

**ASRA NOMANI**  
**JOURNALIST/AUTHOR**

Asra Q. Nomani is the author of the critically-acclaimed *Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* and of *Tantrika: Traveling the Road of Divine Love*.

A former *Wall Street Journal* correspondent, Nomani has also written for the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *Time* magazine on Islam. After Sept. 11, 2001, she went to Pakistan to cover the war in Afghanistan for *Salon*. She risked great danger in helping to lead the hunt to find kidnapped fellow reporter and friend, Daniel Pearl, who was visiting her home with his wife, Mariane Pearl, when he left for the interview from which Muslim militants kidnapped and murdered him. Her character figures prominently in *A Mighty Heart*, the film based on the life and death of Pearl at the hands of Pakistani militants, starring Angelina Jolie. Nomani also taught "The Pearl Project: The Search for Who Killed Daniel Pearl" at Georgetown University in 2007.

After Pakistan, Nomani returned to her hometown of Morgantown, WV, where she lives with her son Shibli. She has become a writer-activist dedicated to reclaiming women's rights and principles of tolerance in the Muslim world. Nomani challenged rules at her mosque in Morgantown that required women enter through a back door and pray in a secluded balcony and is on trial at her mosque to be banished. As a volunteer at the Rape and Domestic Violence Shelter in Morgantown, Nomani recognized that efforts to bring about social justice include challenging power and control that retaliate with intimidation and abuse.

Undaunted, Nomani is the founder and creator of the Muslim Women's Freedom Tour. In 2005, she posted on the doors of her mosque in Morgantown "99 Precepts for Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors in the Muslim World" and was the lead organizer of a Muslim prayer in New York City in which a woman led men and women in prayer, an act that represented a watershed moment in the history of Islam. She was a visiting scholar at the Center for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University her career as an investigative reporter prepared her for a journey in which she has been trying to uncover the true beauty of Islam, hidden behind centuries of manmade rules and traditions. She is committed to seeing hearts, minds and doors open in the Muslim world as part of a wider vision for world peace.

Born in Bombay, India into a modern but conservative Muslim family, Nomani came to the United State at age of four and was raised in the foothills of West Virginia.

**TOPICS:**

- The Paradox of Women in Islam
- The Fight for International Women's Rights
- Danny Pearl: The Truth Left Behind