

## Natassia M. Kelly, Ex-Christian, USA (part 2 of 2)

**Description:** After reading literature and discussing belief with various Muslim girls, Natassia accepts Islam at age 15.

By Natassia M. Kelly

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Stories of New Muslims](#) > [Women](#)

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Something happened in my life in which the little faith I did have decreased to all but nothing. My search came to a stop. I no longer searched within myself, the Bible, or church. I had given up for a while. I was a very bitter person until one day a friend gave me a book. It was called "The Muslim-Christian Dialogue."

I took the book and read it. I am ashamed to say that during my searching never did I once consider another religion. Christianity was all I knew, and I never thought about leaving it. My knowledge of Islam was very minimal. In fact, it was mainly filled with misconception and stereotypes. The book surprised me. I found that I was not the only one who believed there was a simply a God. I asked for more books. I received them as well as pamphlets.

I learned about Islam from an intellectual aspect. I had a close friend who was Muslim and I often asked her questions about the practices. Never did I once consider Islam as my faith. Many things about Islam alienated me.

After a couple months of reading, the month of Ramadan began. Every Friday, I could I joined the local Muslim community for the breaking of the fast and the reciting of the Quran. I posed questions that I may have come across to the Muslim girls. I was in awe at how someone could have so much certainty in what they believed and followed. I felt myself drawn to the religion that alienated me.

Having believed for so long that I was alone, Islam did comfort me in many ways. Islam was brought as a reminder to the world. It was brought to lead the people back to the right path.

Beliefs were not the only thing important to me. I wanted a discipline to pattern my life by. I did not just want to believe someone was my savior and through this I held the ticket to Heaven. I wanted to know how to act to receive the approval of God. I wanted a closeness to God. I wanted to be God-conscious. Most of all I wanted a chance for heaven. I began to feel that Christianity did not give this to me, but Islam did.

I continued learning more. I went to the Eid celebration (the celebrative day following the fast of Ramadan and the rite of Hajj) and [Friday] and weekly classes with my friends.

Through religion one receives peace of mind. A calmness about them. This I had off and on for about three years. During the off times I was more susceptible to the temptations of Satan. In early February of 1997, I came to the realization that Islam was

right and true. However, I did not want to make any hasty decisions. I did decide to wait.

Within this duration, the temptations of Satan increased. I can recollect two dreams in which he was a presence. Satan was calling me to him. After I awoke from these nightmares I found solace in Islam. I found myself repeating the Shahadah. These dreams almost made me change my mind. I confided them in my Muslim friend. She suggested that maybe Satan was there to lead me from the truth. I never thought of it that way.

On March 19, 1997 after returning from a weekly class, I recited the Shahadah to myself. Then on March 26, I recited it before witnesses and became an official Muslim.

I cannot express the joy I felt. I cannot express the weight that was lifted from my shoulders. I had finally received my peace of mind.

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It has been about five months since I recited the Shahadah. Islam has made me a better person. I am stronger now and understand things more. My life has changed significantly. I now have purpose. My purpose is to prove myself worthy of eternal life in Heaven. I have my long sought after faith. Religion is a part of me all the time. I am striving everyday to become the best Muslim I can be.

People are often amazed at how a fifteen year old can make such an important decision in life. I am grateful that God blessed me with my state of mind that I was able to find it so young.

Striving to be a good Muslim in a Christian dominated society is hard. Living with a Christian family is even harder. However, I do not try to get discouraged. I do not wish to dwell on my present predicament, but I believe that my jihad is simply making me stronger. Someone once told me that I am better off than some people who were born into Islam, in that I had to find, experience, and realize the greatness and mercy of God. I have acquired the reasoning that seventy years of life on earth is nothing compared to eternal life in Paradise.

I must admit that I lack the aptitude to express the greatness, mercy, and glory of God. I hope my account helped others who may feel the way I felt or struggle the way I struggled.

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