

Aminah Assilmi, Ex-Christian, USA (part 2 of 4)

Description: After discussing Islam with a faithful Muslim, she accepts Islam, but with her own conditions!

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His name was Abdulaziz Alshaikh, and he made the time. He was very patient and discussed every question with me. He never made me feel silly or that a question was stupid. He asked me if I believed there was only one God and I said yes. Then he asked if I believed Mohammed, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was His Messenger. Again I said yes. He told me that I was already a Muslim!

I argued that I was Christian, I was just trying to understand Islam. (Inside I was thinking: I couldn't be a Muslim! I was American and white! What would my husband say? If I am Muslim, I will have to divorce my husband. My family would die!)

We continued talking. Later, he explained that attaining knowledge and understanding of spirituality was a little like climbing a ladder. If you climb a ladder and try to skip a few rungs, there was danger of falling. The Shahadah was just the first step on the ladder. Still we had to talk some more.

Later that afternoon, May 21, 1977 at Asr', I took Shahadah. However, there were still some things I could not accept, and it was my nature to be completely truthful, so I added a disclaimer. I said: "I bear witness that there is no god but God and Mohammed is His Messenger" 'but, I will never cover my hair and if my husband takes another wife, I will castrate him.'

I heard gasps from the other men in the room, but Abdulaziz silenced them. Later I learned that he told the brothers never to discuss those two subjects with me. He was sure I would come to the correct understanding.

The Shahadah was indeed a solid footing on the ladder to spiritual knowledge and closeness to God. But it has been a slow climb. Abdulaziz continued to visit me and answer my questions. May God reward him for his patience and tolerance. He never admonished me or acted like a question was stupid or silly. He treated each question with dignity and told me that the only stupid question was the one never asked. Hmmm... my grandmother used to say that.

He explained that God had told us to seek knowledge, and questions were one of the ways to accomplish that. When he explained something, it was like watching a rose open - petal by petal, until it reached its full glory. When I told him that I did not agree with something and why, he always said I was correct up to a point. Then he would show me how to look deeper and from different directions to reach a fuller understanding. Alhamdulillah [To God is all praise]!

Over the years, I had many teachers. Each one special, each one different. I am thankful for each one of them and the knowledge they gave. Each teacher helped me to grow and to love Islam more. As my knowledge increased, the changes in me became more apparent. Within the first year, I was wearing hijab. I have no idea when I started. It came naturally, with increased knowledge and understanding. In time, I even came to be a proponent of polygamy. I knew that if God had allowed it, there had to be something good in it.

"Glorify the name of thy Guardian - Lord Most High, Who hath created, and further, given order and proportion; Who hath measured, and granted guidance; and Who bringeth out the (green and lush) pasture, and doth make it (but) swarthy stubble, We shall make you to recite (the Quran), so do not forget, except as God wills: for He knoweth what is manifest and what is hidden. And We will make it easy for thee (to follow) the simple (path)." (Quran 87:1-8)

When I first started to study Islam, I did not expect to find anything that I needed or wanted in my personal life. Little did I know that Islam would change my life. No human could have ever convinced me that I would finally be at peace and overflowing with love and joy because of Islam.

This book spoke of THE ONE GOD, THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. It described the beautiful way in which He had organized the world. This wondrous Quran had all the answers. God is The Loving! God is the Source of Peace! God is the Protector! God is the Forgiver! God is the Provider! God is the Maintainer! God is the Generous One! God is the Responsive! God is the Protecting Friend! God is the Expander!

"Have we not expanded thee thy breast? And removed from thee thy burden the which did gall thy back? And raised high the esteem (in which) thou (art held)? So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: Verily, with every difficulty there is relief!" (Quran 94:1-6)

The Quran addressed all the issues of existence and showed a clear path to success. It was like a map forgiving, an owner manual for life!

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