



French Muslim Sister Caroline Says:

** Allah has bestowed on me the honor of visiting Ameer al- (as) Shrine, and I have been granted the blessing of performing Hajj twice.*

** Islam has helped me protect myself against the enticement of being drifted by fashion; Islam has also taught me how to respect myself.*

** The blind imitation of the West by eastern girls, including some Muslim girls, will never change my conviction of following the method of Islam in thought and ethics.*

It was a good coincidence that enabled Noor al-Islam Magazine to have this interview with the French Muslim young woman Caroline, whom a Lebanese Muslim young woman met while they were on a religious tour in the holy shrines of Najaf.

The interview with the guided sister was conducted by the magazine reporter in the presence of her Lebanese host who had invited her to come to Lebanon.

Q: Could you tell us briefly about the place where you were born and about your childhood?

A: My name is Caroline Rousset. I was born in the French town of Beaune. I spent my childhood in Southern France, 50 kilometers from the city of Avignon to which the famous French children song “Sur le Pont d'Avignon” refers.

I spent my childhood near that bridge, but was never attracted to dancing. I grew up in a Christian family. I finished high school and got a baccalaureate in Social and Medical Sciences. I wanted to major in medical sciences and prepare myself to become a nurse and serve in the Health Department of the army; therefore, I volunteered in the female service unit to get the needed

experience in the military domain, but after a year and a half, I could not take the strict order anymore, so I decided to continue my studies as a civilian nurse.

During my last training course which I did in the hospital, I met a Lebanese Muslim doctor. I was surprised at the respect he showed to women. He also introduced me to Lebanese brothers and sisters from whom I received good treatment and respect. The relation between the Lebanese Muslim and myself got stronger and we decided to get married.

Q: How did your family and friends react to your conversion to Islam?

A: I have been open-minded towards all Muslims, although I have chosen to follow the teachings of Ahlul-Bait (as). My choice of Islam as a faith has been respected by my family members who dealt with me out of their great love for me, notwithstanding their primary refusal because of the change in my outlook, especially the hejab, the new habits and the flowing clothing, for I began to wear long loose dresses instead of short tight ones; they were worried about my future, so, for nine years, they have maintained a gradual, but constant, contact with the Islamic conduct via my husband. My parents understood these standings, and I have spared no effort to influence them and bring them over to Islam

through showing them that the life that we are living is short and fleeting and that it will lead us to another life. We have had long discussions about the aspects of our existence such as happiness, misery, death and life.

Q: Has Islam left a good mark on your personal life?

A: My heart is filled with confidence that I am, Inshallah, moving on the Right Path, the path of those whom Allah has favored and guided to Right.

Islam has made me a patient person, made my spirit tranquil, gave my conscience comfort, and provided me with the ability to distinguish between good and evil.

Q: How do you see the West's standing on Islam?

A: The Westerners want to adapt Islam to fit within their method. The issue of hejab has been put forward strongly, especially in intermediate and high schools; it is allowed in universities. The outlook is too important for the westerners because of the stereotypes they already have about Islam and Muslims. We hope that they will understand the truth of Islam better in the future and distinguish between the acts of some individuals who are affiliated with Islam and those who represent the reality and essence of this affiliation. What distinguishes Islam from the Western methods is the fact that the West organizes its outer laws, whereas Islam organizes its laws from

within and without the human being's self, and the Sharia (Islamic Law) refines and cultivates the Muslim.

Q: What is your advice to Western Muslim women?

A: The suffering is not easy; however, we cannot give up to the difficulties. Besides, I advise them not to take Islam from Muslims alone, but to go back to the Holy Quran, the Purified Apostle's (pbuh) Sunnah and Ahlul-Bait's (as) teachings, for we don't want an Islam that has been adapted to fit some of the West's methods and educational and social systems. Some Westerners see hejab as a phenomenon of backwardness, although hejab is one of Islam's signs that are clear in outfit and behavior. Hejab is not a political symbol or factional sign, as some Westerners believe, it is rather an ethical symbol that indicates the woman's commitment to what protects her from temptations, indecency, and drifting to the fashion fads that the West promotes.

Besides, some Westerners want us to follow a void Islam that has nothing to do with the real Islam.

Q: What do you have to say about the conduct of some Muslim men and women?

A: I owe my faith in the Right Method to some Muslims through whom I had the chance to get acquainted with Ahlul-Bait's (as) teachings. However, I did not expect to see that the majority of Muslims do

not observe the teachings of Islam, for the faith is an ethical deterrent that restricts one's acts. The human being is usually driven by his or her instincts and personal desires. The title 'Hajj', for instance, makes the one who carries it a respectable person, but the criterion is in the essence and content, not in the outlook.

The Jihad that the Prophet (pbuh) meant and called "the greater Jihad" is a constant and hard one.

Q: What do you think the future of Islam will be?

A: The West's lack of values, which had been lost due to the materialistic culture, will make it look for salvation in Islam. The excessive-freedom method which the West has adopted is responsible for its tragedies. It has also increased the cases of frustration and depression, because the people do not have moral criteria and restrictions, nor do they have identified limits.

Q: Your advice to our readers.

A: I advise them not to fear anything as long as they are acting in line with the Divine Path, for Allah will always be with us. When we take one step for Allah's sake, He will guide us, remove the obstacles that may come in our way, enlighten our insights, and show us the path of good and success.