah* so long as he does not express himself with his tongue." For

She also said that she would have embraced Islam in 1954 but her family managed to argue her out of it. She added that, at that time, her faith was not enough strong to withstand the pressure of her family.²⁸¹ In the very first letter that she had written to her mother, in 1945, she identified herself as a Reform Jew. In the same letter, she also showed her strong inclination towards Islam and wished to live with Arabs in Jerusalem.²⁸² She was so much interested in Arabs and Islam that she started writing Ahmad Khalil in 1948. But her family did not want her to leave the American culture and argued with her. As it is mentioned in the second chapter that her father argued with her one night and molded her towards Judaism. Therefore, along with her parents, she was also inclined towards the agnostic humanism of Ethical Cultural Society.

Psychological Factors Involved in Maryam Jameelah's Conversion

Her Psychological problems make her conversions different from the other American converts of that time. Study of those factors makes it possible to trace out the emotional aspects of her conversions. The chronological order of her 'multiple conversions' reveals that she starts thinking of her Jewishness in 1945. That was the first time when she started to inquire about the presence of religion in her life. Next 16 years of her life kept her engaged in a series of conversions. According to Jameelah, doctors declared that she could not get cured in her life. However, after *shahādah*, not only her converting processes stopped but in the next three years, she also got rid of her psychological problems.

After her arrival in Pakistan, symptoms of her disease returned. According to Professor. Dr. Anis Ahmad,²⁸³ when she arrived in Pakistan, she was in a "cultural shock" that played a vital role in her illness. He also said, "this was visible,

details, see, Sharaf Al-Nawawi, *Sharah Al-Nawawī 'Ala Muslim* (Riyadh: Ideas Home International, 2000), 1575.

²⁸¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, xi.

²⁸² Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 9.

²⁸³ Pakistani Muslim scholar, researcher, social scientist and educationist specializes in Islamic Studies and Comparative religions. Dr. Ahmad is also supervising current research work.

we could feel that she had some psychological problems."²⁸⁴ Therefore, she was sent to Pattoki for rehabilitation. She drafted that the time, she spent at Pattoki was the most satisfactory period of her life. According to Dr. Habib-ur-Rehman Asim,²⁸⁵ the life of Pattoki was a learning period for her that brought satisfaction in her life. She lived a simple life there.²⁸⁶ However, she stopped taking Compazine pills as she thought that she did not need them anymore. She also contacted Shaheer Niazi, who according to the American consulate was notoriously unprincipled. He brought trouble in her life and made her suffer "a complete collapse."²⁸⁷ After her rehabilitation, she married Muhammad Yusuf Khan and spent a normal life. Even the intense physical and emotional conditions such as her pregnancies and the death of her first child proved unable to bring any psychological trouble in her life.

As it is already discussed in the first chapter that for William James, a convert is a "regenerated self." To be converted, to be regenerated." Although many of her conceptions were changed after her reading of the Holy Quran, she thought that she had "always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament." Her conversion to Islam was merely a formality that involved no radical changes in her heart. However, she noted that after her conversion to Islam the very first thing that happened to her was the total transformation of her mind from a *kāfir* mind to a Muslim mind.²⁸⁸ From her writings, it is evident that answer to the question of the purpose of life brought satisfaction in her life. She regarded it as a source of happiness for her. However, she did not announce her *shahādah* until her rehabilitation. In fact, her demand for complete satisfaction motivated her to find

²⁸⁴ Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, interview by Zohaib Ahmad, Riphah International University, May 9, 2016.

²⁸⁵ Islamic scholar and researcher currently serving as Assistant Professor at International Islamic University, Islamabad. Dr. Asim used to meet Rai Niamt Ali, guardian of Maryam Jameelah in Pattoki.

²⁸⁶ Dr. Habib-ur-Rehman Asim, interview by Zohaib Ahmad, International Islamic University, May 18, 2016.

²⁸⁷ Baker, *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism*, 88.

²⁸⁸ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 33.

out and meet surrounding Muslim community. When she was under the treatment of Doctor Harper, she noted the limitations of Freudian psychoanalysis. She observed that the analysts do not try to accept the logic or personal views of the patient. They wanted their patient to accept Sigmund Freud's theories blindly. They try to bind not only religion but everything with sex.²⁸⁹ She went through a series of conversions, but she found her satisfaction in Islam. If she had some kind of oedipal conflict, then why did her conversion processes stop? Why after her rehabilitation, she did not renounce religious practices? In fact, after rehabilitation, she took religious matters more seriously. During the current research work, it is observed that she was fully aware of her psychological problems and was clear that she did not have any sort of Oedipal conflict. She embraced Islam after her discharge from mental hospital; after practicing it; after her complete satisfaction. Rambo observes that:

The conversion itself is seen as an adaptive mechanism which attempts to resolve the psychological conflict. ... Fulfillment motivation can operate just as strongly as deficiency motivation. Some people are spiritual questors, always growing, learning, developing, and maturing.²⁹⁰

The factors mentioned by Rambo are equally present in the case of her conversion to Islam as well. However, a close study of her 'multiple conversions' reveals that some of these factors are absent in her other conversions. It was her demand of complete satisfaction that kept her moving from one religious fold to another. Moreover, it was not only her conversion to Islam that helped her to overpower her mental diseases but her wish to live a simple and traditional life (for example, life at Pattoki) also played a vital role in this regard. Treatment of her disease in Pakistan can also be considered as a third possible factor in her rehabilitation. Her life story reveals that when she was in America, Doctor Harper or her any other physician did not try to trace out her emotional attachment to

²⁸⁹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 101-02.

²⁹⁰ Rambo, "The Psychology of Conversion," 883.

religious and traditional lifestyle. She was completely satisfied with her selection of Islam and wrote extensively about its relationship with human health providing a number of examples from *Shariah* as well as from her personal life to prove her arguments. She analyzes both physical and emotional impacts of Islam on her life and argues that it was Islam's care of both the human mind and body that makes it "the best medicine for mental health."²⁹¹ For her, *Shariah's* prohibition of the usage of intoxicants such as narcotics or alcohol provides a great protection against various mental and physical diseases. She adds that Islamic doctrine of predestination gave courage and strength to the minds of the followers of Islam in their time of needs. Islam regards suicide as the most unforgivable sin that makes suicide "among genuine believers of Islam relatively unknown."²⁹² Of course, once she herself intended to commit suicide but a *hadith* of Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stopped her to do that. Therefore, she wrote that it was the love of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and her study of the Holy Quran that saved her from committing suicide. She regarded the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as the sole *raison d'tere* of her life.²⁹³

She distanced herself from atheism because she thought that it could not give any information about the life of the Hereafter. She argued that atheists could not provide any alternative for human spiritual needs. The unfulfillment of these needs motivates a person towards insanity or committing suicide. Her own experiences might have motivated her to draw this conclusion. However, the researcher also found that she regularly studied material about mental illness even after her rehabilitation which is still preserved in her personal library.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

²⁹² Ibid., XIII.

²⁹³ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 414.

²⁹⁴ Maryam Jameelah also corresponded with the psychologists such as Dr. Mohammad Rashid Choudhry of Lahore in order to get latest information about the psychological diseases. Dr. Choudhry also invited her to become a member of American Schizophrenic Association. For

Towards a Definition of Multiple Conversions

It has been observed that the availability of a multi-religious culture, religious options, and active search of an individual can result in various states of continuous religious change in his/her life. It seems that active search of an individual does not stop until the complete satisfaction. This search can make St. Augustine to travel from North Africa to Italy or Salman Farsi from Persia to Arabia.²⁹⁵ A comprehensive understanding of a religious conversion demands the study of all converting processes that happened during the life of an individual. Therefore, 'multiple conversions' is the series of converting processes that happen in the life of an individual.

Application of the Lewis Rambo's Stage Model

Present research finds Rambo's stage model as a useful tool to find, collect and organize the complex data of a conversion process. It proves its effectiveness in finding the complex relationships among her 'multiple conversions'. During the current study, it is observed that when she was drafting her thoughts about her conversions, she was focusing more on Islam than the other religious traditions that she embraced. Therefore, relatively there is less information available to analyze and understand her other conversions. However, it is also observed that some of the findings related to Rambo's stage model are almost common in her each converting process. For example, findings related to the context, crisis, and quest stages are almost the same. But some differences have been observed in her other stages of conversion. A comparative analysis of her 'multiple conversions' along with the

details, see Mohammad Rashid Choudhry, "Dr. Mohammad Rashid Choudhry To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1970).

²⁹⁵ Salman Farsi (peace be upon him) was a companion of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). His demand of complete satisfaction made him to travel Syria, Rome and Arabia. His life also showed the possibility of a series of conversions in a single convert. He was a Zoroastrian who later embraced Christianity and finally settled on Islam. For details, see Mian Anwar Allah, *Hadrat Salmān Farsī kā Hidāyyat kī Jānīb Safar* (Islamabad: Markaz Dawat Al-Tawhīd, 2005).

observations about the sequence and existence of conversion stages in her life will elaborate this point more.

Context Stage

Context is an important part of every study. After all, everything has a context, and everything happens in a context. Maryam Jameelah is one of those converts who had a rich and complex context. Her forefathers were followers of Moses Mendelssohn's *Haskalah* movement and used to call themselves Reform Jews. She was raised in a pure American household, but she was not satisfied with American culture. She felt the impact of the Holocaust on her surrounding Jewish community. A number of events such as World War I, World War II, *Nakaba* in Palestine, increasing atheism, and New Religious Movements shaped her life and conversion. However, the absence of a well-organized Muslim community, as well as Islamic missions, proved to be a hindrance in her conversion to Islam. Therefore, it is concluded that the context and surrounding environment have the potential to move the conversion in both directions. It may either encourage a conversion or discourage it. In Maryam Jameelah's case, both types of contexts are present.

Crisis and Quest Stages

Study of her 'multiple conversions' also verifies the presence of crisis and quest stages. However, in her case, it is hard to separate both stages. Her crisis intrigues her quest and her quest increases her crisis. The World Wars and Israeli-Palestinian conflict were the factors that brought both spiritual and physical crisis in her life. The attitude of her parents and fellow Jews, anti-Semitism, American culture, her extensive reading habit, psychological problems, and genocide of Red Indians are examples of her other crisis. Her quest for the purpose of life and "absolute truth" motivated her to embrace Orthodox Judaism, atheism, Bahaim, and Islam. Her discovery of the Holy Quran was revolutionary that helped her to stop the process of her 'multiple conversions'. She found in it all the answers to the questions she was looking for.

Encounter Stage

Encounter stage, as depicted by Rambo, is not observed in some of the conversions of Maryam Jameelah. She professed agnostic humanism because of the advocacy of her parents and teachers. But at the same time, she herself was searching for new religious options. The anthropomorphic conception of God inclined her towards atheism. Throughout her process of religious change, she acted as an active convert. She studied different religions through their sacred books. Therefore, her understanding of Islam was a result of her own efforts that surprised even the scholars such as Abu A'la Maududi.²⁹⁶ Pickthall's *Meanings of The Glorious Quran* Asad's *The Road To Mecca*, Maududi's *Life after Death* played the role of advocate in her acceptance of Islam. However, for Rambo, an advocate is a missionary who actively search for new converts. Therefore, advocate, as depicted by Rambo is absent from Jameelah's conversion to Islam. It should be noted that, at the time of her conversion, although, few Islamic missions were working in New York, none of them played an important role in making her initial conception of Islam. The absence of an advocate was one of the factors which prolonged her conversion to Islam.

During the course of the present research work it is observed that there can be two types of advocates: First type of advocate is that who encourages an individual or a group towards a new religious option and the second type of advocate is that who discourages an individual or a group to adopt a new religious option. The first type of advocate is absent in her conversion to Islam, but the second type of advocate is present. She wanted to embrace Islam in 1954 but her family managed to argue her out of it. Not only her family but her teachers and some of her pen friends also tried to discourage her to embrace Islam. Therefore, it could be said that to stop the converting process, the second type of advocate uses certain strategies which could be different from the strategies of the first type of advocate. For example, the first type of advocate sometimes offers benefits of

²⁹⁶ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*,

conversion to accelerate the process.²⁹⁷ However, to stop the converting process, the second type of advocate predicts the possibly devastating consequences that can happen in the life of a convert after the conversion. These consequences can be theological, emotional, social, cultural, economic, or of any other type. For example, to stop her conversion to Islam, her pen friends warned her that the Muslim community would not accept her conversion. Similarly, they also warned her about the so-called inferior status of women in Islam.

It is also observed that it is not only the religious desires that motivate the second type of advocate to discourage a converting process; the reasons can be many. For example, her father was against her conversion because of her preference of Arab culture over the American culture. Therefore, he tried to discourage her conversion as discussed in the second chapter. For him, religion was a private matter. He himself joined Ethical Cultural Society and then the Unitarian Church. Moreover, he also showed a strong inclination towards atheism.²⁹⁸ The study of second type advocate can reveal the answer to the important question such as: What does prolong a converting process? Therefore, the researcher suggests adding the study of the second type of advocate to get more information about a converting process which will help in generating the necessary Thick Description.

It is also observed that during his/her search for a new religious option, an active convert can become an advocate. Maryam Jameelah did not only convert to Islam but also preferred to become a *Dai'*;²⁹⁹ acting as the direct agent of conversions to Islam. For example, she tried to convert Samuel Kostelwitz by providing comparisons of Hebrew Prophets as mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Old Testament. Kostelwitz showed a strong inclination towards Islam but he

²⁹⁷ For more details about benefits of conversion see Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 81.

²⁹⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 208.

²⁹⁹ Raheela Sadiq, "Maryam Jameelah: Life and Role in Islamic Literature " (University of Punjab, 2004), 14.

was afraid of the consequences. Because of the unavailability of information, it is not known whether or not he was converted to Islam.³⁰⁰ However, the case of Marlena Garcia, a Brazilian actress, provides a clearer example of this phenomenon. During her final visit to Pakistan, a detailed discussion with Jameelah resulted in Garcia's conversion to Islam.³⁰¹ Her writings also played a vital role in the conversion of Maryam Schartz.³⁰² Moreover, she wrote open letters to her parents in which she invited them to embrace Islam. It should be taken into consideration that she herself was inspired by the works of Muhammad Asad who was a German-Jewish convert to Islam. It is evident that Asad's work advocated her to convert to Islam as mentioned earlier in the current chapter.

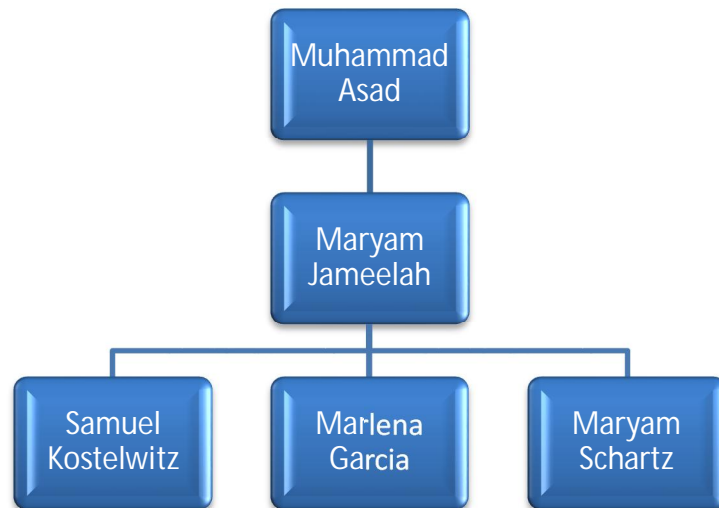


Figure 8: Advocate-convert relationship as observed in the converting process of Maryam Jameelah.

³⁰⁰ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 188-89.

³⁰¹ For details, see Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country*, 365.

³⁰² Maryam Schartz was converted from Christianity to Islam. She was intrigued towards Islam by reading the books of Jameelah and Maududi. She wrote: "My intensive interest for Islam specially grew by reading your books which impressed me a lot." For details, see. Maryam Schartz, "Maryam Schartz To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1978).

Interaction and Commitment Stages

Unlike the absence of encounter stage in the certain conversion processes of Maryam Jameelah's, the existence of interaction and commitment stages is evident in her conversion to Islam. However, in her case, it is hard to differentiate between the interaction and commitment stages. Therefore, both stages are merged together. Little information is available to describe the presence of interaction stage in her conversion to Orthodox Judaism and atheism. It is evident that dissatisfaction from Reform Judaism led her towards Orthodox Judaism. At that time, there seemed to happen an *Institutional transition* in the life of Jameelah. She did not only start taking interest in Orthodox Judaism but also preferred it to Reform Judaism.³⁰³ Moreover, to know the historical relationship between Muslims and Jews, she also started taking interest in Arab culture and Islam. Therefore, her German-Jewish background and surrounding American culture indirectly encouraged the process and set the stage for her conversion. After her deep study of Islam and other world religions, she finally decided to embrace Islam when she was in the mental hospital. Therefore, she met a number of Muslims such as Halimah, Dr. Said Ramadan, Dr. Hoballah, Dr. Nur-ud-din Shoreibah, Khadijah Faisal and Shaikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal who encouraged her to embrace Islam. Moreover, Abu A'la Maududi also encouraged her conversion and told her about the duties of Islam.

Consequences Stage

Rambo's model is not only helpful to collect, understand, analyze and describe the various events happened during her every process of converting but its post-conversion stage provided the possibility to look deeper into the events that happened after her conversion. Therefore, consequences stage allowed it to understand the impacts of her religious change on her post-conversion life on the one hand and provided a well-set platform to understand the reasons of her migration towards Pakistan on the other. A number of factors such as Muhammad

³⁰³ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 30-31.

Asad's depiction of Arab culture, scarcity of Islamic community, hatred of American culture encouraged her to leave America and motivated to join an ideal Islamic society based on *taqwa* rather than race. But she felt bitterly disappointed when she found that Pakistanis were also adopting the "white man's materialistic outlook." But by that new experience, she was able to differentiate that "the fault of the white man was not his race but his ideology."³⁰⁴ However, along with her other consequences such as a dispute with Maududi's family and psychological, she still felt happy and relaxed in Pakistan. She was thankful to her husband and co-wife Shafiqa who made it possible for her to continue her literary work.³⁰⁵ Moreover, Jameelah had good relations with her family in America too. Her parents visited their daughter multiple times in Pakistan.

³⁰⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 70-71.

³⁰⁵ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

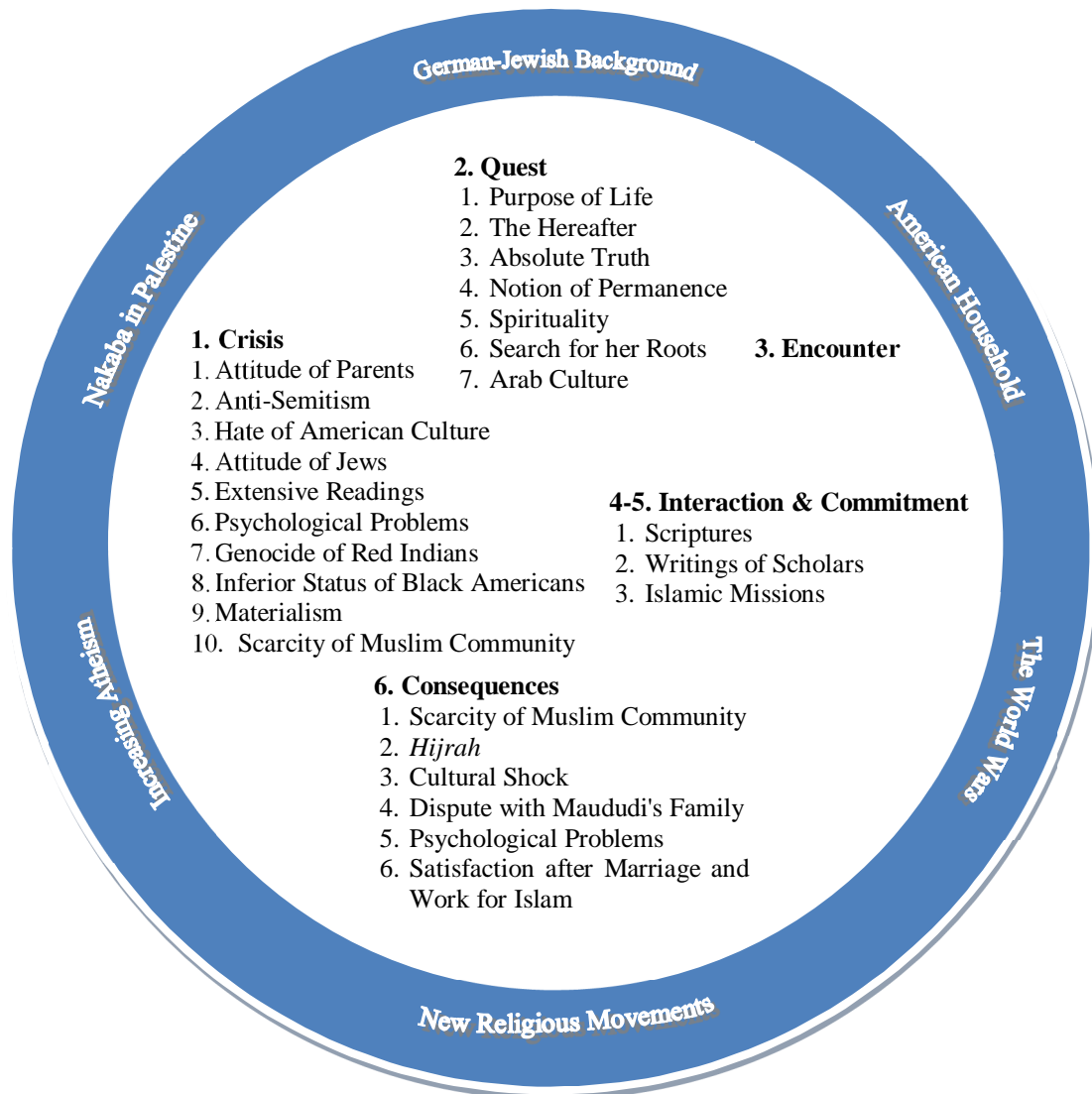


Figure 9: Stage Model of Maryam Jameelah's converting process.

