



# *My way to Islam*

*(subtitle: living in and between two cultures)*

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*Chairwoman*

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*May this little book give you a pleasant time. I wish you all and your families a very peaceful, healthy and joyful holy month of Ramadan and Eid Mubarak!*

## **Foreword**

This little book is written in loving memory of my parents. From the first day on they knew about my thoughts, my feelings, my goals and my wishes. Unfortunately they are not able to see the final results any more. But I am really confident that they would be happy to see, that their daughter found her way, that she is happy with her decision – and that they would have agreed to my decision if they would still be here.

Additionally I would like to give my most heartfelt thanks to my teacher and lady friend, Mrs. Iman Ismail Abdullah Al Hashemi.



Mrs. Iman is my teacher in Islam. But more than that, she is my closest lady friend. She gave her helping hand from the day I converted to Islam – and she still does. And whenever a question or difficult situation came up, she was there to support me, to answer all my questions, and was close to me whenever I needed a friend. From the depth of my heart I would like to thank her again for her patients, her engagement and her friendship.

To convert to Islam is really not a decision made from one minute to the other. It takes its time. Especially for a lady who has no reason such as a marriage. My way was a decision coming from the heart.

## How everything began

How it started, the history and the reason for this decision with all the stories around it, emerging from daily life, are laid down in my story. I wish you will enjoy this little book in reading and understanding how it is for somebody coming from a totally different culture – and possibly you will find some answers for yourself.

Warmheartly regards

*Noura*

**This little book is based on the cooperation of:**



**ESS Medical Performance**

and



**International Women's  
Cultural Forum**

I started to be interested in the Arabian Culture a long time ago. It was 1998 that I started to read about Dubai, the United Arab Emirates and the Arabian world. It was fascinating to me! But how it is – a wish starts growing, but one is not able to make it come true at that very moment. I continued to follow up all reports in TV, bought some books – and I continuously thought about travelling to Dubai. But the situation in Germany didn't allowed me to travel, because my father suffered from the Alzheimer's Disease and my mother from cancer. I wanted to take care of them both and therefore put my wishes on hold to care for my parents next to my job.

Another three years past by – but my wish was still there. Then a situation came up where the company I was working for, had a restructure and I had to leave. In the beginning I felt real sad because I loved this job. But then I thought about my dream – and I realized that now I had the opportunity to travel to Dubai. I find it easy to remember this flight because it was one of the first direct flights of Emirates Airline from Duesseldorf to Dubai.

It was the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2001 I arrived in Dubai. I left the aircraft with all the other passengers and made my way to the exit. What happened when I left the building was something I will never forget. I came out of the building, took a deep breath, and suddenly a very strong feeling surfaced that seemed to say: "That's it!". It is difficult to explain, but from this moment on I felt something very special – it was like being home.

As I arrived at my hotel this feeling continued. From the first day on I did not feel like a tourist. And even the following week did not seem like being on vacation. The people I met were no tourists. The things I saw were not from the usual tours. And the invitations I received were not meant for tourists. My first week passed by very quickly.

When I came back to Germany and told my parents what happened my father was unfortunately not able to understand – but my mother did. She listened very carefully and said: "If it is as you told me, you should go back and check if this feeling is real". I

followed her recommendation and three days later I went to my travel agent to ask him for another trip to Dubai. He looked at me quite puzzled and said: "You just came back. When would you like to go again?" I answered: "What's about next month?" He started to laugh and said: "To stay there for a few weeks would have been cheaper!"

In the beginning of May 2001 I came back to Dubai. And honestly I was really nervous. I told myself that I should not expect the same feeling that I had four weeks ago, that high expectations would disappoint me for sure. So I tried to be relaxed about it. The second trip was a total surprise. Not only did I have the same good feeling as before – the feeling was even better! It took only some days and a few telephone calls with my mum to realize that I had fallen in love with this country. So I tried to find out if there was any opportunity for me to move to Dubai.

