

SWEET BREEZE

Many non-Muslims are in search of guidance as they feel frustrated and despaired with their beliefs. However, they have a negative portrayal of Islam. They are visiting Muslim homes and mosques to learn about Islam. A Muslim's attitude and behavior can help guide them to Islam.

Muslims have to present not only model behavior, but also to keep their places of worship clean and appropriately setup. Muslims must prove in practice that Islam gives high preference to cleanliness and good manners.

Islam in America has been portrayed as intolerant, violent, and a religion of the sword. The electronic and print media still display these negative images. Muslims living in Europe and America have to adopt highly sober and wise methods of Da'wah(a call to Islam) to pave the way for Islam.

Passing the Center, a non-Muslim stopped in one day as he had a negative image on Islam. His intention was to confirm his views about Islam and Muslims.

Upon entering the Center, he was entertained politely and served tea. After some time he started to open up and asked many questions. Each of

his questions was answered in due manner and concerns, with chatting and smiling. The discussion took more than an hour. Upon leaving, he stated that he had never felt more at peace in his life as he felt during that hour at the Center.

A visitor wrote:

"My friend wasn't home, so I was chatting with her mom. I mentioned the trip to the Islamic Center, and we started talking about the religion. I could not believe how anti-Islamic Natalie's mom was. She talked about how Muslims kill each other and kill Christians and how they're so awful."

Another visitor wrote:

"Through watching movies and other forms of entertainment, a stereotype of the Muslim religion was formed in my mind. The trip to the Center has shattered many of those stereotypes. One of those stereotypes was that the Islamic religion was solely composed of blacks and people from the Middle East, most of who were poor and lived bad lives. This stereotype was shattered when I saw people of all ethnic groups and backgrounds praying to Allah."

Another visitor wrote:

"When we were sitting in the prayer room as people came in, I saw people of all races come in and pray in the same way to the same God. White people, black people, and other

nationalities all gathered in the same room for the same goal. Also, the way these people welcomed and embraced each other was truly a touching sight. I witnessed whites and blacks clasp each other's hands and greet each other with kindness and compassion. Seeing this happen made me feel like there was still some hope for this world."

"After seeing the way people in the Islamic Center acted, and listening to the lecture and responses to our questions, I began to wonder why this form of treatment and equality seemed to exist in that one building. I began thinking why people can't simply act like the people in the Islamic Center acted. They seemed to me like people who cared about equality and justice... These people were of all different races, yet they treated each other as if they were of the same race. Why have I never seen such feeling anywhere else I have ever been?"

A Visitor wrote:

"This trip to the Islamic Center meant a lot to me. I now see why Malcolm X's trip to Mecca changed him for the better. I also have a different look upon life, praying and the value of life. I took a Physical journey as well as an inspirational journey to and through the Islamic Center."

"I left the Islamic Center that day with an overall greater understanding of the Islamic religion, than I had gotten from Malcolm X's interpretation of true Islam in his autobiography and the video on his life combined. I am currently agnostic, but if I must end up choosing a religion, I would choose the Islamic religion. I agree with its philosophies and religious ideals. It would be the most fulfilling religion for me."

A Visitor wrote:

"In the Islamic Center, I couldn't help but notice a difference between Muslims and many Christians. This became my belief during the question and answer portion of our trip. Each Muslim was able to answer every question asked with clear, educated responses. They really had a complete understanding of their religion, and had complete faith in it. To them, to falter from one aspect of Islam was to falter from Islam as a whole. Nowadays, there are many Christians who go to Church and pray because it is a habit and nothing more. When I walk into Catholic Church, for example, I don't feel the complete sincerity that I did in the Islamic Center. The Islamic Center opened my eyes to many things, such as the devotion of Muslims to the religion and the differences between Muslims and many Christians.

About the status of women in Islam, one visitor wrote:

"One of the big problems I used to have with Islam was that I thought women were treated with no respect. I thought their dress and being separated from the men was to show that they were inferior. At the Islamic Center I found out that wasn't the case at all. They told us all the reasons for the dress of women and separation. The dress, they said, was a matter of modesty and a symbol of honor. Also, the separated service was because of the close body positions while praying...It makes me feel good that there is such a wonderful community in our area. I am eager to find out more about Islam and hope to show to some people that this is a legitimate and honorable religion."

The first thing non-Muslims do upon entering a Mosque/Center is to notice its setup and cleanliness. One day some shoes were left carelessly in the middle of the hallway rather than on the shoe rack. Some non-Muslims noticed that and started to put the shoes in their proper place. There was a great lesson to be learned by all Muslims who may have noticed the behavior and consideration of the non-Muslims in the Mosque.

May Allah (swt) guide us to follow Islam (Amin).

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