Chapter Four: Development of Maryam Jameelah's Thoughts
and her Critique of Western Civilization

Part One: Interest in Religious Studies

While drafting the history of conversion to Islam in the United States, Patrick D. Bowen noted that Maryam Jameelah was well known to both national and international Muslim community at that time. She started publishing her articles in the prominent periodicals such as *Al-Ittihād*, *Voice of Islam*, *Muslim News International*, *Yaqīn International* and *Minaret* prior to her *Hijrah*. Bowen observed that American converts such as Maryam Jameelah and Thomas Ballantyne Irving³⁰⁶ (1914–2002) earned their respect in Muslim community because of their conversion to Islam. Her *Hijrah* and support of Maududi made her "the most famous living white American convert in the world."³⁰⁷ Even before her conversion to Islam, she had already started writing on Islam and the Western civilization. Her only novel *Ahmad Khalil* is the best example of this phenomenon.

While noting her thoughts about Islam and Western civilization, scholars such as Bowen and Hermansen³⁰⁸ claimed that Jameelah was strongly influenced by Maududi and other conservative Muslim writers of that time. When it was asked by the researcher from Professor Anis Ahmad about the influence of Maududi on the thoughts of Jameelah, he commented that one could find a strong resemblance between the views of Maududi and Jameelah particularly, if one read her critique of the Western civilization in connection with Maududi's writings such as *Tanqihāt*. However, it did not necessarily mean that she was copying Maududi. It was the time when modern philosophies such as positivism and empiricism were emerging.

³⁰⁶ A famous Canadian-American Muslim author and school professor who produced the first American English translation of the Holy Quran. Professor Irving was one of those persons who remained in contact with Jameelah after her migration to Pakistan.

³⁰⁷ Patrick D. Bowen, *A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 1: White American Muslims before 1975*, vol. 1 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 342.

³⁰⁸ Hermansen proposed that while Jameelah was writing her books, she was heavily influenced by the conservative *Jamaat-e-Islami* Movement of Pakistan. For details see. Hermansen, "Roads To Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European And Euro-American Muslims," 79.

Therefore, it could be the context and environment which led Maududi, Asad, and Jameelah to criticize the Western civilization in a similar manner.³⁰⁹

Although, she learned a lot of things from Maududi and praised him as "the *mujaddid* (reformer) of the Modern Age",³¹⁰ she did not regard him as the source of inspiration for her literary career. She noted that her ideas were firmly established long before her correspondence with Maududi. She started writing articles on Islam and the Western civilization prior to her awareness of Maududi and *Jamaat-e-Islami*. However, she said that her correspondence with him resulted in a vast increase in her knowledge and insight.³¹¹ It is also evident that she never joined *Jamaat-e-Islami*. In a reply to Al-Zahra, she wrote that "[d]espite my close relationship to Maulana Maudoodi, I never became a formal member of *Jama'at-e-Islāmī* or any other religious/political movement."³¹² In his very first letter to Jameelah, Maududi said:

When I was reading your articles, I felt as if I were reading my own ideas. I hope your feeling will be just the same when you read my books. And this despite the fact that there has been no previous acquaintance between you and me. This mutual sympathy and unanimity in thought has resulted directly from the fact that both of us have derived our inspiration from one and the same source.³¹³

It is evident from the above quotation that Maududi himself felt the strong resemblance between his and her views (later, Jameelah expressed similar thoughts as well).³¹⁴ He was so surprised by her conception of Islam that he requested her to write him the story of her mental evolution. He was of the view that the strong

³⁰⁹ Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, interview by Zohaib Ahmad, Riphah International University, May 9, 2016.

³¹⁰ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 260.

³¹¹ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, ii.

³¹² Al-Zahra, "Maryam Jameelah: Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt," 134.

³¹³ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 5.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

resemblance of views in their thoughts was because of their "inspiration from one and the same source." Moreover, it should also be noted that her correspondence with Maududi started in 1960 but even before her *shahādah*, in 1954, she had already started writing on Islam and the Western civilization.³¹⁵ Therefore, before going further, it is needed to understand the process of evolution of her thought and ideas to better understand her criticism of the Western civilization. Following pages will briefly discuss the study of Islam and other world religions.

Initial Study of Islam

Maryam Jameelah's interest in Islam was accelerated after her study of the Arab culture. She wanted to travel to the East to warn Muslims about the impact of the Western materialism. She did not want the Arabs to adopt the culture of Jews and Christians.³¹⁶ The mission of Reform Judaism helped her to study the sacred books of the world religions on the one hand and made her criticize modern reform movements on the other. Her search of the "absolute truth" and purpose of life encouraged her to join various religious organizations. She studied Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through their basic sources. Moreover, the work of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Khaldun, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad and Muhammad Iqbal³¹⁷ (1877-1938) also inspired her initial understanding of Islam.

The Holy Quran

It has already been discussed how and why she was intrigued towards the study of the Holy Quran. The purpose of this section is to briefly describe that her firm belief in the authenticity of the Holy Quran that led her to accept it as a Divine revelation. She started studying the Holy Quran after nine years of her introduction with Arabs and Muslims. She was convinced that no change ever happened in the

³¹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*. preface

³¹⁶ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 9.

³¹⁷ Muhammad Iqbal was a poet, philosopher, metaphysician, and politician widely known for his influential efforts to direct Muslims of Indian subcontinent towards the establishment of a separate Islamic state.

contents of the Holy Quran.³¹⁸ She compared the contents of the Holy Bible with their counterparts in the Holy Quran and argued that the "Holy Quran refuses to admit any compromise with evil — social or moral."³¹⁹ When Abraham Katsh tried to prove the superiority of the Old Testament over the Holy Quran, Jameelah rejected his ideas altogether. In her book *Islam Versus Ahl-Kitab: Past and Present*, she discussed the ideas of Katsh and argued that the resemblance between the verses of the Old Testament and the Holy Quran does not necessarily mean the borrowing of the later from the former, on the other hand, it proved that "originally both were Divine revelations."³²⁰

She studied various translations and commentaries of the Holy Quran and commented about their pros and cons. However, the most, she loved was Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran*. The title of the translation itself suggests that it is not the original text but the meanings of it. Therefore, it was easy for her to understand that she was reading a translation and not the original text. Moreover, the foreword to the translation also helped her to consider that it was just a human effort to translate a divine text.³²¹ Six torn copies of *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran* reflects her over use of this translation.³²² She was not aware of Arabic language but Umm Kulthum's voice made her acquainted with it. She noted that unlike the scriptures of world religions such as Christianity and Judaism, the Holy Quran was preserved in its original Arabic language. However, it was not only Arabic language but also the contents of the Holy Quran that inspired and convinced her to convert to Islam on the one hand

³¹⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 183.

³¹⁹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 92.

³²⁰ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 43.

³²¹ For details, see the foreword of Muhammad M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an: Text and Explanatory Translation* (Canada: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Incorporated, 1999).

³²² Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, xxiii.

and regard it as a source of guidance on the other. Almost her every book begins with quoting passages from the relevant sections of the Holy Quran and the *hadīth*.

The Sunnah

In the Oriental Division of New York Public Library, she found the translation of *Mishkāt-ul-Masābīh*. It was translated by Fazlur Karim and published from Calcutta between 1938-1940. On the one hand, the translation firmed Jameelah's belief on the authenticity of the Holy Quran and, on the other hand, it allowed her to realize that without the knowledge of *Ḥadīth*, it was not possible for her to fully understand the Holy Quran. She was of the view that knowledge of the *Ḥadīth* was necessary to follow the commandments of Allah.³²³ In her magnum 'opus, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, she noted that the right interpretation of the Holy Quran is not possible without the knowledge of *hadīth*. She insisted that: "[o]ne is meaningless without the other."³²⁴ Moreover, she thought that the Holy Quran had been revealed by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and he was the best person to explain its meanings. Therefore, the Holy Quran provides a general outline of the teachings of Islam and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) explains its necessary details.³²⁵ She regarded *Mishkāt* as an encyclopedia of the teachings of Islam. She found in it the solutions to the problems of everything about her daily life.³²⁶ It took her just one more week to find Muhammad Asad's translation and commentary of the first two volumes of *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the most authentic book of *Ḥadīth* for Muslims. She praised it and regarded it as the best work of Asad. However, years after her *Hijrah*, when she

³²³ Ibid., xxiv.

³²⁴ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 41.

³²⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 4.

³²⁶ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 109.

was reviewing it for *the Muslim World Book Review*, she criticized Asad to explain away everything sometimes rationally.³²⁷

Other Sources of Maryam Jameelah's Knowledge of Islam

The chief librarian of New York Public Library introduced her to the Orientalia Inc., a bookshop, from where she bought a number of books written by the prominent Muslim scholars. In her very first visit to Orientalia, she selected:

- *Islam at the Crossroad* by Muhammad Asad
- Translation of *Muqaddimah* by Ibn Khaldun
- Translation of *Asrār-e-Khudī* by Muhammad Iqbal
- Translation of *Remūz-i-Bekhudī* by Muhammad Iqbal

She was so inspired by Asad's *Islam at the Crossroad* that she regarded it as the foundation of her literary career. For her, his work proved why Islamic civilization and the Western civilization are incompatible with each other. *Islam at the Crossroad* motivated her to write her first book *Islam Versus the West*.³²⁸ It was a collection of her those articles that she wrote between November 1954 and March 1962. After her *Hijrah*, she decided to dedicate one more work, *Islam, and Modernism* to the same theme. However, when Asad published the revised edition of his work, in 1982, she criticized some of his opinions saying: "[t]ypically of adherents of the reformist movements, he is anti-*Tasawwuf* and opposes both the Sufis and the '*ulama*'."³²⁹

She was inspired by the poetic works of Muhammad Iqbal as well. She noted that unlike his contemporaries, Iqbal wholly devoted his poetic genius to express his deep love for Islam. She thought that Iqbal was one of those very few

³²⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Sahih Al-Bukhari: The Early Years of Islam*, by Muhammad Asad. *Muslim World Book Review* 3, no. 3 (1983) 3.

³²⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 160.

³²⁹ Jameelah, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 40.

poets who were impressive even in the translations.³³⁰ She was so impressed by the poetry of Iqbal that she could not resist quoting the verses of *Asrār-e-Khūdī* in her only novel *Ahmad Khalil*.³³¹

She revealed a few information about her thoughts on *Muqaddimah*. However, it played a pivotal role in developing her thoughts. In almost all of her major works, she referred to Ibn Khaldun to construct her arguments. Along with above-mentioned books, she also went through a number of books on Islam and other world religions before she started correspondence with Maududi and other Muslim scholars of that time. Therefore, it is concluded that her initial understanding of Islam was the result of her active study of the primary sources of Islam along with the work of classical as well as modern Muslim scholars such as Iqbal and Asad. It is also observed that her criticism of the Western civilization was inspired by Asad's *Islam at the Crossroad*.

Maryam Jameelah's Understanding of World Religions

Although from above discussion, it is evident that Muhammad Asad's work inspired her to start her literary career, it is still a question that how did she become, in Esposito's words, "a voice of conservative Islam"? Why did she criticize "exactly those parts" of Iqbal's work that differed from the orthodox traditional thoughts of ulema? Esposito noted that she "tended to take the same position with regard to other religions as well."³³² Why did a product of modern Western thought prefer to take refuge in the traditional teachings of the world religions? Study of her understanding of world religions can reveal the answer to these queries.

³³⁰ For details, see Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 110-11.

³³¹ From all of her works, the most favorite for Jameelah was *Ahmad Khalil*. Her choice of Iqbal's *Asrār-e-Khūdī* shows that how much she was impressed by his works. To see the discussion between Ahmad Khalil and Abd ar-Rahman, characters of her novel, on the works and personality of Iqbal see Jameelah, *Ahmad Khalil: The Story of a Palestinian Refugee and his Family*, 281-84.

³³² Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 58.

Judaism

The mission of Reform Judaism allowed her to understand the pros and cons of modern Jewish thought. Her ancestors were the followers of Moses Mendelssohn's *Haskalah* movement. She herself noted the impact of Reform Judaism in her surrounding environment. Therefore, to better comprehend her understanding of modern Judaism, it seems necessary to briefly describe the role of *Haskalah* movement in the religious lives of German Jews. Living on the margins of a gentile world as a separate community, Jews of Germany spoke a different language,³³³ dressed differently and compelled to adopt a limited set of professions.³³⁴ When the Jewish community was suffering from enormous problems, Mendelssohn provided his services to the civil emancipation of European Jews.³³⁵ He was perhaps the single most powerful person in German Jewish history who articulated to a larger gentile audience.

Mendelssohn was able to generate a good circle of loyal Christian friends who later helped him to solve the problems of his fellow Jews.³³⁶ He observed that the Jewish community in Germany did not want to adopt the German culture. The German language was forbidden to them by the religious authorities.³³⁷ This was an intellectual ghetto that they built around them. He translated the Pentateuch into the German language. His efforts started *Haskalah* in Germany, which linked

³³³ German Jewish community was mostly speaking Yiddish language which was a mixture of German and Hebrew. See Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany 1618–1945*, 127.

³³⁴ Jews were bound to wear some certain type of clothes so one could easily identify them as a Jew. Cecil Roth, *The Jewish Contribution To Civilization* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers., 1940), 37-39.

³³⁵ Joseph A. Biesinger, *Germany: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Facts On File, Incorporated, 2006), 564.

³³⁶ For example, Mendelssohn asked Christian Wilhelm von Dohm (1751-1820) to write for Jewish emancipation. Thus, he wrote his *Upon the Civil Amelioration of the Condition of the Jews* in 1781 CE. For details, see Mendelssohn and Gottlieb, *Moses Mendelssohn: Writings on Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible*, xvi.

³³⁷ H. Walter, *Moses Mendelssohn: Critic and Philosopher* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1930), 28.

prominent Jewish scholars to a single platform.³³⁸ Advocacy of reason, ideas of brotherhood and development of Jews were the major goals of *Haskalah*. Initially, Mendelssohn faced a lot of criticism from Rabbinical authorities but later his work was acknowledged by many Rabbis.³³⁹ His translation of the Hebrew Bible led Jews to assimilate into Germany. But it seems that Mendelssohn was not fully aware of the influence of the German culture on the religious lives of Jews. His efforts developed an interest in secular education but decreased the value of traditional Jewish studies. Therefore, in 1830 CE, all the yeshivas of Germany were closed.³⁴⁰

On the one hand, the *Haskalah* movement modernized German Jewry but on the other hand, it changed the language of the scriptures. German Jewry earned civil emancipation but got influenced by Christian Germany. Reform of Mendelssohn and German Salon led by Jewish women played an important role in the conversion of German Jewry.³⁴¹ Although he remained loyal to Judaism and German culture, the later generations of German Jews failed to follow the path of their reformer. The rabbis of Germany were right in their predictions. Later generations of German Jews turned more and more towards the secular culture. First, they abandoned *halacha* and later they converted in large numbers.³⁴² Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), a *maskilim*, established the first Reform Temple that changed the ancient prayer system. For critics, Berlin *Haskalah* was the source of all contemporary perils among the modern Western Jewry.³⁴³ Therefore, she found

³³⁸ Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community Enlightenment, Family, And Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37.

³³⁹ Paul Spalding, "Toward a Modern Torah: Moses Mendelssohn's Use of a Banned Bible," *Modern Judaism* 19, no. 1 (1999): 75.

³⁴⁰ Lowenstein, "Joseph Ben-David's Hungary and Mendelssohn's Berlin," 127.

³⁴¹ Deborah Sadie Hertz, *Jewish High Society In Old Regime Berlin* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 9.

³⁴² Lowenstein, "Joseph Ben-David's Hungary and Mendelssohn's Berlin," 126.

³⁴³ Isaac E. Barzilay, "National and Anti-National Trends in the Berlin Haskalah," *Jewish Social Studies* 21, no. 3 (1959): 166.

herself compelled to dislike the reform of Mendelssohn.³⁴⁴ Moreover, she started thinking to embrace orthodoxy instead.

It was Mendelssohn who pioneered the Jewish national renaissance that was later enthusiastically adopted by the Zionist movement.³⁴⁵ For her, Zionism was the "combination of the racist, tribalistic aspects of Judaism with modern secular nationalism."³⁴⁶ Although her parents were staunch supporters of Zionism, she turned away from it. As it has been mentioned earlier that *Nakaba* in Palestine also distanced her from Zionism. She observed that Zionist leaders such as David Ben-Gurion³⁴⁷ (1886-1973) were non-observant of their own tradition. Therefore, she preferred the orthodox Jewish tradition. She appreciated the pure monotheism of orthodox Jewish tradition. She was of the view that Orthodox Jews were far better than Reform Jews as they were not ashamed of their Jewishness. She observed glances of her "True Religion" in Orthodox Judaism and wished to embrace a religion which was universal and akin to it. She showed her affection for the orthodoxy saying: "I don't want a counterfeit religion. I want the real thing!"³⁴⁸

Every time when an orthodox Jew chided her non-observant Jewish behavior, she felt ashamed of it and promised herself to be loyal to her "Jewish God" and His commandments. However, as discussed earlier, certain aspects of orthodox Judaism such as the notion of Chosen People, racism and nationalism distanced her from it. She was of the view that Judaism was a limited religion where a convert cannot earn the respect of a Born-Jew. But the secular persons such as Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud can remain in the Jewish fold even after their acceptance of atheism. Therefore, because of its advocacy of nationalism and

³⁴⁴ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 113.

³⁴⁵ Shulamit Reinharz and Mark A. Raider, *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise* (London: Brandeis University Press, 2005), 26.

³⁴⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 4.

³⁴⁷ Founder and first prime minister of the state of Israel.

³⁴⁸ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*.

racism, Judaism remained a narrow and limited faith for Maryam Jameelah.³⁴⁹ She claimed that it was the Jewish racism which made Jews reject the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).³⁵⁰

Christianity

Although Maryam Jameelah was a Born-Jew, she was raised in a Christian environment. Her family used to celebrate Christian festivals. Being a little girl, she used to sing Christmas Carol enthusiastically alongside her classmates. For her, Christmas was way more exciting than *Hanukkah*. It took her six years to know the non-existence of Santa Clause and Easter Bunny in the real life. However, it did not stop her to accept the Christmas gifts. Since the childhood, the dogma of Trinity was a great puzzle for her. She used to wonder how a person could believe in it.³⁵¹ Unlike her family, she never showed any interest in embracing Christianity. She was of the view that, no matter how hard they try, it was not possible for the Jews to be a part of a Christian culture. They just did not belong to the Christian world.³⁵² She was convinced that there were a few Christians (some pious Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants) who believed in the authenticity of Bible as a divine revelation.

For her, Greek, Roman, and Persian paganism corrupted the foundations of Christianity. Instead of criticizing and condemning the influence of paganism, Christian leaders such as St. Paul laid the foundations of Christian theology on it. She argued that it was the teachings of St. Paul that made Christians forget the message and turned them towards the worship of the messenger.³⁵³ Moreover, the rendering of Gospels into the languages that were unknown to Jesus was still

³⁴⁹ She brought various examples from her personal life and Jewish theology to prove her point. For details, see Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 27.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁵¹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 10-11.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁵³ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 208.

another factor that distanced Jameelah from Christianity. She added that "[e]ven the most casual study of the history of Christianity reveals this religion to have evolved through the dictates of popes, saints, worldly kings and synods-thus a purely man-made Religion!"³⁵⁴ However, she revealed that although she did not agree with Christian theology, she had a great respect for the Roman Catholic Church for its defense of traditional moral and spiritual values in America. But she thought that in order to prove Church as "modern" and "progressive", Pope John Paul changed the rituals that had been in practice since the advent of Christianity. She regarded it as the destruction of the whole Christian tradition. Therefore, she warned Muslims not to rejoice at it but prepare themselves as "the destruction of one religion leads to the destruction of others."³⁵⁵

Other World Religions

There is a little information available on Maryam Jameelah's views about the other world religions. She thought that originally, all the great world religions were one. However, they were unable to preserve their original teachings and became corrupted. For example, manmade dogmas such as the idol worshipping, the idea of reincarnation and caste system corrupted the very foundations of Hinduism. Buddhism adopted monasticism. Confucianism made the ancestor worship a part of its faith. Moreover, she claimed that although still, one could find parts of the distorted truths in the great world religions, none of them contained the whole truth.³⁵⁶

Maryam Jameelah's Depiction of Islam

It has been mentioned in the third chapter that she analyzed her converting process at two different levels. On the lever of her acceptance of Islam and on the level of her rejection of the Western civilization. Similarly, in her *My Life Story* it is evident that while she was drafting her conception of Islam, she was analyzing it

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 201.

³⁵⁵ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 161.

³⁵⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 5.

as a religion and as a civilization. She said, "[m]y concept of Islam was not a mere religion in the narrow sense but included an entire historical civilization, independent and unique, with its own language, script, literature, dress, architecture, city-planning, manners, custom, science, and arts."³⁵⁷ She wrote extensively on Islam reflecting her thoughts on its social, moral, political, cultural, spiritual, and theological aspects. However, the purpose of this section is to recapitulate her understanding of Islam only as a religion and as a civilization.

