

“MI”, EX-CHRISTIAN, USA (PART 3 OF 3)

Rating: 4.8

Description: The daughter of a southern Baptist preacher finds her way to Islam. Part 3: Sincere soul searching and questioning finally bring her to Islam.

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On one particular night of paying half attention to my instructor and the other half to the relentless thoughts I had regarding faith and religion, I began to write down my thoughts and questions. There was an African sister who had married interracially and was Christian sitting to my near left. I knew she was proud of being a Christian and it brought her that same joy I used to have. I passed her the piece of paper for her to attempt to answer. On a restroom break, she tried to answer questions about the trinity, sin and atonement but for some reason, the precepts she was speaking I knew of but now did not understand. The scholarly, quiet Muslim girl was sitting behind the Christian girl. I passed her the same note. To my surprise, she wrote down answers that were so clear and concrete. Her body language was subtle; she was not leaning in writing frantically trying to convert me to her faith whereas the other sister did. She wrote down some websites I would be able to visit which had more explanation.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED? Why did I even ask the Muslim girl? Did I just throw a wrench yet again into my whole identity? With the clear answers she provided, if I were a minister, how could I share the gospel with her and convert her? Since she was from another country originally, she had no concept of atonement or of a triune God.

Once home after writing papers and when my husband had gone to work, I would visit websites about Islam. Most of the sites had consistent information. The sites that seemed spooky, calling *Salat* contact prayer for example, were obviously not what I was looking for. Praise be unto Allah, looking back, it was only me searching for these answers with no one to interpret what I was reading and I could cipher through what wasn't Islam. I looked up everything I could find. I had become obsessed with religion and the search for what felt right. I came to the conclusion that there had to be only one God. I considered atheism but the natural world, the human body, the force within us that makes us who we are were too intricate to be some cosmic coincidence or accident. It came down to Judaism or Islam.

Meanwhile, as semesters went by, my personal life began to unravel. I presented the findings I had on Islam to my husband. He did not like it one bit. He didn't speak to me for 2 days. When he was ready to talk, he stated that he didn't understand where all of this was coming from or why I wanted to spend so much time at school or with school

friends. With his complete disapproval and the knowledge that he would not convert, I studied in secret. With two babies, a constant tugging on my heart, and a similar gut feeling about the matters at hand, I had to make some decisions. One night, I was online witnessing a person take *shahada* or their declaration of faith. I began to cry uncontrollably and I still till this day do not know why nor can I explain what I was feeling. A few days later I took mine all alone. I even did it on three different occasions to make certain.

During my search, there were many opinions regarding religion and faith. Most of the people who were atheists, agnostics, or apostates of Islam had seen injustice or experienced some hardship they placed on God. I made sure not to do this. I made sure to consider all arguments, to retract my blasphemous statements to God when I was angry with Him and trusted that any action I committed based on some feeling of faith was not any fault of God. I have heard arguments about how people whose faith is low are more susceptible to having someone be able to convert them. I don't believe that this was the case for me. I would rather take the position that I was always searching for what God wanted me to do. Did He want these bodily actions of worship: the louder the better? Did He intend for us to be segregated by color or culture? Despite having clinical depression and questions, I feel that I owed it to myself to make the most coherent, sound, clear decision. I would love to say that life became easier, that there were butterflies and rainbows and I lived happily ever after but that is not the case. My marriage ended and I am the only Muslim in my family of course. I struggle with the prayers since my concept of worship was completely different. Many reverts disclose how they've attained so much peace through prayer or how they've felt this tug in their hearts but that was a struggle for me. My personal conflicts as a Muslim deal with culture versus the faith, and the feeling of simply standing all alone donned in hijab for the sake of my beliefs. However, the most beautiful thing to me after becoming a Muslim is that finally, I have answered prayers and questions. This brings me a great deal of peace and makes my struggle minute in comparison to the benefits I've gained.

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