

# Hajj Stories

## Never Too Late

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### Dr Salim Parker

‘How I wish that my Mom would embrace Islam,’ Kashiefa\* said. She was a recent revert and was passionately yearning to learn more about our Deen. She and her husband were both patients of our practice long before their interest in Islam was stimulated. What was fascinating about them was that they enquired, explored and recited the Shahada, the acceptance of the faith, together without putting any pressure on their two sons who were teenagers at that time to do the same. ‘They must discover the immense reward of being a Muslim themselves. Of course we expose them to the practice on a daily basis and they seem to be inclined to our path. As parents we also request them to be compliant with our adapted way such as not consuming any alcohol not because of their age but because it is prohibited and they accept that,’ she said.

There were a number of Muslims in their families and since childhood they all lived in harmony and acceptance of each other’s faiths. Her mom would on occasion accompany Kashiefa in her quests. She was exposed to the acceptance of the Shahadah, the acknowledgement

that there was only one Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) was the final Messenger. She knew about the five daily prayers. During Ramadan she on occasion had a meal with her daughter at dusk. The concept of Zakah, the obligation of giving to the poor was known to her. ‘You must make Duaa for all of



She recited her Shahada as the sun was setting on her life

us when you are on Hajj Doc,’ Kashiefa requested humbly. ‘Duaa that one day me and my husband will stand on the plains of Arafat and Duaa that my family will one day see the beauty

of Islam as being a complete way of life.’

‘My Mom keeps saying that she is too old to embrace Islam,’ Kashiefa said. ‘It is never too late,’ I replied. ‘I know Doc, but she thinks she must learn all the Duaas and all the rituals before she can truly be a Muslim. ‘I know being a Muslim is a state of mind and accepting the word in your heart,’ she said. ‘I know very little at the moment, but deep down I know that Allah has accepted my Shahadah. I have my strong foundation and I know need to build onto that. I am slowly adding extra rooms, doors and windows to my structure,’ she added. ‘We are all learning all the time. I know very little as well and the houses that we are building at the moment will need to expand into mansions and palaces of knowledge as our journeys continue,’ I replied.

I left for Hajj. As always I marvelled at the great diversity of humans I interacted with. Some planned for the journey for decades and engrained themselves in the journey, humbled to be able to follow in the footsteps of millions before. Others came under duress, forced to accompany a spouse or family member. Hajj for them was an obligation which their motions fulfilled, but left their souls as depleted as prior to the journey.



Sometimes we all want to emphasise to people like that to seize the most important moment in the life of a Muslim. Most Muslims will never set foot on Arafat no matter how

they work for it. Of those who get there, the vast majority will never have another opportunity. I made Duaa for Kashiefa and her spouse to one day share the epitome of religious intensity on these plains. I wondered what the possibility was of her mother accompanying them on the journey. Of course miracles do occur but sadly it was not to be.

Her mother was not the healthiest of people but managed to get

**“Word by word, intention by intention, determination by determination, she completed her acceptance”**

along on a day to day basis. However her health started to rapidly deteriorate. Kashiefa, whilst doing her daughter’s duties of caring, was doing it as a Muslim, incorporating her newly learnt Duaas. The inevitable passage of time and the additional grip of disease progression led to her mother’s condition deteriorating steadily until one day she was called to her bedside, with witnesses present.

Her mother was struggling to breathe. She was clearly being recalled by our Creator. ‘Do you want to recite the Shahadah?’ Kashiefa asked. He mother nodded in the affirmative. She held her mother’s hand and recited the first few words. There was immense struggle in her mother’s attempt, not because of hesitancy but due to weakness. A barely audible but clear response followed. It may not have been declared with perfect pronunciation, may have sounded like a mixture of air and phlegm but the intention was clear.

Kashiefa continued the words and the determined responses followed. Word by word, intention by intention, determination by determination, she completed her acceptance. They recited the Athan for her. ‘Do you accept Islam Mom?’ Kashiefa asked. Her mother raised her right hand. ‘Do you

want to be buried as a Muslim?’ she was asked. She again raised her right hand. There was no doubt that she embraced the message of Muhammad (SAW). She sighed, closed her eyes,

never to open them again. She closed out the light of this world, and opened, unearthed and liberated her soul to the ultimate radiance.

There were not many to assist with the preparation of her burial and very few fellow Muslims around. Kashiefa was worried that non-Muslim family members may not be in agreement with the proceeding that were taking place. Her concerns were

soon put to rest as everyone assisted in the washing, Janazah arrangements and the prayer arrangements. It was an eye opener for her family and especially her sons. ‘We were all together as one Doc. Different faiths and different ideologies merged as one family. The departure of my mother led to the arrival of an appreciation for Islam by the rest of my family,’ she continued. It was clear that her mother was not forced or coerced into accepting her Deen. Purely setting an example was ample persuasion that it is never too late. When she was lowered into her earthly grave, surely her soul was going to be elevated to a higher level. All the proceedings took place before the sun has set that particular day, as per the request of the deceased.

Kashiefa related a dream she had that same night her mother passed away. In it she saw her mother standing in a crystal clear stream. ‘I am so happy,’ her mother said. ‘It is so pure, so clean, so nourishing and so refreshing here,’ she added. In the dream the deceased face was beaming, she was so alive and appreciative of life in her departed state. ‘I think my mother was telling me that her final words on this earth unlocked an eternal state of happiness.’ I thought back to my time on Arafat where so many Muslims were blessed with being virtually the whole day as close to our Creator as possible. Her mother only had a few moments of being a Muslim on this temporary abode but I am sure she’ll be blessed with a high place in Jannah.

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