Islam as a Religion

For Maryam Jameelah, Islam means submission to the will of God. She thinks that Islam is not a new religion. It existed since the beginning of time. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) did not invent any new thing. He came to restore the law of the Holy Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) which was rejected by Christians as obsolete.³⁵⁸ Therefore, the followers of Islam are Muslims and not "Mohammedans"; they do not worship their messenger as it has been propagated throughout Europe after the Crusades.³⁵⁹ She concludes that Islam and Muslims are intertwined. Islam does not allow Muslims to commit suicide or even willfully injure themselves. She says, "[b]ecause the individual Muslim personifies Islam itself, Islam could not exist without him."³⁶⁰ However, she also thinks that not every Muslim is doing what Islam asks of him.

She notes that the unsurpassed beauty of Islam exists in its concept of God. Unlike Judaism, Islam does not limit the universality of God. Islam preaches the equality of mankind and no one, not even Muslims are the Chosen People.³⁶¹ She further adds that in Islam, man is a "slave of God". Nothing belongs to him. Man is created to obey the commandment of his Lord without any question or objection.

³⁵⁷ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

³⁵⁸ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 209.

³⁵⁹ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 20.

³⁶⁰ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

³⁶¹ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 3.

However, by doing that Islam frees man from the slavery of man. She says, "[t]o be a 'slave of God' means freedom from the tyranny of men."³⁶² Furthermore, she thinks that in Islam, the ultimate merit of judgment is the faith of a person and not his/her race, social position, nationality, or wealth. Therefore, practice and preservation of faith are essential for a Muslim. Unlike other world religions, Islam is a complete code of life that deals with both body and mind; spirit and matter; individual and society.³⁶³

She studied various world faiths before embracing Islam. Therefore, while presenting her view of Islam, she does not forget to compare its teachings, doctrines, and characteristics with the other world religions. She argues that Islam is a universal religion by its very name and characteristics. Validating her point, she provides the example of the naming process of Judaism and Christianity. She traces Judaism as a tribal religion in its very nature and argues that it is named after the tribe of Judah. Christianity leaves the tribal form of religion, but it is not able to free itself from the limited conception of religion. That is why Christianity is the religion of Christ. It is named after its founder Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) whereas Islam is a universal religion that preserves its originality even in its very name.³⁶⁴

She thinks that it is not only the name which is preserved but Islam proves its authenticity in preserving its scriptures as well. She claims that among the world religions, only Islam is keeping its scriptures free from human interpolation.³⁶⁵ She argues that not a single word of the Holy Quran has ever been changed; it exists exactly the same as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). She adds that the languages of world religions such as Christianity and Judaism have

³⁶² Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 34.

³⁶³ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

³⁶⁴ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 400.

³⁶⁵ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XII.

been changed with the passage of time. However, unlike other world religions, Islam has preserved the language of its scriptures as well. Moreover, for Maryam Jameelah, only the scriptures of Islam preach a universal message as they are addressed to whole human race whereas the scriptures of other world religions contain the commandments that are addressed to certain people and nations.³⁶⁶ Therefore, for Maryam Jameelah, Islam is a universal faith. It opens to all humanity without any distinction of race, color, gender, age, social status, or nationality.

Islam as a Civilization

She is of the view that Islam not only presents a theoretical model of life, but it also provides practical solutions to every aspect of it. Therefore, it is a combination of both theory and practice. Among the world religions, Islam proves its universality by successfully implementing its ideologies throughout the history³⁶⁷ and teaches a universal brotherhood based on the commonly shared outlook, practices, and ideals of conduct. Before the advent of Islam, cruelty and torture were the habits of Arabs and Turks. However, Islamic civilization never allowed the mass torture and cruelty.³⁶⁸ Contrary to the Western civilization, it enlightened the savages of Arabs without their genocide, forced assimilation, and racial persecution. For her, Islam presents a perfect view of life which is total, complete and comprehensive. She adds that "[i]slam is no mere accessory to life but life itself."³⁶⁹

She firmly believes that Islamic civilization is different from the modern Western civilization. The modern concept of nationalism corrupts the *Millah* system that upholds the rights of religious minorities. She argues that under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, similar to other world nations, Arabs were treated on the basis of equality. Those were Turkish leaders who replaced its Islamic basis with

³⁶⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 401.

³⁶⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 44.

³⁶⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 197.

³⁶⁹ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 408.

the ideas of modern Western nationalism showing an intense contempt of Arabs.³⁷⁰ Moreover, she notes that Islamic civilization leads the world by its nature-friendly scientific advancements. The scientific knowledge produced by the Muslims was environment-friendly as they used to live close to nature. The sciences developed by Muslim scholars are different from the modern sciences not only in their character but also in their aims and ideals.³⁷¹ She further adds that the scientific model presented by Muslims is not anti-religious and reductive "where modern scientific revolution led by atheists and materialists has been profoundly disruptive of the traditional, spiritual, moral and social order."³⁷² Similar to her contemporaries, Jameelah believes that under the influence of the Western dominance, Muslims are just imitating instead of creating. Therefore, for the revival of Islam as a civilization, it is necessary for Muslims to learn and practice the path of their forefathers.

³⁷⁰ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 188.

³⁷¹ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Muslims In The West: The Message And Mission*, by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 2 (1985) 12.

³⁷² Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity*, by Proceedings of the Inaugural Symposium on Islam and the Challenge of Modernity. *Muslim World Book Review* 18, no. 2 (1998) 18.

Part Two: Critique of the Modern Western Ideas

Describing Maryam Jameelah's views on Islam and the Western society, Esposito observes that the issue of Islamic reform and the impact of West on Muslims are the two big themes of her writings. She criticizes Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam alike.³⁷³ She notes that before the advent of the modern Western civilization, Christian Europe, and the Muslim world were sharing at least the love of God, loyalty to His commandments, belief in the life of the Hereafter and eternity of the scriptures. Even the bitter warfare of Spain is not able to stop Christian scholars to learn in the universities of Cordoba, Seville, Granada, and North Africa. However, Renaissance shatters apart the intellectual atmosphere of Europe and the Muslim world. Urban growth and ever-expanding commerce results in the suppression of Christian church. Monarchs and armies replace the feudal landlords. In the middle of such a situation, modern Western civilization emerges.³⁷⁴ For her, the notion of evolutionary progress teaches by Darwinism is the reason of its ideological strength and existence in the modern age.³⁷⁵ She is convinced that Islam and the modern Western civilization are incompatible. Its connection with Christianity makes her think that adoption of the Western civilization will interfere in the faiths of Muslims.³⁷⁶ This part intends to present her views on the selected philosophies. It will allow us to comprehend her understanding and criticism of modern Western ideas. Moreover, it will also let us know how she describes the impact of these philosophies on the world religions, particularly on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Modernism and Westernization

Due to its diverse nature, the term modernism is considered as an "emptiest of all cultural notions."³⁷⁷ However, when this term is used in relation to Islam, it

³⁷³ Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 58.

³⁷⁴ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 7-8.

³⁷⁵ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Evolution Deceit: The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism and its Ideological Background*, by Harun Yahya. *Muslim World Book Review* 20, no. 3 (2000).

³⁷⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 38-39.

³⁷⁷ Michael H. Whitworth, *Modernism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3.

is defined as movement to reconcile Islam with the modern philosophies such as nationalism, science, progress, and democracy.³⁷⁸ Westernization, in simple terms, is also defined as a process of adoption of "western" values. Scholars argue that it is rather difficult to differentiate between the both.³⁷⁹ Similarly, for Jameelah, modernism and westernization are the same things. She considers Modernism as a militant revolt against the spiritual and transcendental values of the world religions. She traces out its birth in the European Renaissance especially in the political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). Later, the French Enlightenment movement nurtured it and finally, in the 19th century Europe, philosophers such as Charles Darwin (1809-1882), Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Sigmund Freud culminate in it. She thinks that from Europe, it spread to the other parts of the world and destroyed the indigenous cultures of Asia.³⁸⁰ She further adds that Modernism entitles its praisers as enlightened and progressives whereas its critics are stigmatized as backward, medieval and reactionary. It manifests itself into different forms such as Communism, Socialism, Capitalism, Pragmatism, Positivism, Fascism, Nazism, Zionism, Kemalism, and Arab nationalism when it allures and spreads. However, in all forms, Man-worship is one of its main characteristics.³⁸¹ She also depicts a religious form of Modernism and coins the term "Religious Modernism" for it. She explains that in this form of Modernism, modernists impose their materialistic philosophies to mold religion in order to make it relevant to the contemporary norms. She adds that "[t]he motto is that 'religion must keep pace with the times'."³⁸² The way she presents modernism to her readers indicates its significant connection with secularism. Especially her idea of religious modernism

³⁷⁸ Charles Kurzman, "Modernism," in *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 456.

³⁷⁹ John Martin Haase, "Postmodernity: Impact and Implications" (University Of Zululand, 2009), 35.

³⁸⁰ Maryam Jameelah observes similar impact of Westernization on the indigenous cultures. See Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 66.

³⁸¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 17.

³⁸² Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 153.

identifies that how modern philosophies motivate religious people to renounce spirituality and adopt materialism which is one of the major problems of the people of both East and West.

She notes that modernists often argue that Modernity is not only a Western phenomenon; on the other hand, it is a universal phenomenon. Although historically it is Western, sociologically it is global. She observes that the study of human history teaches us that consciously or unconsciously the weaker nations try to follow the civilizations which are economically, socially and politically more advanced than their own civilizations. She comments that Modernism is not a global phenomenon in the sense that it "is simply one-way traffic from the West; Europe and America involved wholly in export and Asia and Africa only in import."³⁸³ She regards Modernism as a product of modern Western thought and asserts that to make it a global phenomenon, equal participation of all civilizations without any discrimination of race, ethnicity or nationality is required. However, she thinks that the notions of progress and modernization are depriving the people of the East of their basic rights. She says that "[w]ealth is synonymous with 'white'; poverty is 'coloured'."³⁸⁴ In this way, she tries to propose that people of the east must not accept every suggestion of the west blindly. Their social norms, habits, and goals are different from the people of the west.

Jameelah is of the view that Modernism is not an "international culture" but actually it is the same old Western imperialism under a new name. Similarities between the end products of Modernism and Westernization make her conclude both as two sides of the same coin.³⁸⁵ She argues that Modernism or Westernization is bringing destructions to human civilizations such as:

³⁸³ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 10.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸⁵ Jameelah, *Islam Against the West*, 62; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Modern Literature of the Near and Middle East (1850-1970)*, by Robin Ostle. *Muslim World Book Review* 12, no. 4 (1992) 39; Jameelah, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and The West (Dissertations Series I)*, 19.

1. It destroys the family, the basic social unit of society.³⁸⁶
2. Domination of Modernism results in the extremely low social status of old people.³⁸⁷
3. By focusing on the single aspect of any particular phenomenon, it ignores a comprehensive view of human life.³⁸⁸
4. It brings destruction to the world religions.³⁸⁹
5. It brings destruction to the natural environment.³⁹⁰

She thinks notions such as Darwinism, evolution, progress,³⁹¹ industrialism,³⁹² economic development, and Western commercialized sports³⁹³ are the major weapons of Modernism and Westernization. Although she praises Modernism to bring advancements in medicine, science, teaching, and technology,³⁹⁴ she argues

³⁸⁶ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The House of Obedience: Women in Arab Society*, by Juliette Minces. *Muslim World Book Review* 3, no. 2 (1983) 28; Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 19.

³⁸⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 21.

³⁸⁸ Editor, "The Excellence of the Quran," *The Pakistan Times*, December 13, 1985 1985; Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 23.

³⁸⁹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 160.

³⁹⁰ Jameelah, *Muslims In The West: The Message And Mission*, 12.

³⁹¹ She writes that the philosophy of progress used by modernists consists of four basic notions which are "the uncritical acceptance of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution", examination of the development of human society as depicted by the theory of evolution, consideration of the notion of progress as the Law of Nature and to think that the scientific advancements has rendered all religious values obsolete. For details, see Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 202-03.

³⁹² Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Heart Of Islam: Enduring Values For Humanity*, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Muslim World Book Review* 23, no. 4 (2003) 18.

³⁹³ She notes that Western commercialized sports are one of the strongest factors that is bringing Westernization in Iran today. For details, see Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Being Modern In Iran*, by Fariba Abdelkhah. *Muslim World Book Review* 21, no. 1 (2000) 44.

³⁹⁴ Apparently, Maryam Jameelah shows an ambivalent response towards the acceptance of modern sciences. However, a close study of her writings reveals that she is in favor of modern sciences as long as they do not run into the domain of religion. For details, see Jameelah, *Ahmad Khalil:*

that science cannot tell a person that "he should use this knowledge for constructive or destructive ends."³⁹⁵ It is incapable of providing moral and spiritual guidance.

She notes the influence of Modernism on the world religions. Observing the impact of Modernism on Judaism, she claims that modern reformist movements in Judaism are directly influenced by the notion of progress preached by Modernism. Providing the example of Zionism, she claims that Zionists are bitterly hostile to traditional Judaism.³⁹⁶ Moreover, she provides the examples of Jewish Feminist movements and reform of Moses Mendelssohn to support her arguments. Similarly, attacks on the authenticity of the Bible, Protestant Reformation and French Enlightenment movement make her conclude that "even the most outstanding Christian theologians have succumbed to modernism with no effective resistance to combat it."³⁹⁷ Comparing the reforms of Moses Mendelssohn and Syed Ahmad Khan, she argues that Khan imported Modernism from the West that was later enthusiastically adopted by many Muslims of the Indian subcontinent.³⁹⁸ However, the new generation gives her hope that Islam is still alive and practiced at least a religion if not as a civilization.³⁹⁹

She further adds Muslims are trying to make Islam compatible with the modern way of life by suggesting reforms. However, the more they are applying this method the weaker they are becoming. She is convinced beyond doubt that the modern western culture is incompatible with Islam and contradicts with it in every way. It is not possible for Modernism to reconcile with Islam even by the most

The Story of a Palestinian Refugee and his Family, 294; Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 120; Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 243; Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 302; Jameelah, *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity*, 18.

³⁹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 188.

³⁹⁶ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 1.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 335.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁹⁹ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Children in the Muslim Middle East*, by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea. *Muslim World Book Review* 17, no. 4 (1997) 29.

liberal interpretation of the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah*.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, criticizing every Muslims and non-Muslim scholar of Islam, she suggests that the solution is not to go with Modernism but to fight against it. She adds that "[i]t is not Islam but we who must change."⁴⁰¹ Modernity, in a sense, for her, is not a new phenomenon that Muslims are facing. She observes that in the past, theorists such as Abu Naṣr Farabi (872-950), Ibn Sina (980-1037) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) also tried to make similar conclusions being influenced by the Greek Philosophy but scholars such as Imam Ghazali (1058-1111) debunked their ideas.⁴⁰² Moreover, she also argues that the process of Westernization of Muslim countries such as Iran and Turkey is not a natural phenomenon. It is imposed on them by force. Thus, she proposes that not only for the survival of Muslims but also for the survival of whole humanity, it is necessary to restore traditional orthodoxy and reject Modernism in all the major world faiths.⁴⁰³

Atheism and Materialism

In general, atheism is disbelief in the existence of God.⁴⁰⁴ Because of their lack of belief in the existence of metaphysical or supernatural things, atheists are often considered as materialist. However, it is not necessary that every atheist is a materialist. Jameelah dedicates a whole book, *Islam, and Western Society*, in her

⁴⁰⁰ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, by Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early. *Muslim World Book Review* 15, no. 4 (1995) 67; Jameelah, *The Heart Of Islam: Enduring Values For Humanity*, 18; Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Muslim Family in a Dilemma - Quest for a Western Identity*, by Mohammad Akhtar. *Muslim World Book Review* 28, no. 2 (2008) 70.

⁴⁰¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 232.

⁴⁰² Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Modern Man: The Prospects for an Islamic Renaissance* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1978), 6.

⁴⁰³ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis*, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Muslim World Book Review* 21, no. 2 (2001) 57.

⁴⁰⁴ Some scholars point out "it's possible for someone to be a nonbeliever without also being an atheist. But all atheists are necessarily nonbelievers." See, Kerry Walters, *Atheism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 11.

struggle against atheism and materialism.⁴⁰⁵ Study of atheism and materialism are the other two major themes of her writings. For her, materialistic philosophy attempts to convince the modern man that there is nothing unchangeable, eternal, and permanent in this world. Therefore, there is no such thing as "absolute truth". She notes that according to this view: "religion is purely a human institution invented by man to be the servant of society at a given stage in its history."⁴⁰⁶ Observing the similarities between atheism and Polytheism, she argues that it was later which enforced former throughout the ages. For her, Polytheism does not provide man with any feeling of real relationship with his gods. The only thing man feels is an imagination that his gods are controlling everything and can bestow on him pain or happiness. Therefore, a polytheist performs a number of acts and worships to achieve his worldly goals. Unavailability of revelation makes him construct the rules and regulations by his own will based on "pure expediency and opportunism"⁴⁰⁷ which translated into action means nothing less than pure atheism."⁴⁰⁸ The difference between the both is that polytheists have temples and shrines to perform their rituals whereas atheists are free from such duties. However, at the moral level, she emphasizes, there is no difference between the both. That is why one can find a strong resemblance between the moral behavior of pagan Greece, idolatrous Rome, and modern Europe.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, she writes that polytheists do not provide any independent and lasting basis for their arts, science, philosophies, or economics. She thinks for the reason being that the mental course

⁴⁰⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, dedication.

⁴⁰⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 21.

⁴⁰⁷ Maryam Jameelah also asserts that "pure expediency and opportunism" is due to the selfishness that is inherent in the human nature. A Godless society that have no belief in the Hereafter and Divine judgment will only seek personal pleasure, comfort and happiness even by preying on the weak. For details, see *ibid.*, 188-89.

⁴⁰⁸ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, 14.

⁴⁰⁹ Maryam Jameelah also observes that the idealism of Greeks deteriorated into cynicism and skepticism which led the Roman philosopher Maximus of Tyre to set forth the basis of Atheism. For details, see Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 3.

of an atheist society is as same as that of a polytheist society. The only difference is that later constructs a "highly developed superstitious faculty" based on speculations whereas the former adopts a more practical way of life which has a little relation to theories and speculations. However, one can see the demonstration of the idolatrous mythology of Polytheism in the irrational arguments of atheism when it attempts to prove that the universe is independent and free from the governing of God. Similarly, she thinks that philosophies such as race-worship, nationalism, imperialism, dictatorship, capitalism, and class-struggle are a sequel to the idolatrous mythological attitude of atheists.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, laying out various similarities between atheists and polytheists, she figures out that the modern man is trying to get rid of the worship of God and wants to formulate a world where he wants to be a slave of the humans like her/himself.

She observes that most of the civilizations of the world were based upon some religious foundations. These foundations were resistive to atheism and materialism. However, it is a Western civilization that allowed these philosophies to organize and establish their militant movements which destroyed every other culture and heritage. She notes multiple reasons that turn people towards atheism and agnostic humanism which include:

1. To get independence from any higher power that controls the world.⁴¹¹
2. Corruption of the church and synagogue made people hostile to all religions.
3. Man does not want to bind himself by the iron-clad rules governing his personal life.⁴¹²

She observes that instead of condemning atheism, Judaism and Christianity started changing their dogmas in order to make them more acquainted with the philosophies of the modern age. She claims that the purpose of Reform Judaism is

⁴¹⁰ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, 15.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., XX.

⁴¹² Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 216-17.

just to make Judaism compatible with the American way of life especially for those Jews who perform some Jewish customs purely out of habit and have no concern with the religious mode of life.⁴¹³ Zionists took it to the next level by teaching their children philosophies of atheism and materialism in *kibbutz* and successfully produced a militant form of atheism.⁴¹⁴ For her, the Zionist attitude proves that they have no patience to wait for the promised Messiah. They excluded Devine from their lives and took the matter into their own hands to establish their nationalist state in Palestine.⁴¹⁵ That is why despite the efforts of Orthodox Jews, nearly all the leaders of the modern state of Israel are atheists.⁴¹⁶ Moreover, it has already been discussed in the second chapter that she observes that the stories of the Holy Bible preach materialism which enables Jews to focus just on the life of this world. In other words, she regards the Holy Bible as a source of materialism.

For her, the Church also shows a much similar attitude towards atheism, secularism, and materialism.⁴¹⁷ She drafts that atheism of Karl Marx took its roots in Christian Germany and prospered in Christian Russia. She adds that "[i]n the arts encouraged by the Christian Church, paganism and atheism join hands."⁴¹⁸ Pointing out the differences between Islamic and modern Western scientific advancements, she views that opposite to Islamic scientific revolution, the modern Western progress in science led by atheists and materialists is destructive to the traditional, spiritual, moral, environmental, and social order.⁴¹⁹ She also says that:

⁴¹³ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 4.

⁴¹⁴ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, 318.

⁴¹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 141.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 108-09.

⁴¹⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Prophet Muhammad and his Western Critics: Critique of W. Montgomery Watt and Others*, by Zafar Ali Qureshi. *Muslim World Book Review* 16, no. 3 (1996) 16.

⁴¹⁸ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 283.

⁴¹⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity*, 18.

