

Aysha, Ex-Catholic, Hungary



My name is Aysha, and I am from Northern Hungary. My interest in Islam began from the history lessons we took at my secondary school. I learned that Hungary had been a territory of the Ottoman Caliphate for 150 years. My interest increased when I met Muslims at my university. I took molecular biology, and met many Muslim foreign students. Looking at them, I always wondered why they were so proud to be Muslims! I was Catholic, a good one, but I always had my reservations towards my faith. I didn't agree with some parts of my religion such as, Jesus being the Son of God and the issue of Trinity, which was simply not believable for me.

I made many Muslim friends and began engaging with them. Once, when we were having dinner the *Adhan* (call to prayer) started and one of my friends wanted to stop it, but I insisted to listen to it. It mesmerized me and truly touched my heart. During that summer, I downloaded a Quran program, I don't know why I really did this, but I would listen to the Quran in Arabic and read its meanings in English. I was thinking a lot about Islam and I was reading many books about it.

After two months of thinking I finally chose Islam. I said the *Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith) in front of two of my friends. I said: La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah (I bear witness there is no God worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

I chose Islam against my culture, my family, and my mom, who was upset with my conversion. Thereafter, the month of Fasting (Ramadhan) begun and with it I decided to start fresh. *Alhamdulillah* (thank God), I was successful. I started to offer prayers on the 4th of August. It was very hard for me at the beginning, because the Muslims around me were not practicing Muslims, so I couldn't just ask anyone about the details of prayer and other aspects of Islam. I learnt how to pray, by myself, from the Internet, because no one showed me how to pray or how to make wudu (ablution), or what invocation to say before it or how to

do *ghusl*(ritual cleansing of the body) or what are the etiquettes and the rulings of Islam were.

During this period of learning, a friend of mine said a few words to me that hurt me. He said to me that I would never understand Islam because I was not a born Muslim! When I told him I wanted to start fasting Ramadan, he said it was not just about being hungry. At that time I was so new to Islam, I had converted just a month before and I became scared, what if I would never learn how to pray in Arabic? I didn't have a *hijab* (head scarf) or a rug to pray on, and I didn't get any help. So I had lots of fears.

But when I started to pray, I was thinking God must be smiling on me now. I would write down the text of the ritual prayer on a paper and its instructions and I kept my papers in my right hand and read loudly and then would bow down and read again, and so on. I'm sure I looked so funny. But afterwards I memorized it in the Arabic language so things became easier for me.

Then I came to Facebook and got many new friends and many sisters. From online sisters I got so much love and courage. A Muslim man proposed to me and he got me my first Hijab and prayer rug and an Islamic book. And I got my first Arabic Quran from Jordan by post because we cannot buy them from here. Now it is more than a year that I wear hijab.

I went through a very bad period with my mom. She would say to me that I will be a terrorist and I will leave her as I left my religion and I will leave my country too. She would put pork in all the food in the fridge and I would refuse to eat it and we would end up arguing. She couldn't stand seeing me praying or seeing me in hijab. So I prayed upstairs in my room. She would never look at me when I was in hijab and she would say: "I gave birth to a Christian child not to a veiled Muslim."

We had serious problems, but I was never harsh or rude with her. But *alhamdulillah* (thank God) she calmed down, and now it seems she is more accepting of the fact that I converted. I'm really thankful to Allah for that. Now I go out in hijab, and she doesn't say anything.

I was not talking with my father for all my life and he didn't want to see me. But now, because of Islam, I opened up with him, and he visits us regularly.

Yes, my life is a big test but I thank God for it and I have patience and hope. On the Day of Judgment I will be very thankful for them. So I'm trying to be better and better and learn more and more to understand my religion. I try helping others now in Debrecen. I organized a project to collect second hand clothes for refugee camp people. There are a lot of Muslims there who don't have a home because of wars. So we collected clothes and gave them to the refugees. I

would also make some homemade bread and give it to them, it was so nice just to see the joy and happiness in their eyes.

I'm trying to guide those who want to convert or just converted. I met with two Hungarian sisters, the other day, and they have just converted to Islam. So I gave them books, and my prayer rug and a copy of the Quran, so *alhamdulillah* we prayed together and they were really happy. I always try to leave the image that we Muslims are nice, friendly and have a good heart.

I converted one and a half years ago. Now I am learning Arabic, to be able to read the Quran. I read the Quran in Hungarian, I offer prayers five times a day, I try to follow the Quran and the Sunnah, and I read many books to understand better. This is my story and peace be unto you.