### **My way into the Arabian World**

The first step was to go back to Germany and tell my parents what happened, to talk about my feelings – and that I wished to find a way to move to Dubai and to live in my beloved country. My father, due to his Alzheimer's Disease, usually did not understand what I tried to tell him. But in this situation it was like he woke up for just a little time. He told me that he knew nothing about the Arabian world but if I would have such strong feelings in my heart, I should follow my dreams and that the only thing he wanted was that I would be happy in my further life. My mum totally surprised me. Usually she is scared about everything that is new and unknown. But this time she told me, that she watched all reports, being on German TV about Dubai and the U.A.E. and that for her the most important thing is to know that I am safe and happy. She had also heard, that Dubai was one of the safest places in this world. She only looked at me and said: "Go. But keep me informed about everything and take care of you!".

Knowing that my parent's thoughts are with me, I started to think about the opportunities I might have. I made a list of my strengths like my business experience, my knowledge. But I found myself in a difficult situation.

During that time the disease of my father worsened and he was not able to walk any more nor did he know what time or day it was. And at my mothers hospital they found out that she had a another new kind of cancer and therefore needed another operation. So, once again I put my dream on hold and took a new position in an international company nearby my parents home. This was essential because I took care of them both. Every day after work I went to see my parents in order to buy food and all the daily things they needed. Every weekend I spent with them, took care of them and dealt with all their needs. But whenever I had some time for myself, I continued to develop my knowledge and thought about "my upcoming new life".

In February 2002 my parents were so sick that I was not able to take care of them by myself anymore - especially my father. The apartment my parents stayed in, was not meeting my fathers special needs any longer. So I arranged for a new, comfortable place for the both of them and took a credit from the bank. I later moved them to a fully serviced apartment including medical services 24 hours. In the meantime we needed special medical appliances for them both. My father needed a lifting gear in order to be able to take a bath, my mum was not able to eat or to drink any more and received her nutrition through a stomach tube.

Now I had some support from the nurse's side, but I was with them continuously. Every day after work and every weekend I was looking after them and was there for them whenever they needed me. But even during the hard they both told me not to forget my about my dreams. They wanted to know that, even if they passed away, I would start into a new and joyful life. It was so hard for me, I felt as if I was in between two chairs. One half of me wanted to take care on my parents the best I could, the other half wanted to walk into a new life in Dubai. So what was I to do? My mum seemed clear about – and every time we talked about Dubai and my wish, she told me to go and to look into my future. Sadly, my dad's condition did not allow him to say what his wish for me looked like.

Then one decision was suddenly taken from my hands. The company I had worked for, had a restructure plan as well. And I lost my job. Now I was in a bad place. I had to take care of my

parents and I had no job. I had to come up with a plan because this situation was definitely not working. So I prepared to look for my opportunities. Due to the situation in Germany I had not chance at all. And there was still my dream. So I travelled to Dubai for one week only – and arranged everything to establish my new company in Dubai.

I came back and was really happy to tell my mum what had developed. And again she confirmed that I should continue what I had started. But what was I to do about my dad. All plans were ready. And my move was arranged for. My flight into a new life was confirmed for the 9<sup>th</sup> of September (I wanted to leave after my mum's birthday, which was on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September). But how could I explain this new situation to my dad? At that time he wasn't able to talk or comprehend any longer. And what was I to do, if something happened to my parents. In their serviced home, that was an apartment for two people, they had a rule: If one person passes away, the other person has to move out within three days into an apartment. with special nurses who would exactly meet the needs of the surviving one.

I was raised to be Christian but I must admit that I have never practiced. In Dubai I had this special feeling that something there made me calm. This was the first time I started to pray. I remember exactly, that I did not know how to go about that. If I should pray "Dear God" or "Dear Allah". So I started to pray with both names in German language. I was totally despaired. And asked for help regarding my father's situation. I saw that he was suffering more and more every day – and I was not able to help him. I didn't know what to do any more. So I asked God to help my father, to stop his suffering and pain and to help me by showing me the way.

It was on a Saturday morning that I was sitting with my dad and my mum in their living room. I had my father in my arms and tried to feed him. My dad woke up for one minute only. He told me that he loved me, and that I should not feel so sad. Than it was like before, the light in his eyes was gone. My mum saw that, too and she said, that the person who laid in my arms, was not really our dad any more.