1. Atheism makes people greedy, selfish, cruel,⁴²⁰ and non-sympathetic to the problems or suffering of others.⁴²¹
2. Acceptance of atheism results in increasing suicides,⁴²² mental illness, and drug addiction.⁴²³
3. It stops the progress to prevent the poverty, backwardness, social evils, exploitation, and imperialism.⁴²⁴

She also notes the influence of atheism and materialism on Muslims.⁴²⁵ However, for her, Islam is the only potential rival of atheism and materialism in the contemporary world.⁴²⁶ She observes religions such as traditional Christianity shares with Islam "at least God, Divine revelation, the Hereafter and absolute transcendental, moral and spiritual values,....while atheism and materialism completely reject all of this."⁴²⁷ Therefore, she advises Muslims to consider the

⁴²⁰ Maryam Jameelah argues that Atheism enables humans to exploit, enslave, and even exterminate weaker peoples. For Jameelah, genocide of red Indians by Americans is an example of this phenomenon. For details, see. Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, 359.

⁴²¹ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 222.

⁴²² Maryam Jameelah notes that in America and Western Europe, suicide is one of the biggest causes of death. According to the report of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in America that results in the death of 42,773 people each year. For details, see. AFSP, "Suicide Statistics," <http://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/>. accessed July 24, 2016. In general, suicide rate is highest in European countries whereas United States is near to the middle. For details, see George Howe Colt, *November of the Soul: The Enigma of Suicide* (Simon and Schuster, 2006), 247.

⁴²³ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 258.

⁴²⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 93.

⁴²⁵ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 87.

⁴²⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 16.

⁴²⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Image of the Prophet Muhammad in the West: A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt*, by Jabal Muhammad Buaben. *Muslim World Book Review* 17, no. 4 (1997) 16.

issue of atheism and materialism seriously and warns them that blind adoption of Western-imported ideas will result in the destruction of the whole Muslim society.

Feminism

Feminism is a group of social, political, and social movements that began in the 19th century. Scholars point out that "the multiplicity of feminist ideas and movements, feminism has had an ambivalent relationship with religion."⁴²⁸ Therefore, it is hard to define it especially in accordance with religion. In general, it can be said that feminists work to achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes. Being a woman, Feminism is one of the most intriguing issues for Maryam Jameelah. She defines Feminism as "an unnatural, artificial and abnormal product of contemporary social disintegration which in turn is the inevitable result of the rejection of all transcendental, absolute moral and spiritual values."⁴²⁹ Providing the example of the historical distinction between the roles of man and woman, she argues that modern feminist movements played a vital role in the contemporary disintegration of home and family. Although she traces the roots of Feminism dating back to the era of Plato,⁴³⁰ she is convinced that in modern times, philosophers such as John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) laid the theoretical foundations of Feminism. Later, ignoring the biological difference (between the male and female body) and human social needs, feminists demand equal social roles of men and women, elimination of the institution of marriage, complete female sexual freedom, control of females over their reproductive lives, co-education, equal participation in all fields and productions.⁴³¹ Moreover, she adds that organizations such as *The Daughters of*

⁴²⁸ Lauren Davis Gray, "Feminism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, ed. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (Washington D. C.: CQ Press, 2010), 834.

⁴²⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 105.

⁴³⁰ She notes that *Republic* of Plato and ancient Greek comedy *Lysistrata* preaches the elimination of the family and social roles determined by sex.

⁴³¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 98-101.

Bilitis promoted Lesbianism that shakes the very foundations of the family system. She thinks that Feminism:

1. Disintegrates the family system.
2. Accelerates the moral and social corruption in human society.
3. By promoting homosexuality, it degrades humans lower than animals.
4. Bringing suicide to the whole human race.⁴³²

When Abdullah Jibrail Oyekan⁴³³ asked her to write a book on Muslim women, she said: "I refused this Muslim brother's request to write book especially for Muslim women because so much on this subject has already been written."⁴³⁴ However, in her writings, she can be seen as a devoted advocate of anti-Feminism. She thinks that the Islamic view on gender is the most misunderstood aspect of Islam by the modernists.⁴³⁵ To prove that man is wiser than God, feminists try to change personal family laws. The actual problem is not the rights of women, but the mission of feminists is to eliminate the *Shariah*.⁴³⁶ She thinks that with great care, anti-Islamic writers are trying to omit the fact that Islam has given identical rights and penalties to both men and women.⁴³⁷

Before her conversion to Islam, her family and friends warned her about the so-called low status of women in Islam. However, after her *Hijrah*, she finds out that there is never any kind of criticism that she ever faced from Muslims because

⁴³² Ibid., 116.

⁴³³ Director in the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources, and member of Islamic Education Trust, (IET) Lagos, Nigeria.

⁴³⁴ Abdullah Jibrail Oyekan, "Abdullah Jibrail Oyekan To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1974).

⁴³⁵ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Tao of Islam: A Source Book on Gender Relationships*, by Sachiko Murata. *Muslim World Book Review* 14, no. 3 (1994) 44.

⁴³⁶ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Doctor And The Ladies: A New Debate on 'Women and Islam' In Pakistan*, by H. Mintjes. *Muslim World Book Review* 7, no. 2 (1987).

⁴³⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Women in the Middle East*, by Khamsin. *Muslim World Book Review* 9, no. 3 (1989) 52.

of her gender.⁴³⁸ The Quranic superiority of man over woman is because former spend for the support of later.⁴³⁹ She argues that comparing a man with a woman is like comparing a rose with a Jasmine, for each of them have their own color, fragrance, beauty, shape, characteristics, and features. She adds that "[w]omen are not equal to men. But neither are men equal to women."⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, she is convinced beyond doubt that Islam has given justified status to men and women taking care of their biological and social needs.

Although she follows and defends the rule of purdah and polygamy in Islam, she criticizes traditional orthodox Muslim families in Pakistan and India to interpret it too rigorously "far beyond the actual requirements of the *Shariah*."⁴⁴¹ Proving her points, she provides the examples of the occasions when the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted women to go outside in their time of need. She is of the view that women have been allowed to visit their female relatives, friends, marriage ceremonies, and condolence calls after finishing their duties at homes.

Orientalism

Orientalism is the study of Eastern societies, cultures, and civilizations. Considering it as a degrading knowledge, Edward Said⁴⁴² (1935-2003) regards it as a destructive movement that is inhuman in its nature. He writes "Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience."⁴⁴³ Maryam Jameelah devotes an entire book entitled *Islam and Orientalism* to reveal her thoughts about orientalism. She observes that along with strong personal conviction, in the modern age, it is necessary for a religious man to learn rational arguments in order to cope with philosophies such as atheism, Agnosticism,

⁴³⁸ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 96.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

⁴⁴⁰ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 109.

⁴⁴¹ Editor, "Maryam Jameelah: Answers Questions."

⁴⁴² Edward Said is a Palestinian scholar, writer, and Orientalist who is considered as a founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies.

⁴⁴³ Edward W. Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 328.

Secularism, orientalism, and materialism.⁴⁴⁴ Therefore, she suggests Muslim scholars not to ban the works of Orientalists as it would make the forbidden fruit more alluring. She thinks that to make a theory obsolete, the best way is to bring something more preferable than that. For her, banning the books of Orientalists is a purely negative attitude. Validating her point, she provides the example of Philip K. Hitti's *History of the Arabs* which was banned for having offensive passages on the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). The ban on the book did not help at all.

She writes that under the influence of Western academia, Muslim scholars also started participating in a certain type of "Islamic research". She coins the term "Muslim-named scholars" to describe such Muslim academicians. She also observes that not all the Orientalists are "evil" as some of them put their efforts really hard to translate classical Islamic literature into various modern languages. However, she is convinced that through this new "Islamic research", Orientalists are aiming:

1. To prove that similar to the Holy Bible, Islamic scriptures are also of composite origin and not even revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).
2. To prove that similar to the Holy Bible, the Holy Quran also went through changes and modification during the courses of history.
3. When Orientalists have failed to achieve above-mentioned goals, they motivate "Muslim-named scholars" to prove that the teachings of the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* have no relevance with the modern age and were only for primitive Arab society.⁴⁴⁵
4. They are trying to destroy the faith of the new Muslim generation by encouraging heresies.

⁴⁴⁴ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 163.

⁴⁴⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 105-06.

5. Similar to Turkey and the Arab world, they are trying to crush the Islamic movement in Pakistan.

She thinks that orientalists support modernists as they share the same goals. Therefore, she argues that there is no difference between modernism and orientalism. She thinks that "[f]rom an ideological standpoint, there is no difference at all between the two except that the latter bears Muslim labels."⁴⁴⁶ She criticizes a number of Orientalists and tries to prove that the majority of them study Islam with Christian framework.⁴⁴⁷

Analysis of her Views

Maryam Jameelah spent a significant portion of her life in the United States of America and Pakistan practically observing the social and academic environment of both the communities. Akin to many of her contemporaries, she addresses the major issues of the 20th-century Muslim world. The context in which she started writing was mostly critical of Islam. As it is shown in the next chapter, at that time, a number of the Western scholars' conclusions were either suggesting reforms in Islam or proposing adoption of secularism and atheism. Modern philosophies such as positivism and empiricism were emerging. Her parents, school teachers, doctors, and colleagues were also supporting secularism, modernism, and materialism. All these things made her highly critical to the modern western ideas. Consequently, she presented her own definitions of philosophies such as atheism, feminism, materialism, modernism, orientalism, and westernization. The core of her understanding is that all these philosophies share the same ideological framework and goal. Instead of God, they suggest the worship of man.

She opposes modernity and holds it responsible for the downfall of religion in the world. She devotes a number of her writings to criticize Modernism along with its forms, ideas, and philosophies. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the

⁴⁴⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 178-79.

⁴⁴⁷ Siddique, "Orientalism and Christian Missionaries: A Critique on the View of Maryam Jameelah," 81.

study of Modernism is the largest theme of her writings. Not to adopt the dogma of progress is the slogan of Jameelah. She seems to criticize every single phenomenon which she thinks is modern and new. It should be taken into consideration that reform of Mendelssohn and nonobservant behavior of American Jews motivates her to reject modernism and to embrace the traditional aspects of religion. Therefore, she shows a great interest in the traditional teachings of the world religions but severely criticizes all kinds of religious reforms. She judges that most of the modernists are not working for the rights of women, but their major aim is to discourage the practice of religion. To achieve their goals, they present a distorted picture of Islamic laws forgetting that Islam does not judge a person on behalf of her/his gender. However, she seems to ignore those people who are working to make this world a better place without breaking their ties with religion. Her openness to scholarly debates is evident from her suggestion that instead of banning the anti-Islamic works, Muslims should write on this subject because the best method to obsolete something is to bring something better than it.

She wants to develop harmony among the world religions and therefore, recommends embracing traditional orthodoxy as a panacea. She regrets that Judaism and Christianity have adopted the secular outlook to better integrate into the European culture. Consequently, she converts to Islam and travels towards the East to find a pure traditionalistic environment. Being a convert, the issue of the revival of Islamic civilization gets significant importance for her. Therefore, her conversion and criticism to the Western civilization are bound to each other. Her denial of the notion of evolution is also directly connected to her conversion because she is sure that there are certain rules and principles that are free from the bondage of space and time. She identifies that God is Eternal and Everlasting. He is an "absolute truth" and therefore, is unchangeable. It should be taken into account that since her childhood, she was in search of the absolute truth and permanence, even when she was embracing secularism. Her study of Islam, on the one hand, motivated her conversion to Islam and on the other hand, made her realize that being influenced by the theory of evolution, modern scholars are trying to deny the presence of permanence and absolute truth in the real life. Therefore, she strongly

denounces every single notion that she thought advocated progress and evolution. This approach makes her a supporter of conservatism and fundamentalism. Though she suggests the revival of religious values and advocates interfaith relations, neither she provides any practical examples for it nor she offers any philosophical base to support her arguments. She mostly quotes long passages (sometimes even 3-4 pages) from the works of other scholars (sometimes without even providing the context) and at the end, simply expects from her readers to understand them.

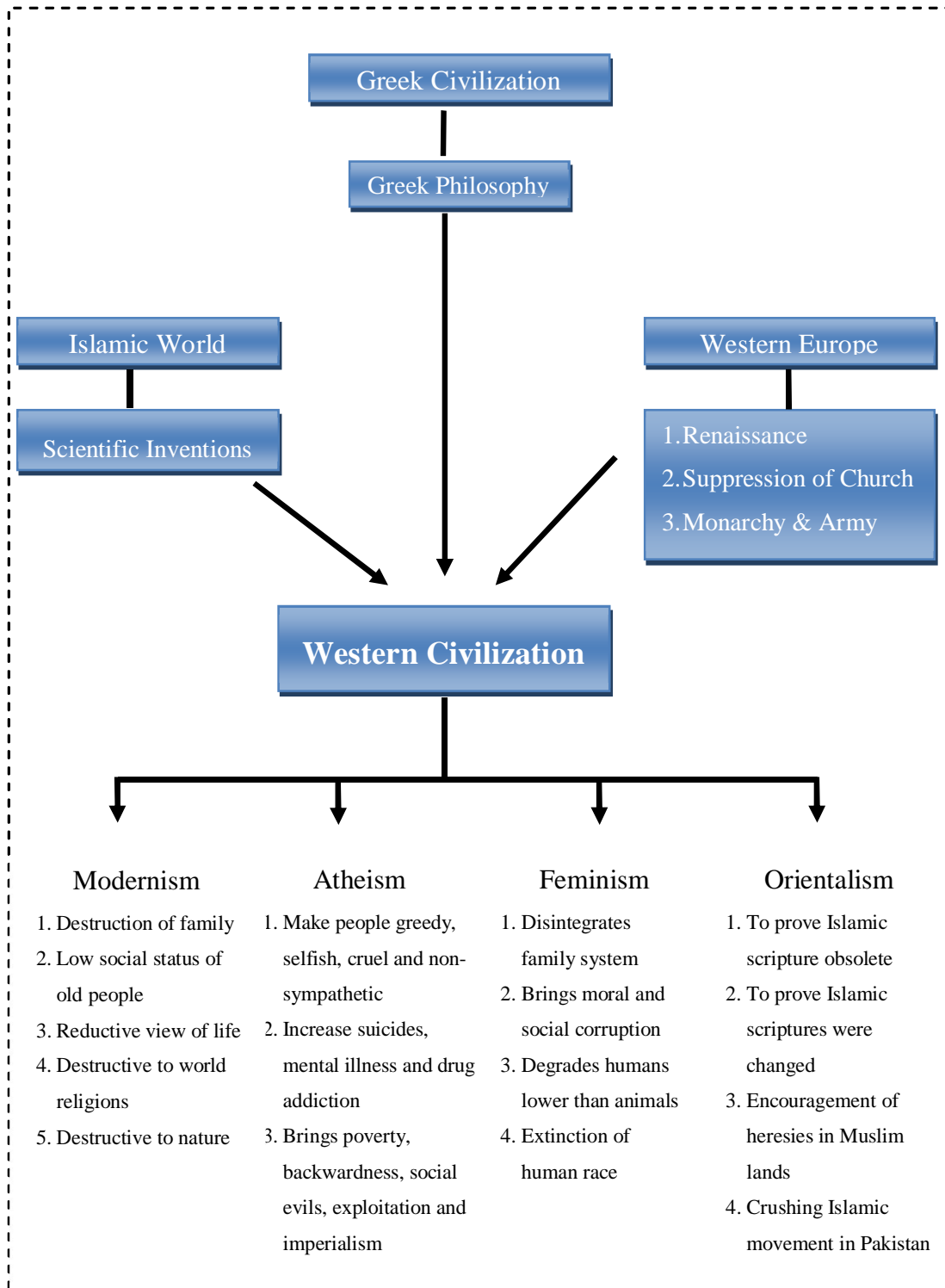


Figure 10: Birth and impact of Western Civilization as depicted in the thought of Maryam Jameelah

Chapter Five: Maryam Jameelah's Criticism of Muslim and
Non-Muslim Scholars of Islam

Part One: Maryam Jameelah's Criticism of the Non-Muslim Scholars of Islam

Maryam Jameelah was perhaps the most prominent female Muslim scholar of the 20th century who, from her earlier days, demonstrated an enduring interest and commitment in defending Islam and criticizing the modern Western civilization. Even her departure from the West could not prevent her to write lengthy books and articles discouraging the Westernization of the East. Her efforts were highly appreciated by the famous Muslim scholars of that time. Through his letters, Muhammad Hamidullah⁴⁴⁸ (1909-2002) expressed his thoughts about her work saying: "you are right in bringing into relief some of the misrepresentations in books concerned (the books of Orientalists that she had reviewed) ."⁴⁴⁹ He also suggested her to avoid "personal attacks" as much as possible, for he thought that a calm and polite "refutation" was more successful in the long run.⁴⁵⁰ However, she did not change her approach and kept engaged herself in defending Islam through her articles the way she was doing before. Later, she compiled those articles into books.

Therefore, two modes of criticism were quite prominent in her writings. First, she decried the Western civilization by evaluating its philosophical sources and products. Second, she immersed herself in criticizing the scholars of Islam to show them where they allowed their prejudices to run *ad absurdum*. She maintained that Islam did not need any sort of reforms or changes.

She observed that the Jewish and Christian community of Europe and America wholeheartedly adopted the Western culture which she thought, was

⁴⁴⁸ Muhammad Hamidullah was a famous historian, *Faqih*, Islamic scholar and translator of the Holy Quran. He is widely known for his discovery of *Sahifah Hammam ibn Munabbih*, the oldest manuscript of *Hadith*. He was among the correspondents of Jameelah and she used to send her books to him for feedback.

⁴⁴⁹ Muhammad Hamidullah, "Muhammad Hamidullah To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1972).

⁴⁵⁰ Muhammad Hamidullah, "Muhammad Hamidullah To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1966).

contrary to the teachings of their religions. Quoting Matthew 6:33, she reminded the Christian fellows the promise that if they sought for the kingdom of God, every other (material) thing would be given to them. She regretted that materialistic philosophy made them forget entirely the spiritual sides of their lives.⁴⁵¹ Similarly, regarding Jews, she pointed out that before the influence of the Western culture, Jews were also traditional people who shared with Muslims a number of characteristics. However, the process of modernization changed the sacred way of thinking and writing.⁴⁵² Therefore, she denounced those individuals who tried to modernize Islam in order to prove it compatible with the modern age through her books and book reviews.

In her *My Life Story*, Jameelah revealed the reasons for her bitter attitude towards Western civilization. She was of the view that after her *Hijrah*, the experience of surrounding Muslim community made her fully aware of the cultural slavery of Muslims in Pakistan. She found them under the spell of modernism that she thought, was destructive and negative in its nature. She concluded that the survival of Islam depends upon the rejection of Western culture and its values. She wrote:

Love cannot be meaningful without corresponding hatred ??⁴⁵³ for falsehood. The adoption of Western Culture and values by increasing multitudes of Muslims is the greatest menace to the survival of Islam on earth (and by analogy, all non-European cultures)... Thus our attitude towards modernity is no academic matter or a subject for tedious 'research'. It is for all Muslims (and non-white, non-European peoples) no less than a question of life or death.⁴⁵⁴

It is also noteworthy to mention here that she made it clear in her writings that it was not her aim to criticize westerners as individuals. What she hated was the

⁴⁵¹ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 54.

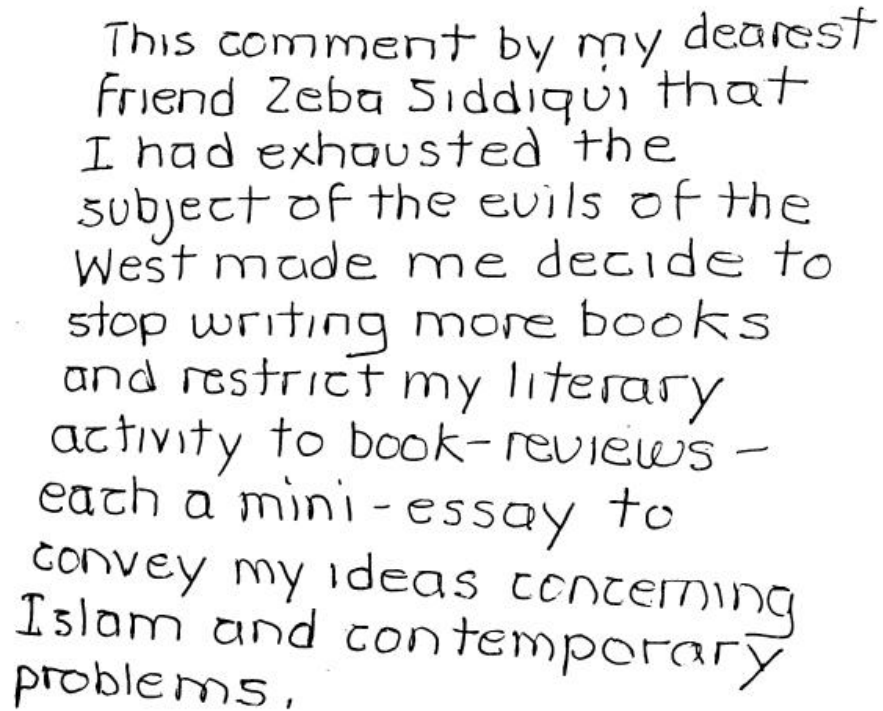
⁴⁵² Jameelah, *Modern Literature of the Near and Middle East (1850-1970)*, 39.

⁴⁵³ The manuscript was not quite readable right here.

