

DEVORAH H. BONOMO, EX-CATHOLIC, USA

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Description: How she found her way to God.

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My journey to Islam began when I was only six years old, it may seem odd, but it's a fact!.I was born into a Roman Catholic home; I received my Holy Communion and my Confirmation at six years old. In spite of this, I was very different from the average Catholic. I only prayed to one God, I refused to worship Jesus, peace be upon him, or any other saint. Of course, my parents thought it a bit strange, but they didn't speak to me about this.

About a month before my confirmation, the priest asked me a question and after I answered the priest asked me to pray to Jesus. I remember looking up at him and telling him that I didn't pray to Jesus, I prayed to God! He went on to tell me Jesus was God, but I argued with him and firmly told him that HE was not! The priest became infuriated and almost hit me. Later that evening my parents received a phone call telling them I was a rebel, a problem child and I had to find my own way! Nonetheless, the church did do my confirmation, but I was excommunicated by the local Bishop and never went to church again.

All my life I only believed in one God. I began praying to Him at the age of three. Life went on and it was when I turned fifteen that something interesting happened. We studied a course in High School called "World Religions" and from the meager section in the textbook that spoke about Islam, I knew from that moment that I wanted to be a Muslim. In my moment of joy, I went to my history teacher and told him of my desire, but unfortunately he talked me out of it and a week later showed me a very explicit film about the life of a Muslim woman. After I saw it, I changed my mind. I then moved to my next choice Judaism. I spoke to the same teacher and he was against this as well, but he accepted the fact that this was going to happen sooner or later. After this, I began to study Jewish books and began to familiarize myself with Judaic history in secret. I knew that if my family found out, they would never accept me.

As the years passed by, my interest perked and I became ever more serious in my quest for knowledge, so at nineteen, I took my first course in Reformed Judaism and was convinced this was the path I should take in life. It was during my last year of college that I met a Rabbi in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. After a meeting with him he said he would convert me. At that time I still wasn't sure, as I was still studying. I

continued my religious studies under him for three more years and in 1988 was converted or at least I thought I was converted to Judaism. After the ceremony I was not satisfied; something about this conversion felt wrong! I went home that evening and read a book on Jewish Law and found out I wasn't a Jew; the conversion was a farce! I told the Rabbi what I read and he was shocked.

Two years later I met a Hassidic group in New Jersey who were furious about the first conversion, and after another year of study with them I was converted a second time, and this time in the correct method! With that, my life began as a Jew. But did it? I was basically left to myself. I was not treated well by these people and I kept leaving the religion and would return, I was restless, and I felt that something was wrong. I soon became very depressed about the people, the religion and was in a state of complete confusion.

In 1999, I left Pennsylvania to move to Budapest, Hungary. Here I tried again to fit in with the Jewish community, but ran into even bigger problems.. I had to make a serious decision in my life and it would have to come fast as I felt that I was losing God in my life. I finally denounced the Jewish religion in 2010. I can honestly tell you in the 24 years I spent in Judaism I never felt the joy I am feeling now. It wasn't even joyful at the end of my conversion ceremonies as I knew at the back of my mind that something was missing. During the time I was a Jew, I used to read the Holy Quran and compare it to the Torah, and I found the Quran made more sense to me.

In 2010 when I denounced the Jewish religion, I knew what the next step was going to be, but after what I went through, I wasn't sure I wanted to ever get involved with another religion. I was even losing hope in God. I started to doubt HIM and HIS existence, and became depressed and confused again. My life went on in this way for a while. I talked to a lot of people who told me I would find my way. I began again to think strongly about Islam. I went out and bought my first Quran, and then bought another that had a better translation; so here I was again at another crossroad in my life. What to do?

One day I was walking down the street in Budapest, and it came to me so suddenly I was stunned; I felt something stir in my soul and I literally stopped on the sidewalk and looked up to God. I thought I was going crazy, but I wasn't. I truly believe that at that moment I received a message from Allah. I stood there just looking up at the sky and when it was over I began walking again, with a smile on my face and knew HE had reached me! That's when I knew I couldn't give up on God because HE touched my soul and I knew it was time to convert to Islam. As the weeks went on I asked some friends on the internet for help and they were telling me how easy it was to convert and what was expected of me. I couldn't believe it, after spending so many years of study to become a Jew, how could this be so easy? I kept on with my research and found out that what I was told about conversion to Islam was true.

On the evening of January 27th 2011, I was feeling depressed and hopeless again. I felt it was never going to happen for me. In this state of mind I went online and found

IslamReligion.com, and there it was in front of me and I couldn't believe it! I remember saying to myself, if you want this then do it now, and get out of this rut of being lost and doubting God; and the next thing I knew was that I was online with an advisor and it was happening! I became very emotional as the chat began and I must confess I was trembling as well. The chat went on and the man called me and before I knew it, I was a Muslim!

The first thing that happened was that I began to cry, but these were tears of joy, a kind of joy I never felt before. After everything was over I felt so many emotions, it was unbelievable and the happiness was overwhelming. I knew from that moment on, I had finally, after so many years of searching, found my correct path to God. In the days that followed the happiness continued. When I went back to work the next Monday, my colleagues were asking me why I was so happy? They wondered had something happened? And I was able to say "Yes", I have found my way to God!

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