Three days later in the evening I got a telephone call from the nurses. They told me that my dad was in hospital because of lounge inflammation and that I should come over. It was on Wednesday morning, the 28<sup>th</sup> of August at 3 a.m. that I arrived at the hospital. My dad lay in his bed and did not even remember me. At 4 p.m. he passed away.

Now I had a hard task: To tell my mum about my father's dead. But as I arrived with my mum's place something happened that gave me the creeps. It was 5 a.m. when I arrived at the service home. I rang the bell and the night nurse opened the door. She said: "I am so sorry your mother passed away!". I was looking at her totally confused and answered: "I am sorry, but my it is my father who passed away. My mum is upstairs and I have to tell her about it!" The night nurse apologized for this mistake and accompanied me to my mum's place. But what had happened?

As explained before, if one person in a double apartment passes away, the other one has to move out within three days, which is almost impossible for a person from caring level III like my mum. The house holds eight levels with more than 800 apartments. But there is only one apartment per level suitable for that. Now during that night, exactly at the same minute my father had passed away, another very old and ill lady had died as well. The nurse had never seen me before because she was there only during nights and had mixed me up. The lady who was diseased was living in an apartment with the correct level of care, the right nurses and all essential equipment my mum needed. A miracle had happened.....

It was hard to tell my mum what had happened. Both of us were crying and we felt really sad about the loss of my dad. But at the same time a thankful feeling emerged inside of me. Wasn't it me who had asked God for help, to stop my father's pain and suffering?! And hadn't I asked him what to do about my mother, also regarding her apartment? Some will say that this happened only by chance. But three miracles in the same night? I started to pray again. And I thanked God for taking the pain from my father and for giving me the opportunity to arrange everything for my mum at the same time.

I asked my mum if it wouldn't be better to stay with her in Germany. But she denied. I had to promise her to try a new start into my future and to visit her as often as I could. Miracle number 4 was the timing. As I explained before - all plans, arrangements and flight bookings were done for the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. By law it takes some days until one is allowed to have the funeral which was on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. Following all laws and regulations I had only three days between the funeral and the move. I finally got all permissions for the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. On the 7<sup>th</sup> I gave emotional support to my mum and spent her birthday with her. On the 8<sup>th</sup> I finished my mum's new apartment and took care of her contracts etc. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September I took my flight – and started into my new life. As I took my flight I was aware that whatever happened during this last two weeks would not have been possible without the help of “above” and suddenly I was really confident that there was somebody else than me looking for the right way. Would you agree?!

### **My first steps within the Arabian World:**

It was really hard what happened within the past month, especially the past weeks. I thought of my father – and in the same time of my mum. Within my first days in Dubai I went to the sea a lot of times. It was the best place for me – to hear the waves, to see the colours of the sea, to smell the water, and last but not least to see the sky over me. I tried to calm down. I was just sitting there and started in my own way to thank God - for his help in stopping my father's suffering and for my mum's situation. But especially for the opportunity to be here in Dubai. There were a lot of things I had to be thankful for and at the same time I asked God to take care of my mum.

The next weeks were filled up with excitement. So many new impressions. The most important one was the conversation with real local people. One of them was my sponsor. I met him already during my first visits. Now it was time to start my business. Nearly every day I met up with him and discussed how to establish everything and many things more. That was the first time I could hear, see and feel what is the meaning of a real local person.

With him I found a very warm-hearted, patient, honest and friendly gentleman. It was more than just talking about business. He introduced me to a part of his family so I would not feel alone. Also he showed me the real life in Dubai – including important information about the past times. For me he had a very special kind of charisma that really fascinated me. He told me about the Do's and Dont's of social life – and I heard the first time about Islam and some of it's contents.

After hearing his words I wanted to know more about Islam. I saw that it would be essential for me to learn more – not only for my daily life. I wanted to know about the rules and how to deal with them and through that hopefully avoid mistakes which might hurt others. I wanted to be a part of this country.