⁴⁵⁴ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

system that produced and nurtured the philosophies that "threaten the very survival of mankind and indeed all life on earth."⁴⁵⁵

In a letter to Jameelah, dated June 4, 1972, Zeba Siddique commented on some of her works and suggested to limit her works to book reviews. She agreed with Siddique and wrote on the back of the letter:



This comment by my dearest friend Zeba Siddiqui that I had exhausted the subject of the evils of the West made me decide to stop writing more books and restrict my literary activity to book-reviews - each a mini-essay to convey my ideas concerning Islam and contemporary problems.

Figure 11: Maryam Jameelah's decision to write book reviews.⁴⁵⁶

Therefore, her book reviews were special in terms that they contain information about her intellectual evolution. In fact, through her book reviews, she rejected some of her own conclusions.⁴⁵⁷ She wrote hundreds of book reviews in which she

⁴⁵⁵ Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 1, XVIII.

⁴⁵⁶ Zeba Siddiqui, "Zeba Siddiqui To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1972).

⁴⁵⁷ For example, in her edited work, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, Jameelah praised Khomeini's Iranian

severely criticized many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam. There was hardly any issue of *The Muslim World Book Review* which did not contain a review of Jameelah. Therefore, it is not possible in the current research work to present even the recapitulation of her views concerning each and every individual. This part will only present her depiction of the selected scholars of Islam that she thought were among the antecedents of the modern Western civilization.

Philip Khuri Hitti

Philip Khuri Hitti (1886-1978) is a notable scholar of Semitic languages and literature; widely known for his efforts to establish the discipline of Arabic Studies in the United States. He earned his fame as an Arab historian through his works such as *History of the Arabs*, *The Arabs: A Short History*, *Islam and the West*, and *Capital Cities of Arab Islam*. She reviewed his book *Islam and the West* and regarded him among the founders of orientalism.

She held that Hitti had not undertaken this project as an objective study but planned carefully the entire scheme of his book. For her, the purpose of the author was to somehow prove the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as an imposter. She criticized his use of cynical language, vague understanding of the incident of *Hijrah* and presentation of Islam as a mixture of Judaism, Christianity, and Arab paganism. She questioned his methodology as well as results arguing that he did not only misrepresent Islamic history but also carefully omitted certain aspects of it in order to draw his conclusions. Validating her point, she argued that to discredit the life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), he did not inform his readers of the scientific compilation of *Ḥadīth*.⁴⁵⁸ She added that not even a single word was written about the life works of famous Imams of Islamic jurisprudence and the role of *Shariah* to the progress of law. Jameelah rightly judged that though Hitti wrote on Islamic teachings, culture and its relationship with the West, the Holy Quran,

Revolution. However, later she found herself "totally wrong and grossly mistaken." For details, see Jameelah, *Being Modern In Iran*, 43.

⁴⁵⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 38.

Ḥadīth, Jihad, Sufism, Arabic literature, crusades, and so on,⁴⁵⁹ he did not mention about *Fiqh* or the scientific compilation of *Ḥadīth*. Consequently, it allowed his critics to consider him one of those Orientalists who deliberately concealed certain aspects of Islamic culture for their own sake. As it is also pointed out by other authors, in some of his works, he erred in his depiction of Islamic history. For example, he thought that Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (646-705), the 5th Umayyad caliph, built Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem because he wanted to divert the attention of pilgrims from Kaaba to *Bayt al-Maqdis*. However, it was not the case.⁴⁶⁰ Although Marwan was not in favor of Abdullah ibn Zubair, a companion of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), he did not try to change the direction of pilgrims. It seems that Hitti did not consult relevant primary sources that resulted in her misunderstanding of the whole event.

Jameelah also looks right in her judgment about Hitti's objectivity. For example, while providing his readers "Samples of Hadith", he started his chapter saying "[a]fter the Koran hadith is the most authoritative source of Islamic theology and law. It served as a means for introducing into Islam alien traditions and concepts."⁴⁶¹ Thus, he introduced *Ḥadīth* as a mean of inventions in Islam without providing any analysis, proof, or argument. Moreover, he also ignored the fact that while presenting it as an authority he was also considering it a source of the invention which is nothing but a sort of contradiction in his own understanding as well. Similar to traditional Muslim Ulema, for Jameelah, *Ḥadīth* was an invincible source of Islamic ideology. Hence, criticizing his methodology, sources as well as results, she considered him one of the fervent opponents of Islam.

She also declared that he did everything to deny the spiritual and transcendental aspects of Islam as the primary attraction for the people of other

⁴⁵⁹ See his Philip K. Hitti, *Islam and the West: A Historical Cultural Survey* (London: D. Van Nostrand Company, INC., 1962).

⁴⁶⁰ See, Muhammad Zubair, *Islām or Mustashriqīn* (Lahore: Maktabah Raḥmatilil'ālmīn, 2014), 142.

⁴⁶¹ Hitti, *Islam and the West: A Historical Cultural Survey*, 105.

religious folds. She found him misleading the readers in his presentation of the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as materialists. As it has been stated in the third chapter of the current research work that she started observing as well as complaining about the materialistic outlook of American culture to her mother since her childhood. She attracted to Islam, not because of its worldly success but the balance it suggests in this life and the Hereafter. In fact, the study of the concept of the Hereafter in the Holy Quran convinced her about Islam being the only "true religion" in the world. She was of the view that human beings have both material and spiritual needs. The unfulfillment of these needs may lead them to insanity or committal of suicide.⁴⁶² Thus, according to her, religion was not only a matter of physical, material, and empirical phenomena but also a spiritual and transcendental thing. She observed that Hitti failed to appreciate the spiritual dimension of Islam and focused only on materialism. Therefore, for her, he erred in his approach as well as failed to understand the mission of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions. Providing the examples of the conversions of the companions such as Salaman Farsi and Suhail Rumi (peace be upon them), she reminded him of the emotional and spiritual attraction of Islam. It is of importance to mention here that Orientalist's representation of Islam as a materialistic religion is a common theme in their writing. Karen Armstrong points out that people in West still believe that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) used religion for worldly affairs.⁴⁶³ Thus, Jameelah thought that Hitti also presented Islam as a materialistic religion which, for her, was not the actual case. However, it is not entirely true that he presented Islam solely as a materialistic religion and provided no attention to its spiritual aspect. Although mostly he was concerned with the materialistic dimensions of Islam, he also pointed out that "Islam, on the other hand, recognizes no geographical frontiers; its values are mainly spiritual and the

⁴⁶² Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 45.

⁴⁶³ Keren Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Western Attempt to Understand Islam* (London: V. Gollancz, 1991), 23.

loyalty it demands is supreme."⁴⁶⁴ Thus, in this respect, she herself failed to properly evaluate his views.

Moreover, referring his discussion on secularization, she criticized his support of secularism and atheism as the prerequisites of the progress of Muslims and Islam. Hitti was of the view that modernization was more or less secularization in its nature. The way he discussed all the matter showed that he did not appreciate Islam as a complete religion since the era of the Holy Prophet but for him, it gradually reached its present stage. He wrote, "[t]here was a time at its rise when Islam looked like a Christian sect."⁴⁶⁵ Thus, providing him the example of the struggle of Syrian Muslims against the Baathist regime, she argued that adoption of atheism resulted in nothing but grave hostility among the rulers and the ruled. Finally, she concluded that: "nothing creative or original can be found in this book."⁴⁶⁶ Therefore, she totally rejected Hitti's evaluation of Islamic teachings considering him as a modernist who deliberately overlooked its certain aspects which for her were the important ingredients of every religion.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith

Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000) was a student of Philip K. Hitti and a professor of Comparative Religion. He earned his fame as a Christian theologian and historian on the one hand and as a specialist on Islam on the other.⁴⁶⁷ His famous works such as *Islam in Modern History*, *The Meaning, and End of Religion*, *The Future of Islam*, and *Modern Islam in India* started a new era of research in the field of Islamic studies in the West. Maryam Jameelah critically reviewed his book *Islam in Modern History* mainly in her two works *Islam and Orientalism* and *Islam Versus the West*.

⁴⁶⁴ Hitti, *Islam and the West: A Historical Cultural Survey*, 91.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁶⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 44.

⁴⁶⁷ William E. Paden, "Comparative Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1877.

She commented that Smith showed a much-matured attitude in his assessment of Islam in comparison with his contemporaries. Categorizing him as a secular writer, she praised him for his more or less objective analysis of Islamic doctrines, knowledge of Arabic, and access to the source materials. She found his chapter on the Arab world was most profound and enlightened. She thought that he successfully approached the spiritual, moral, and intellectual crisis of Arab scholars that were quite prominent in their polemical apologetic approach towards the study of Islam and Western civilization.⁴⁶⁸ Not to mention, she was a consistent critic of apologetics as well as Western civilization. As it has been shown in the second part of this chapter, she blamed Syed Ahmad Khan to introduce the culture of apologetics in Islam. Consequently, she praised Smith's contribution thinking that he tried to discourage the culture of apologetics in the Arab world. She thought that he was right in his judgments about Farid Wajidi (1878-1954), a famous Egyptian writer. She declared that it was one of the most important matters that was in need of serious consideration. In fact, a survey of her writings shows that Smith was one of those few Western scholars whose works she cited to support her own arguments.⁴⁶⁹

On the other hand, in a personal letter to Maududi, she pointed out that Smith was wrong in his understanding that Islam preached by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was out of date and it was necessary for Muslims to accept secularization and modernization for the survival of Islam.⁴⁷⁰ She asked Maududi's point of view regarding Smith's work. He replied in his next letter that Smith and other Orientalists were trying to "manufacture" a new version of Islam. They wanted Muslims to accept the so-called modernism, abandoning the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. However, they were failed to achieve their goals as

⁴⁶⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 111-12.

⁴⁶⁹ For example, see Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 16, 27, 203; Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 221.

⁴⁷⁰ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 20.

Muslims were not ready to accept their description of Islam⁴⁷¹ Jameelah was satisfied with the explanation of Maududi as she herself was thinking in a similar fashion. A survey of Jameelah's sources including the data available in her personal library shows she only studied Smith's *Islam in Modern History*. She even did not go through his *The Meaning and End of Religion* in which discussing "The Special Case of Islam",⁴⁷² he tried to elaborate his version of Islam. Thus, her understanding of Smith is limited to the reading of one book only.

She pointed out that he advocated a ban on Arabic language, *wudhu*, *salāt*, the introduction of mixed choir singing Western-style hymns, and pews in the mosques of Turkey.⁴⁷³ For her, he thought that by adopting such attitude, Muslims of Turkey were not adopting Christian outlook but reforming themselves according to the needs of the modern age. It is pertinent to mention here that Smith even concluded that:

Secularism, then, as indeed modernity in general, would be not a Western device but a new and universal one, which all civilizations are in process of assimilating. To illustrate this for Islam the Turkish instance could be cited—and even the instance of Pakistan, whose enthusiasm for an “Islamic” state might be seen as frothy but short-lived, soon routed under the shock of such developments as the 1953 riots. Similarly in Indonesia, secularism and Islamic-oriented policies could be seen as alternatives, with prognosis, or at least applause, in favour of the former.⁴⁷⁴

It is clear from the above quotation that Smith was sure that secularism will soon replace the religious outlook of other Muslim countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia. However, it did not happen. Now it is almost 60 years passed since the publishing of this book, but Pakistan does not adopt secularism as a way of life. Thus, Jameelah rightly judged the loopholes in his understanding and therefore,

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁷² Wilfred C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 75.

⁴⁷³ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 119-20.

⁴⁷⁴ Wilfred C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 301.

criticized his arguments regarding the condition of Muslim countries. In fact, his chapter on Indian Muslims was evaluated as "worst" by her. She criticized him for judging Pakistan as a mistake and Islam as a mere system of belief and doctrine. For her, Islam was a complete civilization and there had to be a Pakistan for its full expression.⁴⁷⁵ She was of the view that Muslims did not accept such sort of reforms.⁴⁷⁶ These reforms were totally failed and unlike Judaism, there never emerged reformed Islam as a successfully organized movement.⁴⁷⁷ Moreover, she decried him thinking that he was fully aware of the fact that the denial of transcendence was the denial of value. Therefore, for Jameelah, "the book has failed in its aims because of the author has allowed his prejudices to gain the upper hand and thus demonstrated his incapacity to deal with both on equal terms."⁴⁷⁸

She evaluated his chapter on Pakistan a "mixture of truth and fallacy." For her, Smith's was right in his evaluation of the scarcity of the knowledge of Islam among the Muslim Leaguers. However, she found him wrong in his suggestion of secularism as a replacement for it. Similarly, she criticized his depiction of *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (Muslim Brotherhood) as unintelligent and uneducated people, thinking of the compatibility of secularism and westernization with Islam, and assessment of Turks as upright and progressive. She was a strong supporter of both *Jamat-e-Islami* and *Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*. Even before her official acceptance of Islam, she was corresponding with the leaders of both the movements. Her writings contain several articles in which she requested Muslims from all over the world to join these movements.⁴⁷⁹ Thus, she tried to counter Smith's criticism

⁴⁷⁵ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 24.

⁴⁷⁶ She thought that even in Turkey, Kamal Pasha was forced to impose Martial Law nine times to achieve his purposes. Jameelah asked that if the assessments of Smith were correct then why was Turkey unable to make any notable progress in humanities or science even after fifty-five years reign of Kamalists? For details, see Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 123.

⁴⁷⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 30.

⁴⁷⁸ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 134.

⁴⁷⁹ See her articles such as "Shaikh Hassan al Banna", "al-Ikhwan al Muslimun", and "Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan" in her Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*.

arguing that he has failed to appreciate the efforts of these movements for the Islamic cause. Smith wrote on both of these movements. He himself was not sure about the legitimacy of some of his claims. For example, accepting his limitations to figure out "good and bad factors" of Muslim Brotherhood, he wrote that perhaps the official literature of the movement was not the cause of violence.⁴⁸⁰ But at the same time, he also considered it responsible for violence in the country and elsewhere. Not to mention Smith was well aware of the politics of Egypt. He wrote his doctorate thesis on the critical analysis of *Majalah Al-Azhar*, a research journal dedicated to religious and social studies.⁴⁸¹ Therefore, Jameelah was right in his judgments that he deliberately ignored to discuss the ruling period of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970), the second president of Egypt.⁴⁸² However, she forgot to mention that though Smith considered Maududi's representation of Islam "as dated, as inadequate in scope and too rigid"⁴⁸³ and criticized Muslim Brotherhood, he also considered it "a praiseworthy constructive endeavour to build a modern society on a basis of justice and humanity."⁴⁸⁴ Thus, in this respect, Jameelah's treatment of Smith is not different from Smith's representation of Islam.

William Montgomery Watt

William Montgomery Watt (1909-2006) was a famous historian, Orientalist, and professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Through his numerous writings such as *Muhammad at Mecca*, *Muhammad at Medina*, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, *Muhammad: Seal of the Prophets*, *Islam and the Integration of Society*, he earned unparalleled fame in the field of Islamic Studies. Maryam Jameelah critically reviewed Watt's *Islam and the Integration of Society* along with some of his other writings.

⁴⁸⁰ Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 157.

⁴⁸¹ Mushir-ul-Haq, "Wilfred Cantwell Smith: T'aruf aur Tajziyyah," in *Islām aur Mustashriqīn*, ed. Sabahuddin Abd Al-Rahman (Aazam Garh: Dār al-Musannifīn, 2004), 97.

⁴⁸² Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 114.

⁴⁸³ Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 235.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

She regarded his biographies of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as "Orientalist Classics" in the field. She assessed that his work became an authority on the subject even in Pakistani colleges and universities. But his presentation of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) led her to claim that the negative view of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) become an essential part of the cultural heritage of the West. Therefore, similar to his contemporaries, he did not show much improvement in Orientalists' view of Islam and Muslims. Although he tried to free himself from the "medieval prejudice" of the Western scholarship, unfortunately, he failed to achieve his objective. She added that Orientalists such as William Muir (1819-1905) and David Samuel Margoliouth (1858-1940) were frank and open in their criticism of Islam. However, Watt was far more "dangerous" than all because of his "subtle and deceptive tactics" and "mild language."⁴⁸⁵ She is not alone in her criticism of Watt. Other Muslim scholars also held the same view about him. For example, Sabahuddin Abd Al-Rahman⁴⁸⁶ drafted that Watt is one of those Orientalists who to get their own gain, "spit their venom" using their literary skills.⁴⁸⁷ Similar to Jameelah, he also questioned the sources, methodology, and results of Watt on the one hand and his use of language on the other. It also validates her suggestion that similar to many modern Western scholars, Watt was also against Islam as his conclusions regarding it were not positive. She quoted the following example from his *Islam and the Integration of Society* to prove her argument:

It is clear that Muhammad deliberately moulded the new religion to make it more Arabian. For a time after he went to Medina, he hoped that the Jews there would accept him as a prophet and emphasized the common features of his teachings and theirs. At the end of some months, however, he realized that there was no chance of gaining Jewish recognition and (not unlike Paul turning to the Gentiles)

⁴⁸⁵ Jameelah, *Image of the Prophet Muhammad in the West: A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt*, 15.

⁴⁸⁶ A Muslim scholar considered as specialist of Orientalist study of Islam.

⁴⁸⁷ Sabahuddin Abd Al-Rahman, "Montgomery Watt kī Kitāb Muhammad at Mecca par aik Nāzar," *Fikr-o-Nāzar* 25, no. 3 (1988): 227.

began to introduce distinctively Arab elements, apparently in accordance with the desires of at least some of the Medinian Muslims.⁴⁸⁸

In other words, using the classical argument to represent Islam as a mixture of Judo-Christian sources, he tried to prove that Islam was not a genuine religion. The way he presents his understanding of Islam clearly points out that he was not aware of the developments that took place even in the West in the field of Islamic Studies. Not to mention Jameelah too devoted an entire book entitled *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present* in 1967 in which she argued that the resemblance of these religions proved that "originally both were Divine revelations."⁴⁸⁹ Thus, Watt's depiction of Islam was not only rejected by her but also motivated her to consider him an opponent of Islam.

She further argued that although Watt had undertaken this research to find out the reasons of successful social integration of Islam in Madinan period, he ruined it by his prejudices and preconceived notions. For her, he supported materialism while trying to explore the growing power of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Madinan period and the concept of Jihad in Islam. According to her, he overlooked the transcendental and spiritual values of Islam and presented it preliminary as a case of economic stability.⁴⁹⁰ She claimed that in this work, the author's aim was to prove Islam as a purely "man-made, historical product of its time and place and no more."⁴⁹¹ She observed that although he was a clergyman, he did not write with a Christian framework. He preferred to adopt Marxist outlook instead.⁴⁹² Thus, similar to her study of Hitti, Jameelah also questioned the

⁴⁸⁸ W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 93.

⁴⁸⁹ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 43.

⁴⁹⁰ In one of her book reviews, she added social and political factor along with economic factor as well. See Jameelah, *Prophet Muhammad and his Western Critics: Critique of W. Montgomery Watt and Others*, 15.

⁴⁹¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 98.

⁴⁹² Jameelah, *Prophet Muhammad and his Western Critics: Critique of W. Montgomery Watt and Others*, 15.

approach of Watt, trying to prove the influence of Marxist ideology in his study of Islam. Watt is not the only person who is criticized to use Marxist approach. Some authors also pointed out that in his initial works, Smith, who was also a clergyman, used the same approach in studying Islam.⁴⁹³ She seems right in pointing out that though similar to education, peace, and politics, financial stability is also one of the important features of Islamic civilization, it does not mean that one should present it solely as an economic system. A survey of Watt's writings shows that most of his conclusions are not only negative in their substance and are in direct contradiction with traditional Muslim scholarship but also have serious methodological issues. He can be categorized as a reductionist or Marxist who, ignoring the spiritual values of Islam, focused on its materialistic aspects. He himself was aware of this criticism on his works. In the introduction of his *Islam and the Integration of Society*, he drafted that he was strongly criticized by several authors for his Marxist approach in his *Muhammad in Mecca*.⁴⁹⁴ He affirmed that he was under the influence of Marxism when he looked into the economic background of Arabian societies. But at the same time, he also claimed that he was not using Marxist approach while he was drawing his conclusions.⁴⁹⁵ Nevertheless, he showed a similar attitude in his *Islam and the Integration of Society* as well; the second chapter of which he devoted to discuss the economic and social factors of that era.

Criticizing the sources of the book, she commented that Watt referred to Orientalists such as Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) and Joseph Schacht (1902-1969) in such a way as if they were the sole authority on the subject. She thought that Watt followed the path of Goldziher and Schacht merely to refute the authenticity of *Sunnah*. His attitude made her consider him among one of those Orientalists who was aiming for the nationalization and secularization of Islam in order to destroy

⁴⁹³ Mushir-ul-Haq, "Wilfred Cantwel Smith: T'āruf aur Tajziyyah," 97.

⁴⁹⁴ To understand the background of Arabian societies, he even started the very first of the book exploring the economic factors. See, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 1.

⁴⁹⁵ Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society*, 2.

the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. She finally concluded that similar to his contemporaries, Watt was suggesting to Muslims "they must deny the very foundations of their faith if they are to preserve it."⁴⁹⁶ Questioning his sources, similar to many authors,⁴⁹⁷ she argued that Watt was mostly depending upon the western sources. He did not bother to consult primary sources that left his work open to constant criticism. Thus, it can be concluded that she is rightly challenged the originality and scope of his work on a methodological basis.

Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb

Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb (1895-1971) was a Scottish Orientalist and one of the experts of the Middle East studies. He also served as the Professor of Arabic and editor of *Encyclopedia of Islam*. He published a number of books on Islam including *Modern Trends in Islam*, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, *Islamic Society and the West*, and *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*. Maryam Jameelah reviewed his book *Modern Trends in Islam* and regarded it as an authoritative classic in its field.

