

Anonymous Brother

In the Name of God; the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

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Bismillahe Rahmane Raheem

Salamu alaykum

Brothers and sisters, as I stand here before you I am a Muslim. You might not find this surprising, but many of you do not know that I am a convert evert to Islam. On this very special night as we remember the birth of our Prophet, Prophet Muhammad, I have been asked to share with you the way in which the message of Allah(s.w.t.) and our Prophet were shown to me, and why I made the decision to revert.

My name is #####, and I was born in Portugal and came to Australia as a young child. Both my parents are Roman Catholics and hence I was brought up with the values and ideals of the Christian faith. I was taken to church, and attended Catholic schools my whole life. How is it possible that I converted?

The simplest answer is that I didn't believe. If I had to tell the truth I was extremely close, or absolutely sure that it was impossible that any God existed. Christian teachings offered me no answers. I was told to believe in God, who came to earth as a man, born to a virgin, who lived his life as a human, but who performed miracles, and in the end was killed for our own salvation, the salvation of his own "people", of those who he created. I was told to believe in God, and Jesus as the son of God, but that Jesus was God? I didn't understand it. The more I questioned this fact, the more and more confused I became of understanding the concept of the Trinity, until finally I realized that it was a matter of faith, and there simply was no truth.

Living in the 21st century society, I also questioned what morals, what laws and what was the purpose of life, where everywhere I looked I saw people hurting others, criminals, stories of suffering and hatred, discrimination and suppression. Was there any purpose in being a Just and Honest person? In being friendly and accepting of all? In having morals and personal respect? It seemed not.

Worst of all was seeing our “saviors” death, celebrated with drinking and partying. Was it all an age old excuse for a day off work to get drunk and have a good laugh? So I had to ask myself, why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Did I come into this existence simply to work and die? I had no answers and was lost, but life goes on and I tried to forget my fears and concerns.

At around the same time I met some work colleagues who were Muslim. But that was all I gave them, a name. I didn't know what they believed, what they stood for, why they were any different from me, and it didn't really matter. They had jobs like mine, interests, hobbies, families, friends; they lived normal lifestyles, something completely contradictory to what I was viewing on every news telecast, reading in every newspaper, that they were terrorists! How did this bring me to Islam? Are there not nice and friendly Christians?

That's where my inquisitiveness kicked in, and I began to question what was the big difference? One night I went home, sat down at my computer, far away from any library where someone might see me reading a book on Islam, and started searching. What I found truly amazed, shocked and comforted me. It was what I had believed in and had searched for all my life, meaning!

What I was reading was simply like a printed copy of my mind. Every intricate detail of the values and beliefs were the same as those which I had lived by all my life, without ever having a concept that there existed a whole religion which thought alike, whose teaching was so directly in line with my own beliefs. But is Islam a Religion? Or are Religions more of a way of life? We can't just be of a religion; we have to live it every day of our life.

Like I said, I was simply amazed at what I was reading on these Islamic websites. So much peace and tranquility, so much emphasis on family and community, on fairness, trust and honesty. A belief in one God, truly Unique and All Powerful who was beyond the comprehension and imagination of man, who was All Seeing, All Knowing, who was not a man, and who did not have children. The fact that there were no priests, no idols, images, statues or depictions of any religious person. The fact that the holy Quran was the literal word of God, completely untouched for 1400 years, kept away from the manipulation of man. And finally, the knowledge that it was against the will of God to consume alcoholic beverages. This to me was simply common sense. Every word, every law, every belief, just pieced itself together, and to this day I can be honest in saying that I have never questioned anything in Islam twice, it is simply so clear, so self explanatory and so amazingly

unbelievable, that there is no need to question, only the need to worship and follow the teachings of Allah (swt). Could anyone ever not believe?

When I read the stories of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), I was simply convinced. Who else would God choose to be His messenger than the greatest man ever on earth?

“Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a son, a husband, a father, an advisor, a warrior, a leader, a judge and most important of all, he was the Seal of the Prophets.” The stories of his triumphs at battle, his treatment of his wife and family, his sincerity and care, his honesty, the fact that he was able to have the courage and strength to fight for what he believed, and not be afraid to stand and speak out, regardless of how he was treated, just showed that there could be no doubt that this was a truly unique man, the Messenger of Allah (swt).

But what did I do now? After a period of trying to deny myself what I believed I couldn't ignore it any more. I had a fundamental belief which gave me answers to any questions or doubts I may have ever had, and I finally realized that I had just never known about it. Who did I talk to? Who did I see? What did I have to do? I was afraid of what might happen to me if I converted and started practicing. What would people say? What would my family do? How would they be treated when the community found out that their son was now a Muslim?

No matter what the outcome I ceased the consumption of all pork immediately, but I couldn't eat Halal meat, I was afraid that it would start raising too many questions. It didn't work. I felt so guilty every time I ate something, I felt ashamed to Allah that I wasn't praying, and I couldn't live like that any more. Even though I continually kept reading and learning more and more about Islam, I knew that Allah would be with me through anything I was going to face. I started praying. But I didn't want to hide it, I wanted to be open, and let people know about the great discovery I had made. My parents were the first people I told of my conversion. It was difficult for me, but I had to tell them. How would they take it? From the point I stopped eating pork, they assumed something was up. I had never consumed alcohol, so that wasn't an issue. Initially I made up an excuse, but I had to be honest and tell them the truth. I feared the moment, and put it off, time and time again, knowing it would hurt them. You can only imagine if your own child came to you one day and said they were converting to another faith. I didn't want them to feel as though they had failed me, because they didn't. I can only attribute my values, kindness and honesty to the upbringing I received from my parents. When I did tell them however, I don't think they took it very seriously. They thought it was a phase I was going through. But as the weeks

passed, and I continued to eat Halal meat, as Ramadan came and I fasted, and as they saw me pray, I think they started to realize it wasn't going to blow over. I tried, and continue to explain Islam to them, and even though they agree and comprehend some of the differences, it is still impossible for them to accept I reverted.

After communicating with some friends about my next step to Islam, I was told to go to the Mosque and ask to speak to a Sheikh about my conversion. I felt so intimidated, I didn't know what was the proper behavior or customs, so I ended up driving around the mosque two or three times before I eventually got the courage to stop and go in. I asked for the phone number of a Sheikh, and I called. Immediately I was referred to Sheikh Mansour, and so I called. Sheikh was more than willing to organize a meeting, and I came and spoke to him. When I arrived here at the Imam Husain Islamic Centre, and learned about the availability of courses in English, about the lectures, and just about the availability of a community which spoke my language, I felt at ease.

It has now been over a year since I discovered Islam, and about nine months since I made the decision to start practicing, and I will say to you here it has been the most amazing and unbelievable nine months of my life. I won't deny the fact that it was a difficult to get to where I am today, I went through a lot of struggles, I had sleepless nights, and I feared my family would no longer talk to me, but Allah (swt) was with me every step of the way.

I want to thank Sheikh Mansour and the Imam Husain Islamic Centre for all their help and support and for providing me, and our whole community this place of worship in which we sit tonight.

In looking back at all that has happened, I have to look forward. I have to thank Allah (swt) for showing me the light to the true path, and I profess again that "I bear Witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger".

"Ash Hadu Al-la Elaha Ellallah Wa Ash Hadu Anna Muhammadan Rasullulah".

salawat – Allah humma Salle Allah Muhamad wa Ale Muhammad

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