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*“The people of the West find it difficult to acquaint themselves with Islam for since the days of the Christian Crusades there has been either a conspiracy of silence or a deliberate perversion of Islamic matters.”* (Muhammad John Webster, English President of the English Muslim Mission. An excerpt from an Islamic site he published on how he became Muslim).

How true! When I was trying to find written material about Islam in 1990, (the days before the internet) I couldn't find anything that was good or favorably written. It all seemed to be injected with poison, enough to make it repulsive to Westerners.

If you're Muslim you really can't take credit for being Muslim because we were all *chosen* and *guided* to Islam by God through miraculous experiences and people.

God chooses who He wants, when He wants, and how He wants. *Subhannallah*<sup>[1]</sup>! God is so perfect.

***“...Allah doth call to the Home of Peace; He doth guide whom He pleases to a Way that is straight.” (Quran 10:25)***

Allah, (God's name in Arabic, having neither male nor female attributes) is Kind, Merciful, and Forgiving, and He was extremely Patient with me...

As early as I can remember, I believed in God. At five, I prayed our little Chihuahua, would go to Heaven. I was not prompted by anyone, I was alone. When I was eight, I recall praying with tears that my younger brother, John, would never be sent to war. I couldn't bear the thought of him being killed in that way. That prayer was granted. *Alhumdulillah.* Thanks to God.

As a young girl I was a Brownie and a Girl Scout. I loved animals and the outdoors. I didn't have toys; I had a Collie and two pet frogs and a salamander and spent my days outside roaming our four and a half acres, in a little town called, Diamond Springs, which resides at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in Northern California. I have such fond memories of that time and place, in my life. I reveled in nature and

although I didn't know it, God was speaking to me through the splendid colors of the oak leaves I collected like gems. To me they were treasures of emeralds, topaz, and rubies.

***“Verily We take upon Us, to guide.” (Quran 92:12)***

And:

***“And [consider how] thy Sustainer has inspired the bee: "Prepare for thyself dwellings in mountains and in trees, and in what [men] may build [for thee by way of hives].” (Quran 16:68)***

My days in the sun took an abrupt and dramatic turn of events when my mother divorced my step-father. I was thirteen. It was abrupt and I adjusted, but I buried a lot of feelings. We went to live in a nearby city and lived in a small, but nice apartment. I made new friends and I was able to visit my Collie, who'd been sent to my sister, but my life was never really happy, for a long time.

My mother brought us up to believe in God and creation. She taught us not to curse or use the Lord's name in vain. Judging people was a sin, as was lying, and stealing. My mother is a very morally minded person. She taught us many good values. There was never a Bible in our house, nor were we taken to church, nor indoctrinated into a religion, which maybe wasn't so bad. From an Islamic perspective we were missing a lot of religious guidance. By this I mean, had I been brought up within the fold of Islam, I'm certain I would have avoided many pitfalls I fell into.

A teenager in the 1970's and being raised by a single working mother, left me and my brother with too much unsupervised time, home alone. Unfortunately in America, the drug culture, it is considered quite acceptable to do a number of things, Islam forbids. *Subhannallah*. I do know that if we'd had a father figure around to answer to and be confronted by, rather than only our mother, who had enough worries of her own; how to pay the bills, wondering how long her car would hold up--life would've been different. She did a great job considering everything she was up against. We never went without and we never looked or felt poor. But it couldn't have been easy for her. Thirty years have passed and still women don't earn the same salary men do, for the same work. The American system allowed the fathers of my mother's children to leave her struggling, with no recourse. Needless to say, I was a feminist early on...