She praised Gibb for his honesty in not claiming his work as an objective study. She observed that Gibb was aiming to find the reasons for the failure of the modernist movements in the Islamic world. Although for Jameelah, he rightly criticized *The Reconstruction* of Muhammad Iqbal and Syed Ameer Ali's⁴⁹⁸ (1849-1928) exaggerations and apologetic approach towards the study of Islam, he was unable to trace out the roots of the problems. It is of importance that she also wrote on both Iqbal and Ameer Ali. She was against Syed Ameer Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* and devoted an entire article entitled "The Spirit of Unbelief - A Critical Analysis of 'The Spirit of Islam' by Ameer Ali" to criticize his propagation of Islam. She thought that in this book Ameer Ali presented a distorted picture of Islam. However, regarding Iqbal, she showed an ambivalent response. She praised his poetic works but criticized his prose works. She was of the view that he had misled the readers

⁴⁹⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 110.

⁴⁹⁷ Mushir-ul-Haq, "Wilfred Cantwell Smith: T'aruf aur Tajziyyah," 98.

⁴⁹⁸ Syed Ameer Ali earned his fame as a political and social reformer, and a leading scholar of Islam.

in his famous work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.⁴⁹⁹ She also commented that "I vehemently disagree with nearly everything he has to say in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*."⁵⁰⁰ She did not provide any detail why she disagreed with his *Reconstruction*. However, it seems that she was against the reformist ideas of Iqbal regarding Ijtihad and Western education. Therefore, considering his views in contradiction with traditional Muslim thought, she showed her disagreement with them. The same has also been pointed out by Mohammad Suheyl Umar⁵⁰¹ who in a personal letter to her, noted that, while drafting her thoughts about Iqbal's prose works, she criticized "exactly those parts "of his work that was in direct contradiction with orthodox traditional thoughts of Islam.⁵⁰² Therefore, she praised Gibb in pointing out that Iqbal failed to present the proper solution for his fellow Muslims in his *Reconstruction*. Gibb declared that Iqbal's analysis of the problems of Muslims was more or less true and therefore, he suggested Ijtihad as a panacea. But he forgot to understand that only Muslim sources were not enough for that reform. He criticized Iqbal on opposing nationalism, considering it one of the contradictions in his works. He thought that Iqbal supported nationalism in his poetic works (in his national hymn of the Muslims of India) but criticized it in his prose work.⁵⁰³ Regarding Iqbal's understanding of nationalism, Jameelah was also thinking in a similar fashion. She asked Maududi about the apparent contradictions in the works of Iqbal. Maududi informed her that though, in his initial poetic works, he can be seen as a supporter of secular nationalism, since 1930, he started opposing it.⁵⁰⁴ This letter helped her

⁴⁹⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 260.

⁵⁰⁰ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 160.

⁵⁰¹ A prominent Muslim scholar who is best known for his study of Iqbal's philosophical thoughts.

⁵⁰² Mohammad Suheyl Umar, "Mohammad Suheyl Umar To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1985).

⁵⁰³ Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1947), 60.

⁵⁰⁴ Maudoodi and Jameelah, *Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 69.

in changing her view about Iqbal. However, at the same time, she also thought that Iqbal was under the influence western scholars when he wrote his *Reconstruction*. Therefore, in her *Islam in Theory and Practice*, she also wrote an entire article about Iqbal as well.

Though she thought that Gibb failed to find the answers to the questions she was searching for, he was honest and right in many of his judgments. His criticism of Muslim scholars made her recommend educated Muslims to learn from his criticism. While pointing out the reasons behind the failure of the modernist movements in the Islamic world, she commented that those movements failed because they were trying to make two incompatibles, compatible. She added that "[i]ntellectual dishonesty, double-mindedness and hypocrisy" were the only ways to make Islam and modernism compatible.⁵⁰⁵ Gibb and Smith are some of those very few non-Muslim scholars of Islam that are praised by Jameelah.

She tried to answer the question that why the process of Westernization had failed to produce in the Muslim world the intellectual giants such as Abu Naṣr Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd who successfully synthesized Greek philosophy with Islamic thought.⁵⁰⁶ She argued that when Muslims started studying Greek thought, Islamic civilization was in its full bloom. Therefore, Muslim scholars were confident and independent in their study of Greek philosophy. However, Western civilization reached the Islamic world in its defeat and humiliation. Therefore, they blindly accepted every suggestion of modern western scholars. Moreover, she wrote that at that time, Muslims learned Greek philosophy through the books without worrying about the cultural influence of Greek civilization. However, the situation is not the same this time. Therefore, Muslims are just imitating and not creating.⁵⁰⁷ She was not alone in reaching this conclusion. Many other Muslim scholars also pointed out similar issues. For example, Ismail Al-Faruqi argued that

⁵⁰⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 159.

⁵⁰⁶ It should also be taken into consideration that Jameelah also criticized Abū Naṣr Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd to promote secular Greek humanism as well.

⁵⁰⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 161.

similar to the West, Muslims are building schools, universities libraries, and offices. However, from nearly two centuries they are not creating anything. Thus, similar to Jameelah, he also tried to discourage the cultural influence of West on Muslims.⁵⁰⁸

Moreover, she criticized Gibb and his fellow Orientalists to consider the notion of "progress" and "change" as the ultimate law of nature. She argued that if everything was changing with the passage of time then it was impossible to achieve human dignity and nobility of character as they were permanent and stable.⁵⁰⁹ She thought that, although he rightly criticized the Muslim modernists, he overlooked the success of Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and *Jamaat-e-Islami*. She added that Gibb was wrong when he thought that, for the betterment of the Muslim world, it was necessary to prefer modern educated youth over *Ulema*. As it is already pointed out that she was a fervent critic of reformist ideas and a staunch supporter of revivalist movements such as *Jamat-e-Islami* and Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, she did not fail to remind him about evaluating or explaining the "success" of these movements. Finally, she declared that the greatest weakness of the book lied in its assessment that "Islam needs a Reformation rather than a spiritual rebirth to transform the Muslims."⁵¹⁰ Not to mention, she was initially a reform Jew who rejected Reform Judaism because of the non-observant behavior of her family. Whenever her friends, teachers, or other orthodox Jews criticized her for being a reform Jew, she started thinking to follow orthodoxy. Her writings show that mostly she found their criticism valid. Moreover, this criticism made her think "reform" as a try to change the actual teachings of religion. Thus, unlike other secular thinkers who supported evolution, progress, and change, she preferred to reject these notions. Instead, she favored spirituality and transcendence.

⁵⁰⁸ For details, see Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, "Islamization of Knowledge" (paper presented at the Knowledge for What?, Islamabad, 1986), 7.

⁵⁰⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 299.

⁵¹⁰ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 163.

Part Two: Impact of the West on the Muslim World as Depicted in the Thought of Maryam Jameelah

Maryam Jameelah left her family, friends, home, heritage, and the country she had loved and grown up in, setting off for a new land never to return. She preferred Pakistan to America in the hope to find a "genuine Islamic society"; an Islamic milieu where she could spend the remainder of her life. However, when she observed the Western outlook of Pakistani Muslims, she expressed her thoughts saying:

Westernism has become the great god of the East and 'Modernization', 'progress' and 'development' the new Trinity replacing the old Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost ... The imposition of an alien and corrupt educational system, the combined impact of transistor radio, cinema and television have destroyed the last vestiges of native culture and produced an attitude of contempt among the younger people for everything which is not modern or western.⁵¹¹

She realized that it was not only Muslims who were overwhelmed by the superiority of the Western civilization, people of other nations regardless of their race, religion, and country also fell under the spell of modernity. Validating her point, she provided the example of China which was once based on the Confucian ethical classics. However, when the communist took control over China, Mao Tse-tung⁵¹² (1893-1976) announced that "*We wish to completely eradicate the old Chinese culture.*"⁵¹³

She also noted that Westernization was often imposed on the Muslim lands by cruel and ruthless methods. Providing the example of countries such as Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, she argued that there was hardly a Muslim country where the process of Westernization began as a natural phenomenon. Orientalists and Christian missionaries joined their hands to produce "Muslim named scholars" that could help them in their tasks. However, intellectuals such as Muhammad Asad,

⁵¹¹ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

⁵¹² Mao was founding father of the People's Republic of China. He was an ardent communist.

⁵¹³ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 27.

Abu A'la Maududi, Hassan al-Banna, Said Nursî, Muhammad Iqbal, Muhammad Hamidullah, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr worked a lot to stop this process.⁵¹⁴ This part will discuss her critique of the selected Muslim scholars and her suggestions to cope with the problems generated in the modern age for Muslims.

Impact of Western Thought on Muslim Scholars

When she found the educated Muslims endorsing the Western culture and its values, she devoted herself to show them that being unaware of the incompatibility of the Western ideals and Islamic values, they were doing nothing but opposing their own tradition. She criticized a number of Muslim scholars including her mentor Abu A'la Maududi. She was convinced that Islam was "far more seriously menaced from within than from without."⁵¹⁵ This section will discuss her views on the selected Muslim scholars.

Syed Ahmad Khan

Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was an ardent reformer of the Indian subcontinent. He emerged at a time when the status of Muslim community in India was perhaps at its lowest state. Through his numerous works such as *Causes of Indian Revolts*, *Loyal Muslims of India*, *Research of the Word Nasāra*, and *Khutbāt-e-Aḥmadīyyah*, he tried to inspire the younger generation both from Hindus and Muslims⁵¹⁶ which could dedicate itself for the betterment of common people. Jameelah considered him among the pioneers of modernism and apologetics in the Muslim world. She thought that a number of scholars such as Muhammad Abduh, Syed Ameer Ali, and Muhammad Iqbal also followed the path of Syed Ahmad Khan later on. Since her introduction to the ideology of the Aligarh school of thought, she had been criticizing Khan for his efforts to modernize Indian Muslims. She considered him one of those individuals who thought it was necessary for

⁵¹⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 234-36.

⁵¹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 38.

⁵¹⁶ In the beginning, Khan thought that Muslims and Hindu could live together by helping each other. When he observed the bitterness of Hindus for Muslims during a dispute of Sanskrit language, he advised Muslims not to join the Indian National Congress.

Muslims to accept the supremacy of Western civilization as absolute and invincible.⁵¹⁷ She compared the reform of Moses Mendelssohn in Germany with Syed Ahmad Khan's in India and Muhammad Abdu's in Egypt and concluded that their apologetic rational approach ended up in the refutation of various religious doctrines. She also observed that the domination of British in Indian subcontinent and Khan's visit to England encouraged him to adore Western ideals. Criticizing him, she declared "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who took for his god, nineteenth-century European science and philosophy."⁵¹⁸ She thought that his preference of pure scientific naturalism to verify religious doctrines compelled him to deny the existence of Islamic notions such as miracles, angels, Jinn, and the virgin birth of the Holy Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).⁵¹⁹ Similar to traditional Muslim Ulema, she criticized him for his interpretation of polygamy, slavery, *ḥudūd*, and Jihad. She assumed that for showing himself to be candid and open-minded, he considered medieval traditionalist Islam obsolete and unworkable. Therefore, for her, Khan was a heretic as Akbar⁵²⁰ (1542-1605) was an apostate.⁵²¹

The way Khan drafted his commentary of the Holy Quran and the biography of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) let Ulema consider him a staunch supporter of apologetics and rationalism. His commentary was so unpopular among the orthodox Muslims scholars that it provoked their quick rejoinders against it. Abdul Haq Haqqani (1848-1916) published his commentary of the Holy Quran to refute Khan's ideology. He criticized him on more than 60 issues.⁵²² Khan's *Khutbat-e-Ahmadiyah* was also regarded as an apologetical study of the life of the

⁵¹⁷ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Islam In Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, by John J. Donohue And John L. Esposito. *Muslim World Book Review* 4, no. 2 (1984) 10.

⁵¹⁸ Jameelah and Mawdūdī, *Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah*, 2.

⁵¹⁹ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 66.

⁵²⁰ Abu'l-Fath Jalal ud-din Muhammad Akbar was one of the most successful Mughal Emperors (1556-1605) of Indian history.

⁵²¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 176.

⁵²² For details, see Abdulhaq, *Tafsīr Fath-ul-Mannān* (Lahore: Al-Faisal, 2009).

Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Thus, similar to Ulema, Jameelah also criticized Khan along with various other scholars who, in her view, promoted the culture of apologetics among Muslims.

Ibn Khaldūn's theory of rise and fall of empires equipped her with the necessary tools to conclude that it lied in the nature of human psychology that consciously or unconsciously the inferior nations try to adopt the culture and values of the victorious nations. She developed the idea of "Great men/personality" by identifying the impact of a certain individual in the history, culture, and civilization. She observed that "great personality changes the direction of history and literally shapes his times as well as imprinting an indelible mark on the future."⁵²³ She noted that modernists such as Syed Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Abdu, and Qassim Ameen were merely the end-products of their circumstances. Therefore, she thought that these scholars had not deserved the rank of "Great men" as they were just imitators and not creators. She further added that Khan was no exception in the rule as he had also refused to accept many traditional Islamic customs.⁵²⁴ She writes that he was against the use of Persian, Arabic, and other vernaculars and insisted to use English instead.⁵²⁵ Though Khan preferred English to other languages, he was not against Persian, Urdu, or Arabic as he himself wrote in favor of Urdu. In fact, in 1859, he also started a Persian school in Moradabad. In addition to that, he also laid the foundations of Scientific Society of Ghazipur to translate books on history, science, and geography into vernaculars. However, when he observed that Urdu as a language lacks the basic vocabulary to learn modern scientific knowledge, he started supporting English.⁵²⁶

Jameelah found that it was not the objective of Khan to reform his fellow Muslims in the religious sense. He was much worried about the low economic and

⁵²³ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 21-22.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵²⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 65.

⁵²⁶ Altaf Hussain Hali, *Hayāt-e-Jāvēd* (New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, 1999), 91.

social position of Muslims of India. Therefore, he blindly assumed that worldly progress of Muslims was necessary for their better future. However, he was unaware of the fact that "no people in history has ever been able to flourish, even in a material sense, under foreign rule."⁵²⁷ Her view seems plausible that similar to the modern Western scholars, most of the Muslim writers also adopted the materialistic approach and therefore, were dealing with economic matters. However, she possibly could have understood this emphasis with reference to the poor conditions of the Muslim societies as Khan was writing at a time when colonial powers were ruling the world. During the rule of the British empire, Muslims were in the appalling and hopeless condition in the Indian Subcontinent.⁵²⁸ They were deprived of jobs and were forced to pay high taxes. In his *The Indian Musalmans*, a British historian, W.W Hunter pointed out that in Bengal, only 92 Muslims were appointed against 2111 available posts. He proved that governmental posts were awarded in a way that Hindus were 1/2 and Muslims were 1/14 of European officials. He added that though the British had good reasons for what they did, their actions brought ruin upon the Muslims of Bengal.⁵²⁹ Furthermore, British rulers implemented 43% of tax on the silk exports whereas East-India company was free of those taxes. Most of the low-level workers left their occupations. The remaining became the victims of the cruelty of British soldiers.⁵³⁰ In such conditions, it was necessary for scholars to take care of the economic problems of their Indian fellows. However, ignoring the context, Jameelah blamed Khan for promoting the culture of materialism in Muslims. It is pertinent to mention here that her writings do not provide any direct reference to his works. Instead, her understanding of his thought depends mostly upon Bashir Ahmad Dar 's *The Religious Thought of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan* and M. S. Baljon's *Te Reforms and*

⁵²⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 67.

⁵²⁸ For a detailed study on the subject, see Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *Barry'azīm Pāk-o-Hind ki Millt-e-Īslāmiyyah* (Karachi: Karachi University, 1983).

⁵²⁹ W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (London: Trubner and Company, 1876), 165.

⁵³⁰ Rafiq Zakaria, *Hindūstānī Sīyāsat Myñ Mūsalmānoñ Kā Ūrūj* (New Delhi: Urdu Development Bureau, 1985), 23.

Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as, in her writings, she referred to only these two sources. Therefore, it is very possible that her evaluation of Khan's ideas was lacking the reading of primary sources.

Ghulam Ahmad Parvez

Ghulam Ahmad Parvez (1903-1985) was a Muslim thinker, writer, historian, and a specialist in the study of Iqbal's philosophical thoughts. Through his books such as *Maqām-e-Ḥadīth*, *Maṭālib-ul-Furqān*, *Nizām-e-Rabūbiyyat*, *Islam: A Challenge to Religion*, and *Qura'nī Faislay*, he tried to reorganize Muslim society on an economic basis. Maryam Jameelah critically reviewed his book *Islam: A Challenge to Religion* and evaluated it as a dangerous work for the Muslim youth. She wrote that through the interpretation of the word *mudhab* and *dīn*, Parvez claimed that *madhhab* was synonymous with priesthood, monasticism, asceticism, celibacy, and mysticism whereas *dīn*, he thought, was the faith of Islam. As he did not interpret *madhhab* as a *Fiqhi* school but defined it as an equivalent of the word "religion" which for him, is not *dīn*,⁵³¹ it allowed her to disagree with his interpretation. She argued that the word *madhhab* was always translated as a sect or school of thought. If the four schools of Islamic law (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali) were not *madāhhib* then what were they? Did that mean they were the antonym of *dīn*? She traced out that due to his distinction between *madhhab* and *dīn*, Parvez compelled himself to make contradictions. In her opinion, Parvez thought that it was the very nature of *madhhab* to denounce everything new whereas *dīn* welcomed them. She criticized his assumptions and reminded him that if his interpretation were correct then it meant Islam would welcome constant innovation in its beliefs and practices throughout history.⁵³² Therefore, her criticism on Parvez is not only concerned with his misinterpretation of the term *madhhab* but is also an effort to point out its aftermaths. It should be taken into account that Parvez is one of the most controversial figures in contemporary Muslim scholarship in Pakistan.

⁵³¹ Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, *Islam: A Challenge to Religion* (Lahore: Tolu-e-Islam Trust, 2012), 319.

⁵³² Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 100.

Most of his ideas are vehemently rejected by Ulema.⁵³³ Scores of books are written to criticize and reject almost every aspect of his work.⁵³⁴ Similar to Orthodox Muslim Ulema, Jameelah was also in total disagreement with Parvez' ideology and wrote nothing in favor of him.

She noted that, although Parvez devoted a big part of the book to show his readers how the Holy Quran could be used to solve the problems of the modern age, he missed the things which should not be missed. She pointed out "[t]he most glaring omission is any mention of *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah*."⁵³⁵ She decried his apologetic approach and concluded that he was an anti-*Hadith* who, in his efforts to modernize the Muslim community, rejected *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* as obsolete.⁵³⁶ She argued that without the knowledge of *Ḥadīth*, it was not possible to understand even *Ṣalāt*, *Zakāt*, or Hajj, the essentials of Islam. She added that he did not only omit *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* from his book but also his chapter on Quranic economics did not contain any information about *Zakāt*; his chapter on war had no indication of Jihad and his chapter on the woman was lacking any information about purdah or the necessary segregation of opposite sexes. Finally, she concluded that "in preaching 'Islam' minus *Sunnah*, Parvez is asking for the impossible."⁵³⁷

It is of importance to mention here that Parvez was not in favor of the total rejection of *Ḥadīth* but giving primary importance to the Holy Quran, he suggested following the *Ḥadīth* which were in accordance with the principles of the Holy

⁵³³ Sheila McDonough, "The Ideology for Pakistan: A Study of the Works of Ghulam Ahmad Parvez" (McGill University, 1963), 2.

⁵³⁴ For example, Karam Shah al-Azhari (1918–1998), a renounced Muslim scholar of Pakistan, especially wrote an entire book, critically evaluating the arguments of scholars who were considered as anti-*Ḥadīth*. See, Muhammad Karam Shah, *Sunnat-e-Khair-ul-Anām* (Madīnah Publishing Company: Karachi, 1971), 31.

⁵³⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 101.

⁵³⁶ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 214.

⁵³⁷ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 101.

Quran.⁵³⁸ As similar to Khan, Parvez also interpreted Quranic verses related to angels, miracles, and Jinn without appealing to the supernatural. It was easy for her to consider him a faithful follower of Syed Ahmad Khan and a proponent of Aligarh apologetic school.⁵³⁹ Parvez was one of those individuals who would think that the Holy Quran contains all the necessary principles for the practice and preaching of Islam. He thought that it was the task of reason and divinely sanctioned political authorities to further explain these principles.⁵⁴⁰ Therefore, her argument seems valid that scholars such as Parvez and Syed Ameer Ali have magnified what was done by Syed Ahmad Khan. Moreover, Parvez 'ideology was in direct contradiction with orthodox Muslim thought according to which along with the Holy Quran, *Ḥadīth* and Sunnah also constitute sources of legal authority in Islam.⁵⁴¹ It has already been mentioned in the fourth chapter that she herself was a staunch supporter of *Ḥadīth* and Sunnah and thought that the right interpretation of the Holy Quran was impossible without it. In addition to that as it is pointed out by Karam Shah al-Azhari that her study of *Ḥadīth* played an important role in her conversion to Islam as well. Her faith in Islam further strengthens after her study of *Miskhāt-ul-Masābīh*.⁵⁴² Thus, her advocacy of Sunnah was not only an attempt to propagate her understanding of Islam but also a defense of the acceptance of her "true religion".

Qasim Amin

Qasim Amin (1863-1908) was an Egyptian lawyer, writer, feminist, Islamic scholar, and one of the founders of the Egyptian National Movement and the

⁵³⁸ Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, *Maqām-e-Ḥadīth* (Lahore: Toluislam, 2001), 44.

