

## James, Ex-Christian, USA



It all began back in the late 90's. I was a San Diego police officer and I had found myself at the desk. I had found myself in the middle of an internal affairs investigation. Of course these types of investigations seem to take forever; I had the fortune of working with another officer. After being around this for a few weeks, we had the opportunity to talk about various subjects. Never once speaking about Islam, although I knew this officer was Muslim. I knew this because we met during the month of Ramadan. So I saw firsthand the sacrifice's he would make during the day. I often thought to myself, "how could he do this and why". As our time together continued I would see how he would interact with the public and other officers as well as superiors. On several occasions he would take his lunch break and go to the local mosque to pray. I was amazed that he would be back within the hour.

I had always thought that going to church was an all-day affair, I had no idea what going to the mosque entailed. Becoming a police officer had always been a life's dream, so when I achieved this goal, I thought I was better than most. I looked down on regular people and even stopped associating with regular folk. As I spent more time with this officer, I began asking him different questions regarding Islam. I had no idea about the difference between true Islam and the "Nation of Islam".

He was very patient with me and explained the differences between the two religions. He kept a Quran on the desk and I asked if I could read it. Of course he said "yes" and so began my journey. I grew up not really religious but my mom was a devout Baptist, so I had some idea of what religion was all about. However, I could never get my head around Jesus (peace be upon him) being God and God being Jesus and then a holy spirit mixed all in there for good measure. It seemed to me that people would only pray on Sundays, during Wednesday Bible study and when they wanted something good to happen.

So I began reading the Quran, not really knowing what I was reading, but it seemed to make sense to me. It was very clear - not all mystical and

mysterious. However this only peaked my interest. I was still brainwashed on what I had been taught for so long. For about ten more years I did my research on this thing called Islam. Subsequently I had to drop all my worldly things and move back to the East coast to take care of mother. I became obsessed with trying to become successful and taking care of an ailing mother. Taking care of her every need consumed so much of my time that I strayed away from my journey. However, every so often I would pick up the fact finding mission. I was trying so hard to find some fault with Islam. No matter how hard I tried, I could not find any such thing.

Two very important things happened in the mid 00's. My mother passed away, God bless her soul, and that I succumbed to my journey and began believing in Islam. However, I had accepted it in my heart but I still had to take my *shahada*. This took a few more years to do. I said my shahadah in the year 2009. At this point in my life, I had the opportunity to move back to the West Coast. After coming back to the West Coast I quickly realized the woman I had spent so much time waiting for, was never going to change enough for us to have a life. I had gone through the most painful experience one could ever go through. It was then that I set out on my journey to truly follow Islam and start living my life for me and Allah, and I never looked back.

Allah ordains all that passes and we are at times left in awe of His wisdom. I had the unfortunate fate of having my leg amputated above the knee. This event was a life changing one in so many ways. After a three month stay at the local hospital, I was released and was fortunate to move in with a longtime friend. After a year of recuperating and learning my way as a one legged person, I ventured out on my own and began going to the local mosque. I met some really nice people who took me by the hand and started teaching me the proper way to pray etc.. Being a handicapped person I do have certain restrictions and limitations. I was so worried that I would not be accepted, but so far so good.

Every day I learn something about this great religion. I hope my story leads others to Islam.