

Jina Talang, Ex-Catholic, Philippines



Introduction

Revealing to you my story is not that easy for me to do. Because, it hurts me so much to recall my past life. But having Allah in my life, gave me courage to do it. To begin

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all Words, the Most Merciful, the Beneficent, and the Master of the Day of Judgment. Peace and blessings be upon Muhammad, the masters of all prophets and messengers, and on his family, companions all and whoever follows his path till the Day of Resurrection.

Where I am from?

In a small town in Philippines, Rizal, Cagayan. I was raised by a parents of different religion. My father was a “Roman Catholic”, while my mother was a “Protestant”. As for me, I prefer my father’s religion. But I’d never been that religious, because there’s a lot of question in my mind such as:

- Why do I have to confess to a priest and let him be the one to ask for God’s forgiveness of whatever I’d done wrong?
- Why do I need to pray to saints and not direct to God?
- Where is God? Does he exists like human?
- Was Jesus really the son of God?
- Why is there a lot of bible version?
- What is possibly waiting for me after death?

For such a longtime, I felt like that I was just wasting my time. I wanted to know the truth and what is the right way of life (a life with God loving presence).

When I was twelve years old, my father was arrested and accused of killing his uncle (my grandfather's brother) because of their ancestral ownership. As far as I know my father, I know he didn't do it. They simply don't want my father to inherit anything from their wealth.

Because we can't afford to pay for an attorney, my father was convicted seven years imprisonment. And because he behaved well in jail, they released him after five years of imprisonment. During his years in jail, raising us became a burden to my mother. Luckily, we had good people around us (my mater uncle and my aunt) who very supportive to us.

By the way, we were five siblings (4 girls and a boy) and I am the third among them. But due to money shortage I only finished high school (grade ten). After I graduated, my uncle (father's brother) brought me to Manila to find a job. By God's favor, I quickly find a job in a bookshop. Part of my earnings, I sent it to my mother. A year and half later, one of my friends encouraged me to work abroad.

A week after, she introduce me to the agency. They told me to submit my credentials. So, I gathered all the documents they required me of. After a month, they informed me that I needed to take a medical examination. By God's love and mercy, I passed the examination. And in two weeks time I departed to Kuwait.

I heartedly thank God for having an employer who was kind and considerate. Three years later, I ask for an increase salary. But my madam said that she couldn't afford it. So, I asked them to give me release so that I cant find work outside. Luckily, they not deprive me of their favor.

I then found a work at a billiard hall somewhere in Khaitan. And there I met an Indonesian believer of Allah (swt). She had a very strong faith (IMAN). Her way of belief made me like reading books about Islam.

How am I (in times of my Ignorance of Islam)?

I never thought that Islam was a religion worth studying. Most of my friends were Christians. We use to go together and pray in the church. In vain and in my heart, I felt nothing but the absence of God. I realize that I'm totally "lost" which made me more desperate finding my way to the right path. So, I bought myself a "Tagalog" translation of the Qur'an, but I couldn't go on reading more than two pages of it. So I decided to keep it aside and buy more books and pamphlets about Islam. But I came to a point that I gave up understanding it alone, so; I decided to go to IPC (Islam Presentation Committee) in Rawda - Kuwait. They all (the sisters) welcomed me warmly. It was my first encounter with a group of believing

women in Islam. By my surprise, I feel like a total stranger to them. It was then I started to attend Islamic classes. Every minute of the lecture and every pages of the book seemed like a revelation to me. It gave me a great spiritual satisfaction which I never felt before, but still I hadn't decided embracing Islam.

When did I embraced Islam?

On June 6, 2004, I decided to embraced Islam. I did perform my testimony of faith (Shahadah) in court. It was a real great experience for me. Every single Muslim at the court, embraced me with both hands tightly. I knew then that I was guided to the right path. And I had made best decision in life. After two years of embracing Islam, I went back to Philippines, to attend my sisters wedding.

How was I (when I became a Muslim)?

Being far from any other Muslims, living in that place (where I've grown up) was a big trial for me. I had to control my desire of wearing my clothes before such as mini-skirts and half sleeves blouses. As Allah (swt) forbid us (Muslims) to disclose the beauty of our body except for our husband (at home particularly) without the presence of anyone whom can be a "Mahram" to you (us women).

In three months time, in that isolated place (far from any other Muslims) was that really hard to stand firm on our religion. So, I hurried back to Kuwait ; to study more about Islam.

What did I benefited in Islam?

Islam made me understand the importance of wearing hijab and dressing Islamicly. Though at first, I feel uncomfortable doing it. As days passed by, I got use to it. I even wear Abaya (jilbab) by now.

Islam decreased my desire of putting make-up every time I go out, neither with my family nor with my friends.

Islam thought me how to safeguard myself and how to prevent evil actions (fitnah).

Islam thought me the real meaning of sisterhood and brotherhood.

Islam made me more careful of my actions and thoughts.

Final Thoughts

A believing woman wearing hijjab and Islamic clothes is a beautiful as an Angel. What you keep something secret for the sake of Allah (swt), increases its value. In other words... Keeping womans body secret, increases its charm in the eyes of a believing man.

