

Anne Frank and a Hijab



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When I was little I had a friend named Maria. If memories serve me right, she was in my first grade class. She had black hair and pale white skin, light pink lips, and a large white toothy grin. Her smile was infectious. I remember how accepted she made me feel. She was in my life for a short time, but her kindness stayed in ways I never realized until now.

My memories of that time are vague. I have feelings about my memories. I seem to feel that Maria's house was elegant, and things may have been in shades of cream. Her Mother made me tea. It was not a tea kettle and a mug, but actually tea cups and I think a silver tea pot. I felt at the time grown up and special. I felt I was being treated as an equal. I do not remember how the tea tasted but that I felt warm and appreciated. I do not remember what Maria's mother looked like. I do not remember though because her face was covered. She was wearing what I now know is a hijab.

I asked my mother recently about Maria, if she remembered her. She did not remember until I reminded my mother that Maria's mother wore a hijab. My mother's response at that moment was suddenly she did remember Maria. She remembered her as a very sweet girl. I wish I had more friends who left me that impression from that time of my life. Maria did not seem to have a mean aspect. Unfortunately for me, however, Maria left and went home. She was from Iran. It was before the Iran Iraq war.

I told my Mother that Maria was probably Islamic. She denied that as true. I pointed out Maria was from Iran and that her mother wore a

hijab. My mother told me it did not matter. But it does. It took a Muslim ban to make me put the pieces of my psyche into perspective. I realized I asked my mother about Maria to shock her into the truth. My parents may have both voted for the government that created the Ban. I realized aspects of my life were influenced by one friend at the age of six. It was one of the many pieces of my childhood that made me different from the rest of my family. I knew that just because a woman wore a hijab did not mean she was incapable of kindness. Maria's mother after all made me tea and made Maria.

Years later I saw a book in the library and the girl on the cover looked just like Maria. It was Anne Frank. That was the first time I read the story of a little girl who had to hide in fear. I know a truth. That if you ignored the fact that Anne Frank was a Jew, I could have been reading Maria's diary or some other girl who looked like her, in hiding from terrorists or in hiding from us. Children truly do not know hate. I hope this story helps someone remember that and see the truth, before a new Ban is set in place. Kindness is possible and present in anyone of any belief or culture. We have to learn to cultivate it, not scare it into a grave.