So you're wondering: How did God guide you? Let me explain by posing some questions:

Why did we have Muslim neighbors who were always pleasant and smiling? Prior to this, we didn't know any Muslims. (To show us how good Muslims behave.) Why was I spared in a horrible car accident? (Because while my car was in mid flight, flying off the road, thirty feet down an embankment, and landing in between two cement blocks, beneath a culvert, I was calling on God and He heard me. I believe angels turned my car in mid flight, because the way the car left the road, and the way it landed, was

aerodynamically and physically impossible. It was in a completely different direction!) I had no concussion, no broken bones, barely a scratch. I had a full body ex-ray because the crash was so extraordinary. What provoked my mother to move us out of California to North Carolina, when I was 20? (It was there I bought a house; became Christian, and completely weeded alcohol out of my life.) Why was it that wherever I worked, I'd find and befriend a good religious person? (Because, I wanted and needed guidance and God put us together). Why did I end up in the Bible Belt of all places? (It was a stepping stone toward true religion.) Why did I begin seeking God and read the Bible and join a church? (God's plan: I had to experience wrong religion in order to recognize true religion, later.)

I'd like to say something to you: if you are in a religion that has taught you to "pray in the name of Jesus" or has indoctrinated you into believing Jesus is Lord, or god, or God's son, or that God is part of a Trinity then you are in grave danger. Get out of that religion. You are committing an unforgivable sin called, *Shirk* (in Arabic meaning associating others with having power equal to God's.) It's a sin also mentioned in the Old Testament. You know the familiar scripture where God says, He's a jealous God...and not to put rivals up against Him.

***"Certainly they disbelieve who say: 'Allah is Christ the son of Mary'. Whoever joins other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the Garden and the Fire will be his abode."***  
***(Quran 5:72)***

***"They disbelieve who say: Allah is one of three, (Trinity) for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their world of blasphemy verily a grievous chastisement will befall the disbelievers among them."*** (Quran 5:73)

When I was 25, I joined the United Methodist church, and it was there I learned many things. First, I learned that the Bible was a confusing mess. It contains many contradictions and blatant errors. Even Jewish and Christian and Muslim scholars have gotten together and discussed this openly. Today the Bible is taught as a piece of literature rather than the word of God, in Seminaries across the U.S.

I was a serious new Christian. I wanted to lead a pure life. But soon I found myself praying in Jesus' name and I didn't know then, I was committing an unforgivable sin! The pastor would lead the prayers and sure enough he would say, "In Christ's name we pray, amen..." I accepted it, never thinking a church would lead me to Hell! But it was. The ideas I was soaking up, I later realized, upon my own inspection, weren't in the Bible! How the church leaders and Christians continue promoting these ideas is dangerous and crazy. Praying in the name of Jesus; Jesus is God, or the son of God, or part of a Trinity, are ideas you will not find in the Bible.

It has been long agreed by religious scholars and historians that a lot of the ancient authentic scriptures had missing or lost or stolen pieces, and in some places things were added and taken away. God mentioned this in the Quran and in fact the Quran was sent to rectify all the changes made, over time, to His previous revelations.

**“And we sent down the book (Quran,) to thee so that thou should make clear to them those things in which they differ and that it should be a guide and a mercy to those who believe.” (Quran 16:64)**

So, after having gone through all of this, God put a Muslim in my path. He was fasting, (it was Ramadan 1990) and the first discussion we had was about religion. I was astonished he'd gone all day without food or water. “You can't even have a Lifesaver? Or piece of gum?” I had asked. Then when I saw how Muslims pray, I thought it was so beautiful, so appropriate; so respectful, that I recognized it as the way Jesus prayed, as depicted in the New Testament. He was barefoot, after having done ablutions, and he bowed and prostrated.

When I found out that Muslims believe Jesus was only a prophet and not a god or son of god or part of a trinity, and that he wasn't crucified, but someone in his likeness was, I knew I'd found all the answers I was looking for. Then, when I learned Islam prohibited alcohol and all intoxicants, I was convinced this was the way God wanted us to live! And I embraced Islam.

I married the Muslim God had put in my path a year later and together we left America to live in his country, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. I wrote a book about Western culture and Islam and published it in 1998. Since leaving the U.S., I've earned a college degree and a certificate of writing through Penn State University. *Subhannallah!*

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#### Footnotes:

[1]

This means: Far removed is God from every imperfection. It is used when one expresses their happiness or wonder over something.

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