I bought my first Koran. It was written in English. But due to the fact that I had no basic information or knowledge about the Islam, it became difficult to read and to understand what was written. A few weeks later I visited my mum and bought my first Koran translated into German.

During the following months I was able to talk to many local ladies and gentlemen. I became more and more interested in knowing what was the special charisma of this country. It was fascinating for me to feel this special kind of warm-heartedness. I had never seen or felt something like that before. It was the first time that I thought about converting to Islam. I wanted to find out what was the way, what were the rules and procedures. But the more I tried to find out, the more diverse were the answers I got. Finally the information was that I had to go to a Koran school three times a week, four hours per day. That was definitely not possible since I had to work seven days a week with at least 12 to 14 hours per day.

I had to postpone this idea – there was too much work waiting for me. I needed all my energy to survive with my business and to take care on my mum.

But then a day came up which brought devastating news. In January 2004 I received a telephone call. It was my mum's doctor who told me that now she had another kind of cancer and that

they were not able to help her any more. From that day on I travelled to Germany every four weeks to see her. Her doctors and nurses told me, that it would be better for her if she didn't know about her situation.

The decision I had to make was really hard. Looking into my mums face, knowing about her situation, and hide this information, was very often more than I could take. But I knew it would be better to give the most comfortable time to her – and to keep the information from her that she had only some more months to live. I did everything that was possible for me to do – and nobody saw that every night I was sitting in the hotel crying my heart out.

During the last months of her life my mum suffered from pain every day more and more. Neither her doctor's nor I was able to help her. That was the time I started to pray continuously. I asked Allah several times every day to help my mum. And sometimes I asked him what I should do. I felt that I had no energy any more, my health started deteriorate as well. Everything hit me at once: the struggles of the present (establishing my company in Dubai) and the past (being able to pay all necessary things for my parents, accompanying my father until his last day which had only been two years ago). And now I had to accompany my mum in the same way. I was too much for me alone. And I was alone, totally alone.

There was no family member or anybody else I could talk to or ask for help. It was the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2004 – three days after my mum's 76<sup>th</sup> birthday. At 4 p.m. I received the call that my mum had past away. I can not explain the feeling I had at that moment. It is hard for everyone to loose their parents, but to know that there is nobody next to you, no family any more, is a very painful feeling.

The next day I had to cancel all meetings which were arranged with a local friend and business-partner and book the flights. I called him and told him what had happened. He asked me to come to his office, so I passed by. What happened then is again something that I think would never happen in Germany. This gentleman and friend had already arranged my flight, gave me expenses for accommodation and the funeral and as I came to Germany I got a call from a common friend, that this local gentleman had already arranged for the funeral flowers.

I heard and saw what happened. But I could not believe it. Yes, this Gentleman was a friend, but there really was no reason for him to help me like he did. I really don't think in Germany anybody would do something like that.

As I came back to Dubai, I visited this gentleman. I wanted to give my most heartfelt thanks to him (even if that was not enough). Again he was the one who tried to comfort me. He said, that I was not alone, that I would be a part of his family. In my situation he helped me a reat deal by saying these words.

During the next months I had to work very hard to establish and develop my business. But at the same time I thought about these "miracles" more than once a day. It was a real hard time, and I felt very sad. Each day I seemed to have less energy. Every morning it became more difficult to get up and to start with my work.

I was so busy and so sad that I didn't recognized what happened to me next. It took a while until I felt a certain change. Every time I was sitting at home, I started to feel a little more relaxed and calm – that was the time when the Moazen started to call for pray!

Nearly 40 meters next to my place is a nice mosque. I saw it before – but I didn't pay attention to it in the past. Now I felt that there was something special. I started to listen more carefully. I watched exactly what happened With me during the next few days and I realized that, every time I listened to the Moazen, I felt more relaxed and calm.

It was beginning of March this year that I wanted to become a part if what cause this positive feeling so I sent a SMS to my close friend and business-partner, who helped me during the difficult situation with my mum. I asked him, if he knew a person who was able to explain to me, how I could become a Muslim. His answer via SMS was: "I'm on a business trip. Is it for a male or female?" My answer: "It's for a female – it is for me!".

