

# Looking for the Truth Since the Age of Eight

My search for God started when I was eight years old. I lived in a rural area, where you were either a Christian or you did not believe in God. There were no other types of religions. But, even at that early age, I had a problem with some of the Christian beliefs. Especially the belief surrounding the Trinity and that Jesus (Pbuh) was God or a part of God.

At this young age, I was already being drawn to the truth, but I did not know it yet. Everywhere I turned to look for the answers came up empty. From one Christian church to another, still there were no answers. To my dismay, no other sources to the truth could be found. Or so I thought.

As I went through my teenage years, American society took a hold of me. Not finding any answers, I turned my back on God. Granted to say, during this time, I was in a lot of trouble. Not only spiritually, but I was putting myself into emotional and physical danger. There were a number of times, where I was near death, both by others and by my own hand. I was into alcohol, drugs, sex, and almost anything else that was bad. Time and again I was spared.

Then, during college, I met my future husband. He was not into the things that I was doing. He was a fine and good individual with a strong moral character, although he did not believe in God. I do not understand why, but he took an interest in me. He helped me leave the life I was living. He helped me become sober and clean. It was at this time, that I started to again feel the pull to find God.

I went to college close to where I grew up. There still were not many avenues to explore in order to find out what God was really about. There were more branches of Christianity, and there still were no answers to be received. But, there was a library, so I started reading and learning about other religions that I had heard of: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Shintoism, etc. Nothing that I read felt right. Unfortunately, at this time, I still had not heard of Islam.

So my unrest grew, but I still had to go on with my life. I married my husband, and became content with my marriage and my career, for a while. I still felt that I needed more in my life. I wanted desperately to have a child, but had been told by my doctors, that I would never be able to conceive. Because of my past history, there was too much damage to my uterus. But then, I

**\*\*By Jennifer A. Bell**

The depression got really bad. My muscles in my neck tensed up, and I could barely move my neck. My childhood stutter returned. I had a hard time speaking even the simplest words, let alone any sentences. I was hardly sleeping or eating. My life was a mess and I was in despair. It got to the point where I was calling in sick to work.

And then I found this man online again. I told him about my problems and what was going on. He seemed to know so much about everything. So, why not see if he could help? What he told me to do sounded bizarre and strange. He instructed me to take a bath, and clean myself from head to toe. After I was done with that, I was just to sit quietly, clear my mind, and concentrate only on God. What did I have to lose? I was in a desperate situation. No one was around to see me acting foolishly, so I tried it.

Then, the most amazing thing in my life happened. I was sitting there, focusing my thoughts on God. I thought that was amazing by itself. I had not been able to focus on any one thing in the last few weeks. Then I just started shaking. I was not cold, and I did not know of any reason why I would start to shake. But, as quickly as it started, it stopped. Calming peace filled my heart and soul. This peace was so absolute. I felt God enter my heart and I accepted what He had to offer.

Between this experience and what this friend had been telling me about Islam, I had finally found a religion that matched my feelings on theology. It took about a week after I made this discovery, to find, contact, and meet with the Imam at the masjid. On my first meeting with the Imam, I said my Shahadah.

The peace that I felt that day has not left me. There are times when I lose track of it because I get caught up in the world around me. But, when I stop for salat, I put aside what is happening around me, and all of the peace settles down over me once again.