

## Amirah:

### This is the story of how I became Muslim

I was born in Arkansas to Christian parents, who were also born in Arkansas. In fact as far back as I can trace all of my family has come from the Southern states here in the United States. I was raised here all my life on a farm, where you get up in the morning, milk cows, feed the chickens and do the rest of the chores. My father was a Baptist minister, which is just a sect. of Christianity, such as Catholics, Methodist, etc.

The town that I lived in was completely white raced and all Christians. In fact this was the scenario in a 300 mile radius of me. So I had never been exposed to any other cultures or religions. But I had always been taught that we were all created equal in the eyes of God, and that there was no difference in race, color, culture or religious practices. Later I discovered that this was easy for them to preach and teach as long as they stayed closed minded and these other people did not invade their world.

The first time I seen a Muslim was while I was in college at the University of Arkansas. I will admit at first I stared at the women in their “different clothing”. But the first time I had the opportunity to get to know a Muslim lady that I felt comfortable with in asking questions, it started a thirst in my heart and soul that will never be quenched. Alhamdulillah!!!

I will never forget her and I would sit for hours listening to stories about her country and the culture, but what intrigued me most was her religion...Islam. This lady had an inner peace about her. Like no one I had ever seen. I can remember so well even today her telling me about the prophets, peace be upon them, and ALLAH (swt). Even though I had never voiced this to anyone, I had always questioned in my mind the concept of what Christians called the “trinity” and why we had to pray to Jesus (pbuh) and not to God directly, and why so much emphasis was put on “Christ” and not God.

My friend did everything she could do to convince me that Islam was the only religion that would take me to heaven, and that it was not just another religion, it was a way of life. My friend graduated six months later and returned Home. During this time I had met and made friends with a lot of people from the Middle East. They also helped me deal with the lost of my friend. This was also when I came to love the Arabic language. It was beautiful.

I would listen to their tapes of the Qur’an for hours, even though I didn’t have any idea what they were saying. Even today, I love to have someone read to me from the Qur’an, and I still can’t understand what is being said, but it still touches my heart and soul. I didn’t have time to really learn any Arabic in college, I was lucky to remember my homework assignment. But I am trying very hard now to learn how to speak and read it, Insha’Allah. And for those who have ever listened to me speaking Arabic or typing in “Arabic English”, they can tell you I have along way to go. And I thank them for their patience and “tutoring”.

After I left college and returned to my “community”, I didn’t have the honor to be around Muslims any longer. But the thirst had never left nor had my love and desire for the Arabic language. Which I might add infuriated my parents and other friends. This confused me, because I had always been taught that we were all equal in God’s eyes. I guess there were a few exceptions to this concept for my friends and family.

Then in the Spring of 1995, Allah (swt) brought someone into my life. This person was such a wonderful example of what a Muslim should be and what Islam was about that once again, I began to ask questions. I was even taken to my

first mosque. That will be a memory that shall forever be etched into my memory.

For 8 months I studied everything he could possibly find me and read and listened to tapes continuously. Then on February 15 1996, I officially embraced Islam. ALHAMDULILLAH !!!!!!!

Our engagement was broken because his parents were against the idea of him marrying an American. Even though we are no longer engaged, I respect and admire him greatly. And I would never give up my Islam.

Since then, my life has taken many turns. When I became engaged to an Arab, my family was in shock, they rarely spoke to me. I also lost most of my American friends. BUT when I embraced Islam, my family first tried to have me committed to a mental hospital, when that didn't work, they completely disowned me. They did make calls to me to tell me that they hoped I rotted in hell...and calls from my so called friends stated the same desire. Yes this hurt, even though my family and I had many differences, I still loved them deeply.

The town I live in is very small and there are no other Muslims or Arabs even close. The closest mosque is 120 miles away. Even though I am alone as to the fact that I do not have any other Muslims to visit with and learn from, Alhamdulillah, ALLAH is always there!!

What little knowledge I have about Islam has been gained through reading everything I can find on the internet, and through my true friends and family on the Internet. I will never give up...but I would like to thank a very special muslim brother for his love, support, friendship and prayers during these past few weeks. You know who you are. God bless you richly. To my other Muslim brothers and sisters on the Internet, I love you and I thank you.