

Malik Mohammed Hassan, Canada

First of all, I would like to start by saying that this true story is not for my own fame or admiration, but for the sake of my Lord and your Lord God. All praises due to God, the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful Owner of the day of judgment. I would like to repeat to you something I heard: the journey of a thousand miles has to start with the first step, and this is the first part of my journey.

My name is Malik Mohammed Hassan, and I have recently converted to Islam. When I was in junior high school, I was first introduced to Islam by reading the book *Roots* by Alex Haley. It taught me a little bit about the strong will that most Muslims possess, myself included. It also introduced me to Allah. I had never heard of Allah in his real form until I read that book, and I was very curious. I then started reading about The Nation of Islam (specifically Malcolm X), and it fascinated me how devoted he was to God, especially after he left the self serving Nation of Islam. Reading about Malcolm made me think about a God who (for a change) did not have any physical ... limitations and, being a totally blind person, it made me relate to these people: the people who Malcolm and Haley referred to as Muslims. I continued reading what I could about Islam, which wasn't as much as it should have been. My reading material was very limited, because like I said above, I am a totally blind person, and the material available about Islam in Braille or on tape was not only very little, but also very general. I believe the reason was that the material that I had access to wasn't written by Muslims, and it kind of painted a dark picture of Islam. I think most of the literature written by Christians or non Muslims about Islam tends to do that most of the time. And I didn't know that there were even Muslims in Halifax, so I obviously didn't know any. I didn't even know about the local Islamic association until I was already a Muslim.

So I read what I could until my first year out of high school, around the month of May, 1996, when I received a phone call asking me if I wanted to participate in a camp for blind and visually impaired people, known throughout Canada as Score. I agreed and sent them a resume, and praise be to God, I was excepted for work.

At first, I really didn't want to go, but something kept telling me it would be a good idea if I went. So, on June 30th 1996 I boarded a plane from Nova Scotia to Toronto and took my last trip as a non Muslim; I just didn't know it yet.

I got to Toronto, and everything at first was pretty normal... It was on the second day I was there when the journey of a thousand miles first started.

I arrived on a Sunday, and on the next day I met the person who God would use with His divine power to help guide me to the beautiful Religion of Islam. I met a sister named [xxxx], and if she reads this, I hope she doesn't get mad at me for using her name.

When I met her, I immediately wanted to talk to her because I liked her name. I asked her of what origin her name was and she told me that it was Arabic; so I asked her if she was Muslim and she replied with the answer of yes. I immediately started telling her what I already knew about Islam, which lasted about ten seconds. I started asking her questions and also asking her to talk to me about Islam.

One particular incident that comes to my mind is when all of the workers at the camp went to a baseball game, and the sister and I started talking about Islam and missed pretty much the whole game.

Well, anyways, we talked for about three, maybe four days on and off about Islam, and on July the fifth, if my memory doesn't fail me, I became a Muslim. My life has been totally different ever since. I look at things very differently than I used to and I finally feel like I belong to a family. All Muslims are brothers and sisters in Islam so I could say that I have approximately 1.2 billion brothers and sisters all of whom I'm proud to be related to. I finally know what it feels like to be humble and to worship a God that I don't have to see.

For any non Muslim reading this, just look at it this way. It's good to learn, but you never know when you will be tested, and if you're not in the class at the time of the final exam, no matter how much you know, you'll never get any credit. So like I said, it's good to learn, but if you want to get credit, sign up for the class. In other words, declare shahada (testimony to faith) and let God teach you everything you need to know. Believe me the reward is worth it. You could say the reward is literally heaven.

If any good comes out of this story all the credit is due to God; only the mistakes are my own. I would like to mention a part of a hadeeth that has had a great effect on me and that is:

“Worship God as if you see him and if you don't see him, know that he sees you.” (Saheeh Muslim)