He sent back another SMS with a name and a mobile number. I called there the same day – it was the mobile phone of Mrs. Iman Ismail Abdullah Al Hashemi. I told her what I would like to do and We met the next day for a coffee. It was the first time that I met Mrs. Iman. She was accompanied by a gentleman, an

international lawyer named Dr. Mansour who teaches the Islam worldwide. I think we talked about three hours and I explained in detail what happened in the past, how difficult it was to get real information, and what I had in mind concerning the conversion.

After a while Mrs. Iman and Dr. Mansour discussed something in Arabique. I didn't understand what they talked about but their views about Islam were really nice and heartwarming. They explained everything about the Shariah and what I had to do exactly. I agreed to follow their recommendation and repeated the words they said to me (after they explained in detail what they meant). After this part was finished I asked them what to do next and they said: "Nothing! You are a Muslim now!".

Two days later I went to the Dubai Court to set out my decision in writing through a certificate together with Dr. Mansour. It was not so easy. The judge asked me: "Do you want to get married? Is that the reason you want to convert?!" My answer was no. Then the judge said: "Then you are already married?" Me: "No, I am not". The judge: "Then you have been married?" I denied again. "Then why do you want to convert to Islam?" he asked. I told him that I was just following my heart. In the end Dr. Mansour had to explain everything. It was the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 it was finally confirmed by certificate of the Dubai Court that I was a Muslim from now on.

### **My first days being a Muslim**

The first day being a Muslim was absolutely exciting. Especially because I wanted to know everything as soon as possible which is a typical thing for me. What did I have to do? How would I pray the right way? The Do's and Dont's of being a new Muslim and many, many things more. But Mrs. Iman stopped me and said that I didn't have to pressure myself like that, that she would explain to me what I had to do step by step.

One thing was no problem for me at all – the dresscode. Even in the past, before I had become a Muslim, whenever I was invited to the home of my sponsor, I had worn the Abaja and the Sheilha for respect of my sponsor's family. From the beginning I had really loved that. I informed some of my closer friends about my decision

- that I was a Muslim from now on. Some of them asked: "Must you now wear this black dress?" Most of them didn't know the terms so my answer was: "To wear the Abaja is never a MUST. I am ALLOWED to wear it now!!!"

They also did not know about the rules of Islam. So I decided to explain in a very kind and soft way what the new rules for me looked like. I thought that everybody around me was open-minded enough to understand and accept my decision but that was wrong.

During the next days I found myself in a new and very difficult situation. Even my European business-partners who were already living in the Arabian countries for years were not as open-minded as I had hoped them to be.

The worst thing to me was that one business-partner said: "Do you seriously tell me that you converted to Islam? Then I would like you to know that I don't want to see you in the black dress in my office. And I don't want you to visit our customers dressed like that!". I was totally shocked and confused. What should I do now? This was my biggest business-partner during that time. An exclusive representative of a German company.

I called the company in Germany and spoke with the managers. At first they were very polite. A few days later though, I received the information that they were not able to pay my monthly fee any more. This was my first painful impression of where this could possibly all lead to. Subhan Allah Mrs. Iman was close to me. She tried to calm me down and said: "Don't be angry. If they don't accept your decision they were not the right partners. And you should know that, if one door closes, Allah will open 2 others for you!".

I tried to believe what she said even though it was really difficult for me at that time. Within the next few days I was about to see very clearly what happens worldwide – specially after the September 11. Some people almost "attacked" me with words like: "How can you go for a religion which gets people killed in Afghanistan as soon as they want to reconvert? "How can you choose a religion which is responsible for the holy wars in Irak?" How can you go for a religion which is responsible for terrorist acts such as the World Trade Center bombing on September 11?" The

list of questions like that was very long. And I think you can imagine how difficult the situation was for me – especially during the first few days of being a Muslim!!!