⁵³⁹ Similar to Jameelah, many other scholars also argued the same thing. For details, see Abdul Rehman Kilani, *Ā'inah'-e-Parveziyyat* (Lahore: Maktabat al-Salām, 1987), 112-13.

⁵⁴⁰ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran: Towards a Contemporary Approach*, New edition ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 13.

⁵⁴¹ For example, see Abu Muhammad Abdul Sattar Hammad, *Hujjat-e-Ḥadīth* (Lahore: Dār al-Salām, 2007), 27.

⁵⁴² Muhammad Karam Shah, *Ziyā'-un-Nabī*, 7 vols., vol. 6 (Lahore: Ziyā'-ul-Qur'ān Publications, 2015), 230-31.

National University. His famous works such as *Liberation of Women*, *The Slavery of Women*, *The New Woman*, and *Paradise* made him a central figure of *al-Nahda* or the cultural renaissance that emerged in Egypt at the end of 19th century. Maryam Jameelah reviewed his books *Liberation of Women* and *The New Woman* and considered him the champion of Western-inspired Feminism on the one hand, and a devoted disciple of Muhammad Abduh on the other.

She thought that in both of his works, Amin tried to attack *Purdah* and *Hijāb*, the fundamental institutions of Islamic society.⁵⁴³ As Amin wanted women to earn their own living,⁵⁴⁴ she criticized him considering women responsible for it. She was of the view that it was the duty of men to provide economic support to the whole family. She observed that under the influence of the theory of evolution, Amin was bound to see "change" in everything. Advocating "progress" in every aspect of life, for her, he concluded that tradition was neither internal nor sacred. As it has been pointed out in the third chapter of the current research work that during her religious quest, she was in search of absolute truth and permanence. She found it in Islam and accepted it as her "true religion". Therefore, she regards Amin's support for progress and change as a rejection of absolute truth and permanence.

She observed that he did nothing new but accepted blindly the attacks of the Christian missionaries without even investigating the condition of Muslim societies. Thus, for her, he was a perfect example of a westernized Muslim. She drafted that "[i]ndeed, as one reads this book, it is difficult to believe that its author was a Muslim and not a Christian missionary!"⁵⁴⁵ She was not the only one who considered him as a product of Western thought. His many critics also pointed out the similar things about him. For them, he was inspired by the example of Western

⁵⁴³ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Liberation Of Women, The New Woman: Two Documents In The History Of Egyptian Feminism*, by Qasim Amin. *Muslim World Book Review* 24, no. 2 (2004) 43.

⁵⁴⁴ Qasim Amin, *Tahrīr al-Mara'a* (Cairo: Hindāwī, 2012), 41.

⁵⁴⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 158.

women,⁵⁴⁶ and therefore, wanted to reorganize Egyptian society in a similar fashion. Some writers declared that "[t]he origins of his (Amin's) philosophy can be traced back to the liberal intellectual heritage of the nineteenth century, especially to the writings of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, and Karl Marx."⁵⁴⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that why Jameelah thought him a supporter of evolutionism.

In his *Liberation of Women*, Amin clarified he was not in favor of the westerners as they went too far in exposing their women. It is tough for them now to guard themselves against the sensuous desires and shameful feelings.⁵⁴⁸ He added that similarly, he was not in favor of those Muslim societies who reached the other extreme by veiling their women, thinking them as objects and goods. He was of the view that the legal veil was in between both extremes. Thus, in his own way, he tried to suggest balance. However, in his *The New Women*, his criticism of Muslim scholars was derogatory and insulting. For example, he writes that "[I]f Muslims adopt the opinions of their ignorant jurisprudents, who to them seem knowledgeable, they will think it their duty to imprison their women..."⁵⁴⁹ Thus, his fierce criticism on Islamic values and support of imitation of Westerns enabled Jameelah to criticize almost every aspect of his writings.

She added that since the days of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), no one ever questioned the clearly defined rules of purdah, divorce, and polygamy. However, Amin did not want to accept these rules anymore. His attempts to change the Muslim family system, consider women slaves of men, encourage co-education and campaign for the elimination of purdah, polygamy, and divorce also critically evaluated by her. Najmus Sahar thought that as Jameelah was born and raised in

⁵⁴⁶ Joseph T. Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 18.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵⁴⁸ Amin, *Tahrīr al-Mara'a*, 37.

⁵⁴⁹ Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Women and The New Woman*, trans. Samiha Sidhom Peterson (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 131.

Western society, she was aware of the drawbacks of modern Western civilization. She was sure that Islam took care of every aspect of women rights. Hence, she strongly rejected Amin's ideas and maintained that Islam provided justified status to women.⁵⁵⁰ Sahar's assessment of Jameelah's views also points out that she thought Amin suggested changes in the social, cultural, and political aspects of Islamic teachings. Therefore, considering him as a modernist, she wrote against his feminist movement.

Moreover, she also thought that "Amin's observations of the mental and intellectual underdevelopment of Egyptian women in Purdah were the most convincing part of his book."⁵⁵¹ However, at the same time she also commented on the condition of Muslim women saying:

Although seclusion, polygamy, slavery, and concubinage have disappeared or are disappearing, today it is not difficult to find modern Muslim women who have shown how it is possible to combine the *hijab* with higher education and even a career in public life while upholding the necessity for regular worship, the sanctity of home and family while totally rejecting current permissiveness.⁵⁵²

Thus, on the one hand, she praised Amin's movement to awake the younger generation of Egyptian women to work for the betterment of Muslim Ummah and on the other hand, she criticized them not to learn from his positive criticism. She herself was a woman and during her whole life, she strictly obeyed the rule of Purdah. From her *My Life Story*, it is evident that she was satisfied as a woman, as a wife, co-wife, and mother in a Muslim community. She had other reservations about Pakistani Muslim society, however, none of her writings, including her personal letters and notes showed that she felt inferior in Pakistan due to her gender.

⁵⁵⁰ Sahar, "Maghrbī or Islāmī Tehzībūn main 'Orat kā Muqām: Maryam Jameelah kay Afkār kā muṭāla'ah," 77.

⁵⁵¹ Maryam Jameelah, Review of *The Liberation Of Women: A Document in the History of Egyptian Feminism*, by Qasim Amin. *Muslim World Book Review* 15, no. 2 (1995) 38.

⁵⁵² Jameelah, *The Liberation Of Women, The New Woman: Two Documents In The History Of Egyptian Feminism*, 44.

In fact, she felt relaxed in the home of her husband Muhammad Yusuf Khan along with her co-wife Shafiqa.⁵⁵³ Therefore, she does not consider Amin's criticism valid and advised her readers to reject whatever said by Amin.

Abu A'la Maududi

Abu A'la Maududi (1903-1979) was an Islamic scholar, journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist leader, political philosopher, and the founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Through his famous works such as *Tafhīm ul-Qurān*, *Islāmī Tehzīb aur us kay Usūl wa Mubādī*, *Khutbāt*, *Purdah*, and *Tanqihāt*, Maududi became one of the most influential thinkers of his era. He was among those few persons who left a deep impact on the life and thinking of Maryam Jameelah. Thus, her works provide more details about him in comparison to the other scholars. In her initial books, she repeatedly praised him and considered him a *mujaddid* of his time. She quoted from Maududi's works and repeatedly affirmed what he said about Islam and Muslims.⁵⁵⁴ She praised him as well as his Jamaat as the harbinger of Islamic renaissance.⁵⁵⁵ In her magnum 'opus, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, she devoted an entire article entitled: "Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi: The Great Mujadid of the Modern Age"⁵⁵⁶ to explain her understanding of his works. Once again, she showed her agreement with almost every aspect of his work.⁵⁵⁷ In contrast to many authors,⁵⁵⁸ she even upheld that "[n]obody in Muslim India

⁵⁵³ Jameelah, "My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975."

⁵⁵⁴ She did not show a single contradiction with the ideas of Maududi. For example, see Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 127; Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 52, 81, 124, 59, 236; Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 63, 334, 98, 405.

⁵⁵⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 236.

⁵⁵⁶ This article along with some additions was also published separately under the title "Who is Maudoodi?". For a critical analysis of this article, see, Wadi Z. Haddad, Review of *Who is Maudoodi?*, by Maryam Jameelah. *The Muslim World* 66, no. 4 (1976).

⁵⁵⁷ For details see, Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 260-326.

⁵⁵⁸ J. Gordon Melton, *Faiths Across Time: 5,000 Years of Religious History* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 1722; Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, *Islamic Reform in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 477; John Calvert, *Islamism: A Documentary and Reference Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 29.

supported the Pakistan movement more enthusiastically than Maulana Maudoodi.⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, in the same book, she also drafted another article entitled: "The Jama'at-e-Islami, Pakistan". In this article, she presented the formation and role of the Jamaat in the political and religious history of Pakistan. Writing about the goals, constitution, and process to become a Jamaat member, she persuaded her readers to join the movement saying: "[b]elievers in every country of the world-East or West-should take the Jama'at-e-Islami for their guide and organize local Jama'ats like it wherever they may reside."⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, she could be seen as a staunch supporter of Maududi in her various other writings.⁵⁶¹

Her efforts made her one of the important spokespersons of the movement. Consequently, her affiliation with the movement was appreciated by the officials of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Similar to *Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan*, international wings of the movement including *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind*,⁵⁶² and *Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir*,⁵⁶³ also sent her invitations to participate in the various conferences. These invitation letters are still preserved in her personal library. However, she never left Lahore after her marriage.

As it is pointed out in the third chapter that Jameelah was in support of Sufism. The comparative study of her writings suggests that in the beginning, she recognized Maududi as an advocate of Sufism,⁵⁶⁴ however, later she categorized

⁵⁵⁹ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 266.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 382.

⁵⁶¹ For example, see Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 236; Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 327; Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 214, 15.

⁵⁶² See, Muhammad Yusuf, "Muhammad Yusuf To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1975).

⁵⁶³ See, Begum Haneef, "Begum Haneef To Maryam Jameelah," (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1981).

⁵⁶⁴ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 215.

him among the critics of it. She drafted that Maududi was against the whole Sufi school of thought.⁵⁶⁵ She further added that:

The polemics of the Salafiyya against the '*Ulamā*' and the Sufis, extolling science and material progress, the acceptance of the evolutionist and progressivist interpretations of history, the indifference, if not hostility, towards Islamic philosophy and Islamic art and Islam's relationship with the Jews, the Christians and the West in general even found expression in some of the writings of Maulana Sayyid Abu'l A'lā Mawdūdī (1903-1979) in his monthly *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*.⁵⁶⁶

The above-mentioned quotation shows that Jameelah started considering Maududi as a modernist, an anti-Sufism, and an opponent of Islamic art in her later writings. However, at the same time, she showed her agreement with him on certain issues such as purdah⁵⁶⁷ and inability of secularism.⁵⁶⁸ In 1990, she published her book *At Home in Pakistan*. In the preface of this work, she wrote that the impression she had of him during their correspondence was quite different from the "reality" that she found after her arrival in Pakistan. Furthermore, she mentioned that "the actual ideals and goals of the Maulana's re-interpretation of Islam were very far from the traditional orthodoxy in which I sought to live and immerse myself, I did

⁵⁶⁵ Writing about the event of the celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), she indicates that "Unlike Maulana Maudoodi, Bhaijan (beloved brother) does not condemn all Sufis." For details, see Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country*, 149.

⁵⁶⁶ Jameelah, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and The West (Dissertations Series 1)*, 19.

⁵⁶⁷ For example, she herself was a staunch supporter of purdah and when she reviewed *Women and Islamic Law* written by Safia Iqbal, she wrote that: "Women and Islamic Law is the best work of its kind on the subject to appear in print for many years. It supplements and brings Maulana Mawdudi's *Purdah* (1939) up-to-date. For all those who wish to ameliorate the suffering and oppression women endure today, this book is indispensable reading." See. Maryam Jameelah, Review of *Women and Islamic Law*, by Safia Iqbal. *Muslim World Book Review* 9, no. 4 (1989) 44.

⁵⁶⁸ See Maryam Jameelah, Review of '*Honour*' Crimes, *Paradigms and Violence Against Women*, by Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain. *Muslim World Book Review* 28, no. 2 (2008) 69.

not fully discover until long afterward."⁵⁶⁹ However, she did not mention anything about those "actual ideals and goals". She herself was a staunch supporter of orthodoxy and therefore, criticized both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who she thought preached modernism. She writes that a modernist is a person who thinks that it is necessary to re-interpret Islam to make it compatible with the modern way of life. Therefore, for the revival of Islam, a modernist advocate's independent reasoning and tries to close the doors of *taqlīd* by advocating *ijtihād*.⁵⁷⁰ As she started considering Maududi as a modernist, in her book reviews, she criticized him for his modernist as well as *Salafī* thought.

In 2003, she published a seven-page article entitled: *Modern Ideas and Concepts in the Works of Maulānā Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī*. Borrowing long quotes from his writings, she tried to show her readers that modernism impacted a lot on the thoughts of Maududi. She criticized him not to consider traditional Islamic art as a part of Islam. She added that he was unable to properly regard the scientific achievements of the Muslim world and painted classical Islamic civilization pitch-black. Finally, she concluded that in some of his writings "Maulana most eloquently expresses his faith in evolutionism and progressivism and contempt for Tradition."⁵⁷¹

In 2005, during an interview, when it was asked of her that she is widely known because of her close association with Maududi. Does she think that his ideas are relevant for the Muslims in the present age? She replies that in 1941, he was mostly concerned with the cultural matters of Islam and its relations with the West. But afterward, he was mostly involved in political matters. She said that "[p]lacing politics at the center of the Islamic mission is contrary to the traditions of Islam.

⁵⁶⁹ Jameelah, *At Home in Pakistan (1962-1989): The Tale of an American Expatriate in Her Adopted Country*, 26.

⁵⁷⁰ Jameelah, *Islam In Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 92.

⁵⁷¹ Maryam Jameelah, "Modern Ideas and Concepts in the Works of Maulānā Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī," *Islamic Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 352.

However, Jamat-e-Islami deserves all the credit for restraining the worst excesses of secular military dictatorships."⁵⁷²

The change in Jameelah's views was also noted by some scholars. For example, during her interviews with the women wing of *Jamaat-e-Islam*, Amina Jamal observed that most of the female workers of the movement, that she had interviewed, were "less interested in and somewhat dismissive of Maryam Jameelah."⁵⁷³ She added that although, in the beginning, Jameelah was considered as an important spokesperson for Maududi and his movement, in later years, she started criticizing him as well as his ideas regarding Islamic revivalism.⁵⁷⁴ When, through an email, it was asked from Jamal regarding her views about the relationship of Jameelah with Jamaat, she agreed with the researcher that "Maryam Jameelah's relationship with the Jamaat was ambiguous and ambivalent."⁵⁷⁵ Because of his modern political ideas, Jameelah eventually became a critic of Maududi.

Deborah Baker also attempted to tell the same story but from a different point of view, trying to criticize Maududi, his Jamaat, and Jameelah.⁵⁷⁶ In her controversial book, *The Convert*, she argues that when Jameelah read the translations of Maududi's work, that appeared after his death, she started considering him as a modernist.⁵⁷⁷ Baker judged the change in the views of

⁵⁷² Biju Abdul Qadir, "Despair and Hopelessness Forbidden, Tread the Future with Caution: Maryam Jameelah," (2005), <http://www.youngmuslimdigest.com/interview/07/2005/despair-and-hopelessness-forbidden-tread-the-future-with-caution-maryam-jameelah/>.

⁵⁷³ Amina Jamal, *Jamaat-E-Islami Women in Pakistan: Vanguard of a New Modernity?* (New Jersey: Syracuse University Press, 2013), 121.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁵⁷⁵ Amina Jamal, e-mail message to author, December 12, 2017

⁵⁷⁶ In his master's thesis, Muhammad Asif Javid also pointed out "Baker's personal interest in Jameelah as a forerunner of modern Islamic extremism influences her presentation stratagem." See, Muhammad Asif Javid, "Constructing Life Narratives The Multiple Versions of Maryam Jameelah's Life" (Leiden University, 2018), i.

⁵⁷⁷ Baker, *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism*, 118-19.

Jameelah but ignored the fact that she did not only criticize Maududi but also Asad and various other writers; writers whose works were available to her in English. Furthermore, many of the major works of Maududi on Western and Islamic culture, history, and law were translated into English long before the 80s. In fact, his *The Message of Jama'at-i-Islami* and *The Process of Islamic Revolution* were translated into English as early as 1955.

It is also observed that she also had a working knowledge of Urdu language for she was living in Pakistan since 1962. In an interview to a Pakistani magazine when it was asked of her that why there are various Urdu books in her personal library? She replied that "I have a working knowledge of Urdu, the books of Mawlana (Maududi) are very easy. I can understand them effortlessly when someone reads them aloud for me."⁵⁷⁸ Therefore, it can be said that it was not just the translations of Maududi's works that changed her views. She started considering him as a modernist who was not in favor of a traditional interpretation of Islam as a whole. It is clear from her writings that in the beginning, she identifies Maududi as an advocate of her version of traditionalist Islam, but later she started considering him as a supporter of modernism and evolutionism.

The Relationship between her Criticism of Western Civilization and Conversion to Islam

Considering Islamic orthodoxy as the acceptance of the Holy Quran, *Hadīth*, *Sunnah*, the four schools of *Fiqh*, Sufism, teachings of Ulema and other Islamic sciences as inevitable parts of Islam, Maryam Jameelah criticized both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam. In this respect, she even chided Muhammad Asad and Abu A'la Maududi. She claimed that a good number of modern scholars were trying hard to interpret Islam in such a way that was far away from its orthodox traditional interpretation. Her writings indicate that while she was assessing the views of Western or Muslim scholars, she was paying attention to the two major aspects of them. First, being a convert, she was focusing on those factors which also inspired her conversion to Islam. Her writings point out that she was

⁵⁷⁸ See, Kulthum, "Muhtarima Maryam Jameelah: Khaton-e-Islam," 30.

particularly searching for the notion of the purpose of life, absolute truth, and permanence while evaluating the writings of other scholars. Not to mention, it was her search for these notions that made her witness multiple conversions. She wrote that she was in search of absolute truth even when she was embracing atheism. Her conversion processes did not stop until her acceptance of Islam in which she found, in her own way, the purpose of life, absolute truth, and permanence. Thus, when she found someone writing in favor of change, progress, or evolution, she could not help criticizing her/his views. She was convinced that everything does not require change and progress for its perfection. In other words, she is claiming Islam to be the "true religion" which is complete and perfect. It does not require any change or further modification.

Second, she mostly criticized those scholars who advocated reforms in the world religions by advocating materialism, secularism, or any other western philosophy. As Esposito and Voll pointed out that "for Jameelah, the past is not to be criticized or modified in any substantive way but fully embraced."⁵⁷⁹ A reform or change suggest modification in the past which was never acceptable for her. It motivated her to consistently criticize every attempt to reinterpret Islam. Apparently, it seems that she started criticizing western civilization after her conversion to Islam. Her criticism was multiplied after her migration to Pakistan which made her critics to consider her as a polemicist who represented a fundamentalist view of Islam. For them, Maududi's guardianship and impact of *Jamat-e-Islamic* played a pivotal role in this regard. However, it is often ignored that it also indicates a relationship between her denial of Reform Judaism and acceptance of Orthodoxy. Since her childhood, she was not content with Reform Judaism. When she learned about the reform movement of Moses Mendelssohn and its impact on her family, she started thinking it as a cause of the non-observant behavior of the Jewish community. It was one of the reasons that intrigued her to convert for the very first time in her life. She strongly rejected reform Judaism

⁵⁷⁹ Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 58.

considering it a "counterfeit religion".⁵⁸⁰ Thus, her criticism on the reformist ideas started from her acceptance of Orthodox Judaism. Moreover, as it has been explained in the third and fourth chapter that her view of Islam was not confined to a mere set of dogmas and rituals, but she was also taking it as a complete civilization- a civilization which was unique in its origin, sources, and culture. She accepted it both as a religion and a civilization. Her conversion to Islamic civilization was also her deconversion from Western civilization. Thus, her criticism of western civilization was different, at least in aims, from those who did not experience any conversion. Her preference of Islam to other religions and Islamic civilization over Western civilization was a try to defend the faith she accepted as her "true religion".

Suggestions of Maryam Jameelah

She borrowed a number, of her suggestions from the writings of Abu A'la Maududi and Syed Qutub. Both in her books and articles, various suggestions are available in one place or another. The researcher collects and subdivides them into following categories. She suggests to focus on:

Internal Coherence

1. Muslim scholars must find a way to end their internal conflicts.
2. *Ulema* should condemn attempts of "self-appointed reformers" as heretical by official *fatwas*.
3. Free Islam from man-made philosophies.
4. Unanimous explanation of "what Islam is and what it is not" by all recognized Islamic school of thoughts.⁵⁸¹
5. The non-Western world must reject the westernization and materialistic way of life and uphold their religious inheritance based on the Absolute, Transcendental ideal.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 31.

⁵⁸¹ Jameelah, *Islam and Orientalism*, 27-29.

⁵⁸² Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 250.

