SECTION 2: SHAHADAH: SUPPORTING NEW MUSLIMS

Make the Invitation

The final stage in your dawah conversation (if it reaches this stage), is to formally invite them to Islam. Again, sincerity is key — be sincere in asking them if they want to accept Islam. Remember, whether they do or not, is not in your hands. Guidance is in the hands of Allah. So, make the invitation. It can be as simple as "David, after having this discussion on Islam, and now you know much more about this religion, I'd like to know your thoughts. Does it make sense to you? Does it make more sense than what you currently believe in? If it does, then I would sincerely ask you to think about it and I invite you to accept Islam as your religion and way of life"

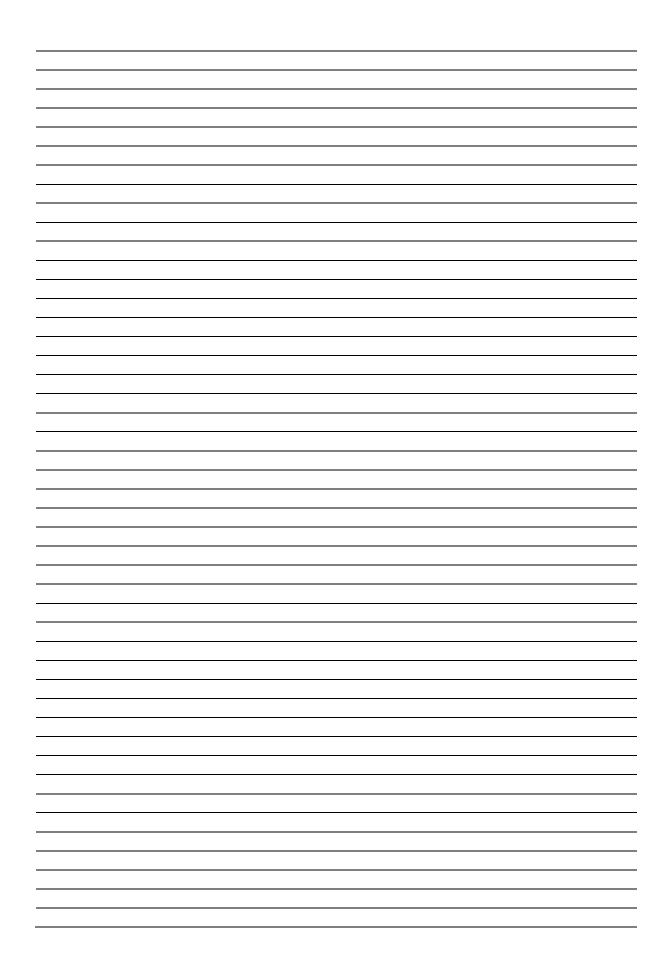
If they don't accept, don't think your dawah ends there. Give them space and time. Inform them of your local dawah organization or masjid if they have any follow-up questions. If they do accept, then be sure to have a support system in place! You must be loving and genuinely care for your new brother or sister and become a support mechanism for them. Love goes a long way...all the way to jannah. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us "You will not enter Paradise until you (truly) believe, and you will not (truly) believe until you love one another." (Muslim)

Developing New Muslims

It is highly important that everyone involved in dawah understands the following: dawah is not only to call to Islam, but it is also to establish a support system for those that accept Islam. Based on a significant amount of cases, there seems to be an incorrect assumption made about dawah and new Muslim support, as if they are two separate entities. That is, dawah is something that is very active – both nationally and internationally – with thousands of people coming to Islam every year; however, there is not an effective follow-up system or plan for new Muslims.

From the little research that has been done on this topic, the reality is that: Between 40-50% of converts are not remaining upon Islam or not becoming practising Muslims. This means little importance is placed on developing new Muslims or a lack of understanding of what developing new Muslim entails.

| After a lengthy discussion with David and after you invite him to accept Islam, David agrees and is ready to take the shahadah. Alhamdulillah — he is now a Muslim! Now it is time to think about your new Muslim plan for David. Put a plan in place to help David on his new journey as a Muslim. Also consider what type of advice you would give him. |
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New Muslim Plan

Ultimately, when a person accepts Islam, the focus shifts totally on him/her. All dawah activities should be stopped and the development, support and mentorship for the new Muslim should begin.

- Advice: Welcome David and shower him with love, as they were guided by Allah are now part of the biggest brotherhood/sisterhood in humanity. Tell him to take it slow and steady. This is a journey, not a race. Like on any journey, we need to be well-prepared. We need to know that we will encounter hardships, difficulties, moments of ease and pleasure. But it is all worth it, because this journey is to Allah and to His Paradise. Also assure him that he will have the support and help of his brothers on this journey as we are all going in the same direction.
- Shahadah Review: Go over the shahadah one more time with David, preferably before he takes it. The reason for this is so that his decision to take the shadahah is an informed decision. Does he truly understand what it means and entails? Any new Muslim that takes the shahadah should realise that this statement has implications one must abide by:
 - I. **Entering into a covenant with Allah**: A commitment to worship Him alone, and not worshipping anyone or anything else but Him
 - 2. **Taking the Prophet as our role-model**: Our example of guidance in terms of worshipping Allah and living a life pleasing to Him.
- Other ideas include: Connecting them with a mentor, to the masjid, stay in regular contacts with them and make du'a for them.

| | Pour take David to the local masjid, and introduce him to the local brothers and the imam. You even pair him up with a New Muslim mentor. David is still a new Muslim. He is still going through situations where he would need support at any odd time. Who should you make David's first point of contact? |
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New Muslim Plan (Part 2) – Focus on Allah

The first and best contact David should be provided with is Allah - through Salah & Du'a. While it is important to connect a new Muslim to the masjid and other mentors, the most important focus is to connect them to Allah and build their spiritual relationship. Therefore, the first thing you focus on is the salah! Salah! Practically, everything else is secondary. The most important thing is to get the new Muslim to establish a relationship with Allah. It is only through connecting with Allah will life's problems be dealt with. Salah also prevents evil and wrongdoing.

| Use the P.R.A.Y. with E.A.S.E. methodology for salah (see Appendix A). Empower them with the relevant tools so they will be equipped with the correct mind-set in dealing with the challenges that they will face as a believer and to become positive contributors to society. |
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