In the following weeks I heard a lot of things such like these. And I started to get scared. I lost some good jobs. And I lost business-partners. The situation started to get so critical that I thought that I would lose my company and consequently would have to go back to Germany. But that I didn't want at all. During that time I met and talked to Mrs Iman nearly every day. She was full of patience and understanding. She supported me in all matters. And due to her warm-hearted and gentle way, she was able to calm me down every time and she helped me to hold up my hopes for a good future.

I was really thankful for her support and started to talk to a wide range of Muslims - from the conservative Muslim families to the internationally experienced ones. And I started to draft my own way. I designed a solution and a way for myself.

I tried to combine my full respect for my new life as a Muslim with my job interests such as dealing with my German and international business partners. It became clear to me that I could not expect too much of them.

In the beginning it was not easy. Every time I prepared for a meeting I had to ask myself: "What is the plan of today? Whom will I meet? What dress-code will be the right one?". The other issue was my name. I really love and definitely prefer to be called "Noura". My Arabian name was given to me by my two closest local friends – and means "the light". But I could not expect that business-partners and friends would change immediately from "Iris" to "Noura". My closest friends came up to me and asked which name I preferred. But there were others who told me straight out that they were not willing to call me by my new name. During the first few days I didn't know what would be the best way to react. But after a while I learned from the kind and polite manners of Mrs. Iman. I started to become calmer and just left the choice of name to them. What happened? Some of the people who had denied to call me by my new Arabic name, but now joined some meetings, felt suddenly uncomfortable because the others called me "Noura". Step by step they changed their mind.

I must admit that, due to these stressful and hard times I asked myself more than once if I had done the right thing. I never had expected to get responses which caused me such difficult and painful days. Situations like that made me feel absolutely insecure.

I took some days off and stayed home. I didn't want to talk nor see anybody. I just wanted to be left alone. And I wanted to listen carefully to my heart and my feelings. I wanted to find out if I still could stick to what I had decided for. So I made notes about what had happened within the past years.

Whenever something is a wish of your heart and this wish comes true people say "this is a miracle". So I counted all "miracles" which had happened to me so far. I counted everything from business to private – especially what had happened with regards to my parents. Then I checked all miracles. My conclusion was: If one miracle happens, it simply is one. If you count five miracles, you become suspicious. But if you count up to a number of 25 or more, you can simply not call it a miracle any longer. For me it was very clear that there was somebody above taking care of me. So my decision was again that I had done the right thing and therefore had chosen the right way.

Now I wanted to learn more about this new part of life. The first thing I wanted to know was how to pray in the right way – and in the Arabic language! That was a real challenge. I have to say that except for some words of respect, I didn't speak Arabic at that time. So it might be funny for you to read how I started to learn it. I asked Mrs. Iman to teach me the prayer - including the right pronunciation of words. Then I wrote everything down my way and during the first prayers I kept several notes with me. It took some days until I knew which moves belonged to which words. But after a while it became easier every day.

Feeling more secure by the day I started to talk to my circle of friends again, especially the local ones. I couldn't believe what happened next. The feedback I got was really impressive. It was not only that they congratulated me but they talked to me more warm-hearted and friendlier than ever.

Next to that a big change in business emerged. I have to explain that during the past five years I had been supporting and assisting those local people who needed medical treatment in Germany.

With my partners I had established a very honest and transparent line of treatment in Germany – along with certain university hospitals. This idea which helped to establish a fixed price system that allowed my patients to pay exactly the same amount as a German patient was not appreciated by everybody. But we continued. For patients within the U.A.E. who are very ill and/or old and therefore are not able to travel to Germany, we facilitated the opportunity to bring specialists for special cases to the country (such as specialists in pain-medicine).

For a long time I have been trying to forward this information to patients from the U.A.E. Finally - by being a Muslim – from one day to the other it seemed that people started to pay attention to it, even those people who were too shy or maybe scared to contact me in the past. Now it seems that due to the new situation there is a special basis of trust growing stronger every day.