6. For the survival of humanity, it is necessary to repudiate modernism and restore the traditional orthodoxy in all major world religions.⁵⁸³
7. Rather than a revolution, the most important need of Muslims is social integration based upon moral and spiritual renovation.⁵⁸⁴
8. Although colonial rule resulted in the decline of the Islamic world, Muslims must collect whatever is left of their culture and civilization.⁵⁸⁵
9. Arabs should reject nationalism, socialism, and Marxism and adopt Islam as the only valid base for the unification.⁵⁸⁶
10. Muslims must learn from the achievements of other religious folds especially from the medieval Jews who changed their tragic history by establishing "schools for their children, their own philanthropic organizations, their own shops to make Halal foods easily available and also set up their own commercial enterprises to provide adequate employment opportunities."⁵⁸⁷

Education

1. She is in agreement with Sayyid Qutb⁵⁸⁸ (1906-1966) that the Holy Quran must be the focal point of the children education.
2. It should not only be memorized mechanically but also tried to be understood as much as possible.
3. It must be integrated into every subject and should not only be taught in isolation.
4. The study of history must be a part of the curriculum. Children first learn the history of their country and later the history of Muslim civilization. Only

⁵⁸³ Jameelah, *The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis*, 57.

⁵⁸⁴ Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 97.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 78.

⁵⁸⁶ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 197-98.

⁵⁸⁷ Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 132.

⁵⁸⁸ Sayyid Qutb was a Islamic scholar, poet, historian, political philosopher and one of the prominent members of *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon*.

after that child should be introduced with the history of Europe and America written by the Western authors.

5. Higher education must encourage the students to study modern philosophies with the independent and open mind. Only after that, it will be possible to achieve another renaissance.⁵⁸⁹
6. The Muslim community must recognize the mosque as the only proper place of education. Therefore, every mosque must also have a school as well.
7. Although it is a duty of government to provide financial as well as moral support for education, those who are wealthy should also aid the education system with their donations. The support of *Zakat* and voluntary charity can make education free from primary to university level.
8. Although parents should be encouraged in every way to send their children to school, they must not be forced by law to do so.⁵⁹⁰
9. During the compilation of curriculum, it must be maintained that European and American literature that only contain materialistic concepts must not be taught.
10. Muslims must produce the bulk of literature on history, sociology, psychology, and biology from the Islamic point of view.
11. Muslims must write their history in an inspiring manner that can make them feel proud of their culture and civilization.
12. Muslims must adopt Arabic as their national language and as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges.
13. They should stop the use of Roman alphabets for Urdu, Bengali, or other vernaculars.
14. English should be limited and used only so long as its practical necessity remains.

⁵⁸⁹ Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 100-02.

⁵⁹⁰ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 103-05.

The Problem of Foreign Influence

1. Instead of banning Orientalist's work, Muslims should write scholarly refusals based on logical and persuasive reasoning to replace the anti-Islamic works.
2. Muslims should produce a generation of Occidentalists that can take care of the Orientalist problem.
3. Muslims must stop to over glorify the achievements of the past and work for the future.
4. Muslims must rewrite Islamic as well as European history in an interesting and readable manner from an Islamic point of view.⁵⁹¹
5. Muslims "must crush the conspiracies of Zionism, Freemasonry, orientalism and foreign missions both with the pen and with the sword."⁵⁹²
6. To get rid of foreign influence, Muslims should not only condemn modern philosophies but also construct positive practical alternatives based on pure Islamic ideals.⁵⁹³
7. Muslims must realize the necessity of their duty of *Dawah* both in individual and organizational form.
8. Those who are involved in the work of *Dawah* must present Islam in a rational and universal manner providing the details of its rich culture throughout the history.

Social Norms

1. Filial loyalty and respect of elders must be encouraged in every possible way. The best possible way to achieve it is "to put an end to the cult of youth-worship."
2. When women were playing their role effectively in taking care of home life, they should have no desire to play the role of a man. Neither should they dislike being required by the law to wear modest dresses.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 394.

⁵⁹² Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitab: Past and Present*, 390.

⁵⁹³ Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 100.

3. To achieve an Islamic milieu, segregation of males and females, banning immoral books, alcohol, cinema, and other un-Islamic customs are strictly necessary.
4. Minorities must be given complete social, cultural, and religious autonomy according to the rules of *Shariah*.⁵⁹⁴

Foreign Relations

1. Muslim lands must not be given to foreign powers to maintain their military bases.
2. Muslims should rely on their own resources and therefore, avoid foreign aid.
3. Foreign Christian missions, Zionism, Communism, and the Freemasons must be outlawed.⁵⁹⁵
4. It must be realized that Palestine is not merely an Arab problem, but it is a concern of all Muslims throughout the globe. Therefore, to solve the Zionist problem, Jihad must be organized under the command of *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimoon*.
5. The common grounds between Islam and other world religions must be stressed.

Maryam Jameelah was convinced that secularization of the West posed a great danger to the religious and spiritual atmosphere of the whole world. She regretted that Judaism and Christianity adopted the secular outlook in hope to better integrate into the European culture. She converted to Islam and traveled towards East to find and live in a pure traditionalistic environment. It was a great shock for her when she found Muslim communities adopting the norms of the Westerners.

She realized that Islam as a civilization was breathing its last in the Muslim world. However, when she found a large number of Muslims practicing their religious duties, she concluded that Islam as a religion was still alive. In the

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 106-07.

⁵⁹⁵ Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 33.

meanwhile, she also observed that a good number of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars were trying hard to interpret Islam in such a manner that was far away from the traditional orthodoxy. Therefore, she started working for the revival of Muslim civilization. To do that, she not only criticized the Western ideologies but also attempted to suggest countermeasures to cope with the problems generated for the Muslims in the modern world. For her, the revival of Muslim civilization is bound with the revival of Muslims. To achieve it, she suggests practices such as the thorough study of the tradition, internal coherence, adoption of modern sciences, democracy and education. However, during the course of this research, it has been observed that she did not provide any model for the practical implementation of her various suggestions.

Conclusion

Understanding the process of religious conversion is an important yet neglected aspect of the religious studies. Historically, not much consideration has been given to understand, analyze and describe the complex elements involved in the process of religious change. Even fewer information is available in the case of Islam. The current research work aims to study Maryam Jameelah's conversion to Islam and her critique of Western civilization.

To understand her conversion, Lewis Ray Rambo's heuristic stage model has been mainly used. Various observations and findings allow the research to identify the flexibility of Rambo's stage model on the one hand and describe the complex process of religious change in her life on the other hand. Rambo uses the inter-disciplinary approach to formulate his heuristic model that consists of seven stages including context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences. To conclude her conversion, it seems necessary to present the recapitulation of the study. It will allow us to identify the reasons for her selection of Islam as "the true religion" and herself as a proponent of it.

Her life can be divided into the two parts: The time she spent in America (1934-1962) and the time when she stayed in Pakistan (1962-2012). She belongs to a reformed Jewish family that migrated from Germany to America during 1848-1860. Except her, the entire family wholeheartedly adopted the American outlook and later embraced Christianity. Her parents were staunch supporters of Zionism, but it never appealed to her. Unlike her family, she did not find satisfaction in the surrounding American society. According to her mother, Maira Marcus, she was a conservative child who used to complain about the absence of spirituality in the home. In sum, love of simple and traditional lifestyle, the impact of the World Wars, comparative study of the world religions, and love of classical music also identify her as a traditional as well as a conservative woman.

Although she received a secular education in the community public schools, she started taking interest in the religious studies from early childhood. Factors such as anti-Semitism, desire to find her roots, criticism of Orthodox Jews, the fear of the life after death, and attitude of parents and teachers motivated her to study the world religions. Her discovery of the connections between Jews and Muslims developed her interest in the Arab culture. Love of classical music introduced her to study the Holy Quran. Later, Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca* strengthened her ties with Arab culture and Islam even more. When she was in America, she suffered a number of religious, cultural, social, physical, and emotional crisis. She was struck multiple times in her life by severe nervous breakdowns. Before her acceptance of Islam, she went through a number of other religious conversions as well.

The chronological study of her life reveals that during her voyage in search of the "True Religion", on the one hand, she has joined various religious organizations such as Ethical Culture society, Mizrahi Hatzair, Young Women's Jewish Association, youth group at the Orthodox Synagogue, and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab's Bahai movement of New York. On the other hand, she has made conversions between following religions.

1. To Reform Judaism
2. To Orthodox Judaism.
3. To atheism/agonistic humanism.
4. To Bahatism.
5. To Islam.

It has been noted that non-observant behavior of Reform Jews in America encouraged her to renounce Reform Judaism and to embrace orthodoxy instead. Certain Jewish concepts such as the idea of the Hereafter, the purpose of life, born-Jew, Chosen People, Jewish Nationalism, the status of Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament, and Jewish Racialism has supported the decision to distance herself away from entire Jewish creed. Though she fails to find her ideals in Judaism, still she wants to embrace a religion akin to it. Unlike her family, she disapproves of

Christianity because of its concepts such as Trinity, Original Sin, Priesthood, Monasticism, the unclear concept of the Hereafter, acceptance of Secularism on principle, and support of Zionism. Similarly, she does not embrace Buddhism and Hinduism because of their exotic philosophies and denial of the realities of the material world.

The current study finds out that although she converts multiple times in her life, she does not show even a single intention to be converted to any other religion after embracing Islam. Present study coins the term 'multiple conversions' to describe her various processes of religious change. Consideration of the possibility of 'multiple conversions' contributes to better understanding of the reasons underlying her acceptance of Islam and her rejection of other world faiths.

She notices the dominance of materialistic conception of life over American culture. She considers many stories of the Old Testament as the sources of contemporary materialism. Therefore, she wants to adopt a civilization which can keep a balance between the life of this world and the Hereafter. Her in-depth study of the various translations of the Holy Quran helps her to find answers to the questions such as the concept of God, purpose of life, Hereafter, and the status of Hebrew prophets that later resulted in her conversion to Islam. Moreover, she makes it clear in her writings that her selection of Islam is not the result of any kind of mystical experience or dream.

However, the multiplicity of converting processes in her life also reveals some of the complexities that can be involved in the study of a single convert. Most of her conversions show her as an active agent while, some of her conversions (for example, adoption of agnostic humanism) contain a sense of passivity in them as well.

Through the comparative study of the 'multiple conversions', it has been traced out that the purpose of life and search for "absolute truth" and permanence also motivated her to join various religious organizations that made her embrace multiple faiths. Her study of Islam provides her such satisfactory answers that end

the continues process of her various conversions. She never uses the term *fitrah* or reversion to describe her conversion to Islam. However, chronological study of her 'multiple conversions' reveals the role of *fitrah* in her life.

Psychological factors involved in the multiple conversions of Jameelah also provided the opportunity to understand the emotional dimensions of her conversions. It has been observed that it was her fear of death that made her think about the purpose of life and the Hereafter. During her stay in the mental asylum, she vows to embrace Islam but after the rehabilitation, however, the demand of complete satisfaction motivates her to find and meet surrounding Muslims community. After meeting a number of individuals, she finally embraces Islam on May 24th, 1961. She makes it clear that she has always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament. Her conversion is merely a formality that involves no radical changes in her heart. Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca* put a huge impact on her thoughts. On the one hand, it motivates her to embrace Islam, and on the other hand, it gives her the necessary encouragement to find and to live in an Islamic community. Her intense wish to live a traditional and simple life, financial reasons, and scarcity of the Muslim community in America also intrigues her to accept the invitation of Abu A'la Maududi. With the permission of her parents, she migrates to Pakistan and started living as a family member in his home.

Her initial years at Pakistan bring pain and suffering in her life mainly because of her psychological problems, cultural shock, dispute with Maududi's family, and contact with Shaheer Niazi. Moreover, she observes the non-religious attitude of Pakistani Muslims that encourages her to write scholarly refusals of the Western ideals. After her marriage with Muhammad Yusuf Khan, she spends a satisfactory and relaxed life. She remained in contact with her parents and other family members for the rest of her life. her parents visit her multiple times after her marriage at the home of her husband in Lahore.

While drafting her thoughts about the various events, she seems to give a special importance to the factors related to her acceptance of Islam in comparison with her other conversions. Her 'multiple conversions' reveals that it is her demand

of complete satisfaction that moves her from one religious mode to another. Her conversion to Islam brings satisfaction in her life that plays an important role in resolving her psychological conflicts as well. However, treatment of her illness in Pakistan and her wish to live a simple and traditional lifestyle can also be considered as other factors of her rehabilitation. It has also been traced out that during her stay in Pakistan, she was strongly inclined towards Sufism and started practicing it.

Analysis of her 'multiple conversions' figures out that findings related to the context, crisis, and quest stages of Rambo's model are almost the same in her each conversion process whereas some differences are observed in the other stages of her conversions. Context as a stage is present in her every conversion. It has the potential to encourage or discourage a conversion. Both types of contexts are present in the conversions of Maryam Jameelah. Quest and crisis stages are also evident in her 'multiple conversions'. However, it is rather difficult to differentiate between both the stages. Her quest for purpose of life, absolute truth, and permanence keep her engaged in the process of 'multiple conversions'.

Encounter as a stage and the advocate as depicted by Rambo seem absent in some of her conversions. Therefore, it can be said that at least some stages of Rambo's model are Christian-centric or represents missionary religions. She is intrigued towards agnostic humanism due to the advocacy of her parents and teachers whereas she embraces atheism because of anthropomorphic conception of God. The scarcity of Muslim community and Islamic mission allow her to carry out her conversion to Islam without the help of any advocate. However, works of Muslim scholars such as Pickthall's *Meanings of The Glorious Quran*, Asad's *The Road To Mecca*, and Maududi's *Life after Death* can be considered as advocates in her conversion to Islam in one way or another.

Due to their strong relations with each other, interaction and commitment stages are also merged together in the study of her conversions. German-Jewish background and surrounding American culture indirectly encourage the processes and set the stage for her conversions. It is evident that dissatisfaction from Reform

Judaism leads her to embrace Orthodox Judaism. She embraced agnostic humanism due to the advocacy of her parents and teachers whereas meetings with American Muslims such as Halimah, Dr. Said Ramadan, Dr. Hoballah, Dr. Nur-ud-din Shoreibah, Khadijah Faisal, and Daoud Ahmad Faisal encourage her to embrace Islam.

Consequences, the post-conversion stage of Rambo's model, allows to understand the problems faced by her after her conversions. It also allows to identify the reasons of her migration to Pakistan. Rambo regards mystical experiences as the catalysts of religious change. She notes that she does not have any kind of mystical experiences or dreams before her *shahādah*. However, after her conversion to Islam, she has shown an inclination towards Sufism as she has narrated at least one dream/vision. Therefore, it can be said that Rambo's stage model does not deal with such mystical experiences that happen after the conversion.

Study of her writings reveals that while she was considering Islam, she wants to embrace it as a religion and as a civilization. She mentions in her *My Life Story* that the later aspect of her conversion is "even more important" for her. Almost all her publications start with the story of her acceptance of Islam that also reveals the strong connections between her conversion and criticism of Western civilization. Since her childhood, she felt the strong influence of secular culture and Christianity over Judaism. Factors such as the Western mood of living, Reform Judaism especially the work of Moses Mendelssohn, the industrial revolution, love of natural beauty, the nonobservant attitude of parents, the genocide of red Indians, and love of classical music cause her to abhor to modernism and Western civilization. Later, when she finds Muslim scholars such as Syed Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh following the path of the Westerners, she makes up her mind to write scholarly refusals of the Western ideals. Asad's depiction of Arabia, rejection of Western civilization, and presentation of traditional Islamic culture also motivate her strongly to follow his path. Therefore, she starts writing on Islam and Arab culture at the age of twelve. She regards Asad's *Islam at the Crossroads* as

the foundation of her academic career. Moreover, like Asad, she gives a special importance to her personal experiences as well.

Her criticism of Western civilization can be divided into two parts. First, she criticizes the Western civilization by evaluating its philosophical sources and second, she criticizes the scholars of Islam through hundreds of her book reviews. Her criticism of modernism or Western civilization was multiplied after her migration to Pakistan. Therefore, many scholars recognize her as a polemicist who represents a conservative and fundamentalist view of Islam. For them, Maududi's guardianship plays a significant role in this regard. However, she strongly refuses to accept such proposals in her books.

Although her writings can be considered polemical as she herself is fully aware of her bitterness of Western civilization, it is not only the polemics that she used to write. She can be seen as a passionate traditionalist writer as well who, from her earlier days, used to honor the moral and spiritual teachings of the world religions. Even the bitter criticism of Orthodox Jews is fully embraced by her in this regard. Her letters, as noted by some scholars, are the best example of her traditionalist attitude. Her *My Life Story* reveals that, after her *Hijrah*, the experiences of surrounding Muslim community convinced her to strongly reject the modern Western philosophies. Therefore, she severely criticizes the modernist attitude of every scholar of Islam. She considers modernism as a militant revolt against the spiritual and transcendental values of the world religions.

She traces out that modernism or westernization are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, she rejects to accept the universality of Western culture or modernism and argues that to make it a global phenomenon, equal participation of all civilizations is necessary. She emphasizes that philosophies such as atheism, feminism, materialism, modernism, orientalism, nationalism and westernization share the same ideological framework and goals. In all forms, Man-worship is one of its main characteristics. For her, Darwinism, through its theory of evolution, provides the philosophical basis to these ideologies. She finds the strong impact of such philosophies on traditional teachings of the world religions and argues that

most ancient civilizations of the world were based upon some religious foundations that were resistive to atheism and materialism. However, it is the Western civilization that allows these philosophies to organize and establish their militant movements which proved destructive to the heritage of other civilizations as well.

Although, she praises modernism to bring advancements in the medicine, science, teaching, and technology, she argues that opposite to the Islamic scientific revolution, the modern Western sciences led by atheists and materialists, are destructive to the traditional, spiritual, moral, environmental, and social order. Therefore, she suggests to embrace traditional orthodoxy instead in all world religions. She is convinced beyond doubt that the modern Western culture is incompatible with Islam and conflicts with it in every way. She observes that it is not a new phenomenon that Muslims are confronting the issue of foreign influence. In the past, philosophers such as Abū Naṣr Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd constructed similar conclusions being influenced by Greek philosophy but scholars like Imam Ghazali refuted their ideas. Therefore, she suggests to accept the whole Islamic tradition including the Holy Quran, the *Sunnah*, legacy of four schools of *fiqh*, Sufism, the entire Islamic civilization, culture, and history as she thinks it will lead Muslims towards practical solutions.

It should be taken into consideration that reform of Mendelssohn and nonobservant behavior of American Jews motivates her to reject modernism and to embrace the traditional aspects of religion. Therefore, she shows a great interest in the traditional teachings of the world religions but severely criticizes all kinds of religious reforms. She notes that majority of the Western scholars use Christian framework combined with modern materialistic outlook to study Islam. Hence, most of them suggest secularism as the panacea for Muslim countries. On the other hand, for her, many Muslim scholars also use the Western imported ideas and suggest reforms to make Islam compatible with the modern age. She criticizes both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike and maintains that Islam does not need any sort of reforms or changes. She insists that it is Muslims who need to be changed.

Jameelah spends a big part of her life in the search of absolute truth and permanence. She finds her efforts worthwhile after her study of Islam and therefore, she accepts it as her "true religion". Later, when she discovers that being influenced by the theory of evolution, modern scholars are trying to deny the presence of permanence and absolute truth in the real life, she decides to spend the rest of her life in defending these ideals by criticizing modern philosophies as well as its advocates through her writings. She is fully confident that everything does not require change and progress for its perfection.

Recommendations

This thesis suggests following recommendations for further researches:

1. Give a special importance to the religious aspect of conversion while not forgetting the historical, social, political, or psychological dimensions of conversion.
2. It is needed to give consideration to the study of conversion to Islam in order to verify and develop theories and models of conversion according to the findings.
3. It is needed to check the possibility of 'multiple conversions' both in active and passive converts.
4. While giving importance to the advocate, one should also need to consider the factors that de-advocate conversion process.
5. Give a special importance to the context and personal testimony of converts.
6. Check the nature of advocate-convert relationship throughout the conversion process.
7. Give a special consideration to active converts in order to find his/her advocacy of conversion to other people.
8. Check the cultural as well as religious specificity of conversion models.
9. The impact of the Holy Quran played a vital role in the conversion of Maryam Jameelah, therefore, it is recommended to check the psychological impact of sacred scriptures in the life and conversion of a person.
10. It is also needed to study the Jewish converts to Islam during the period of Israel-Palestine conflict and vice versa.
11. A comparative study of the conversions of Muhammad Asad and Maryam Jameelah is also vividly needed. Through this research, one can try to find out the elements, events and characteristics involved in the converting process of active German converts to Islam in 20th century on the one hand, and their views, ideas, and approaches to understand and describe the Western civilization and Islam on the other.

Glossary

Term	Explanation
<i>Dā'ī</i>	A person who is engaged in <i>Dawah</i> or the Islamic mission.
<i>Dīn</i>	A word mainly used to explain the religion or creed of Islam.
<i>Fatwa</i>	A ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority.
<i>Fiqh</i>	Literary, deep understanding", usually refers to Muslim jurisprudence.
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	Words, actions or habits of the Holy prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
<i>Halacha</i>	Jewish Law
<i>Hudūd</i>	Punishments that are mandated and fixed by Allah.
<i>Kāfir</i>	Non-Muslim or a person who do not believe in Allah.
<i>Maskilim</i>	Member of Haskalah.
<i>Madhhab</i>	Mainly used in Arabic to present different schools of <i>Fiqh</i> or Islamic jurisprudence.
<i>Muhadith</i>	The teacher of <i>Hadith</i> .
<i>Mujaddid</i>	Reformer of religion.
<i>Ṣalāt</i>	Islamic prayer.
<i>Shahādah</i>	To testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His last messenger.
<i>Shariah</i>	Islamic Law
<i>Sunnah</i>	The practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
<i>Ummah</i>	The whole community bound together by the ties of religion.
<i>Wudhu</i>	Islamic procedure of washing different body parts, ablution.

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