### **My current and new daily life**

It is exactly six months ago that I converted to Islam. From my today's point of view I sometimes ask myself if the first three difficult and painful months were something like a test - given by Allah. May be he wanted to know if my decision was an honest one. Today I know exactly that if my wish to convert to Islam and my thoughts and feelings wouldn't have been real, created by a deep and real feeling out of my heart, I wouldn't have survived these times!

Very often I were asked by close friends if I had regrets about my decision. Now I can say – NO! I don't regret anything at all. And if I would have to make the same decision again I would do it with full knowledge of the consequences. Why?

Especially during the past three months many things have changed in my personal life. One of the most important parts concerns my life as a lady here in Dubai. I am really happy to say

that I found new friends - especially women. And due to the fact that some of them know me for some months, I am now allowed to join this special circle of ladies. Even though I like these local ladies since the first day I moved to Dubai I now feel much closer to them. Especially the close relation to Mrs. Iman and - in the meantime – to her family as well, gives me a warm, safe and comfortable feeling I never have had before. It is as I had found a new family. I told Mrs. Iman that if the time was right and I would find a good husband, I would hope that he has daughters like Mrs. Iman. To have daughters like hers is a real gift given by Allah.

In the meantime the problems regarding the dress-code became less. Since I am wearing the Abaja and the Sheilha for respect most of the times and the European clothing style only when I have meetings with international business-partners, everybody accepts and respects me because they feel it comes from my heart. It is possible that I will change my way again if I ever get married to a local gentleman and he and his family would highly appreciate if I wore the national dress every day – but this is a decision I will make when the situation comes up.

Aside the current personal situation there is the change in daily business life. Before I knew about my business experiences and strengths since I have worked hard in developing my knowledge for 26 years. Would I now still find partners who would like to participate in that?!

### **Future Perspectives – Our Conferences**

My goal from the beginning on was to do business which combines my German experience and professionalism with my love for the local friends and this country. Now I am very happy and proud that due to the very close cooperation with Mrs. Iman and the International Women's Cultural Forum of Dubai, I am now able to implement and support several of her events exactly the way I wanted to.

In addition I founded - as a part of ESS Medical Performance – a Humanitarian campaign for the children of the Lebanon war. The

beginning was rather slow but I will continue to work on it. We are also ready to start two new and important conferences as soon as we will have the reply of the office from His Highness.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> conference (which is the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference for the International Women's Cultural Forum) is named "Family & Technology" and will take place March 2007. It is designed for all families who are living in the U.A.E. and deals with all matters which will be of advantage for the local families. This conference is initiated, worked out and under the head of Mrs. Iman Ismail Abdullah Al Hashemi – and I am proud to be allowed to support and assist her.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> big conference & exhibition is based on my work and experience. As I mentioned earlier I am supporting local patients who are in need of medical treatment in Germany (or for some cases need specialists to treat them in their own country). My goal is – other than all other conferences in this matter – to bring German quality, knowledge, experience and support to all people within the U.A.E. and the Gulfregion, especially designed and worked out for all people with special needs. From training to support, from technology to design – whatever is requested in these countries.

This conference including all projects directly connected to it would make my biggest wish come true. By forwarding all my experience and knowledge to the people, I could give back what this country gave me!

#### **Final word**

Since it is difficult to note every single detail from the past five years, I really hope you could follow my thoughts and feelings and my way to Islam.

I feel that there is a new challenge which at the same time could represent itself as a chance. Due to the fact that I am living in and between two cultures, I might be able to break some barriers between them. I learned that there are people who try to attack you only because of misunderstandings, a lack of information or unawareness. But even though I am only one person and I don't belong to a powerful and famous family – if I'm able to destroy

only some negative impressions or if I manage to explain a bit more about the true and merciful way of Islam – I might be able to contribute to a better understanding between two cultures. Insha Allah!

I know that there is much more to learn about the Islam. But now I have close friends so I am able to ask whatever I would like to know about. And I am really happy that I found my way into this fascinating Arabian world.

Now the time of the holy month of Ramadan is starting and I wish a very healthy and peaceful time to all of you and your families as well as a very happy Eid.

*Eid Mubarak*

*Asakum Men Auadukom*