

SAUMYA, EX-HINDU, INDIA

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Description: A Hindu's journey to Islam.

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When the truth is revealed to you and you stand face to face with it, how long can you refuse to accept it? How long would you run away denying it?

There comes a point in your life when you have to break free from all the chains that hold you back from answering the True Call.

It is a moment where nothing else seems significant and equivalent to the call of the Almighty God and His path of freedom, bliss and satisfaction.

All the lies with which you have been living with start fading and your beliefs as a disbeliever fall like a pack of cards. And what you witness is an Eureka moment, a moment when you realize the truth, when you realize the beauty of Islam.

Then you take no time to accept it. You just have to take a bold step lest fearing the societal pressure and disagreement. For you should always fight for the Truth and stand firm on to it, no matter be it against your own kin.

I remember the day when I stood in front of the mirror in my room, looking vaguely, trying to search for something but failing to find an answer. In retrospect, I was never an atheist,

I always believed that God existed and being a Hindu it existed for me in thousand forms: from a stone to a tree, from a tree to a river, from a river to a well (funny but true). All were objects of worship for me as I was told by my family and other traditions.

I took pride in being a polytheist, considering that all objects made by God are worth worshipping and that there exists a part of God in them, in every single being; so all are worthy of worship. It could be a cow, a tree, a river (as I said also a well), idols and even human beings themselves.

I detested Islam for being so rigid and stubborn on this. I found the Muslims static, living in the past, while the world is moving far ahead of them. For me all their beliefs were unreasonable (maybe because I never looked for reason), impractical, cruel and

outdated.

Probably, it was not my fault; I was made to look at them this way. It was a pre-conceived notion, which I inherited from this society which has often kept a negative image of Islam in majority of its opinion.

My first encounter with Islam was in high school where the majority of my classmates were Muslims and during free classes we used to have discussions on Islam (largely because of the anti-Islam propaganda by the Hindu Organizations post 9/11 and the Gujarat riots).

During these talks they tried to clear various misconceptions that I carried regarding monotheism, rights of women, their status, and other popular myths which have become clichéd more or less.

Yet, it was not convincing for me, I still kept those beliefs and my pride in being polytheist. Though I was not anymore an anti-Muslim, I was moved by the sufferings of the people who were one of us, simply dying because they practiced a different faith. I became more secular in my outlook.

I give the major credit of becoming a monotheist to Arya Samaj, a Hindu organization that believes that Hinduism preaches monotheism and not rituals and idol worshiping. After coming under its influence I stopped worshiping idols, performing any sort of rituals and going to temples.

These are what I call the steps I was taking to finally reach my destination that is Islam. Though Arya Samaj has its own flaws, I again found myself in the same cob-web; where rituals and fire worshiping became an integral part.

Reading Vedas, Manu Smiriti, and other scriptures only confused me. It was all philosophical, nothing material which could help you precisely find an answer for your daily life queries.

While in college studying Law, it was the first time when the clarity of Islam dawned over me. It was nothing but a small course of Family Law - Hindu Law and Islamic Law regarding marriages, divorce, succession, etc.

While Hindu law was riddled with various technicalities, confusions, differences of opinions and lack of stability, Islamic law on the other hand was clear, precise and certain.

My opinion here changed overnight. What I used to find static, appeared stable to me. This made me curious to read more in this regard; I spent hours online talking to friends who used to tell me about Islam.

I read various links and participated in forum discussions. My outlook towards Islam started changing which was reflected when I spoke with my friends or discussed things with them.

Of course this change was not appreciated by them, they warned me against the so-called 'brain washers' whose sole aim is to divert Hindus to Islam.

All this used to bother me, I felt scared of their disagreement. I felt as though I were cheating my friends and family by doing what they sternly disagreed with.

But, as I said earlier, how long can you run away from the truth? You cannot live with a lie and accepting the truth needs courage. And as the Holy Quran says:

“Believers, uphold justice. Always bear true witness, even if it be against yourself, your parents, or your relatives-and regardless of whether the person against whom you are speaking is rich or poor. God is close to people regardless of their material circumstances. Do not be led by emotion, as this may cause you to swerve from the truth. If you distort your testimony, or refuse to testify, remember that God is aware of all your actions.” (Quran 4:135)

And that day all the fears just drifted away, because if I wouldn't have converted then I guess I would never had. I would have stayed stuck in the complexities of the material world where false emotions stop us from doing the right thing.

Though my friends and family members are yet unaware of it, but certainly I will tell them sooner or later and I hope Insha'Allah (God-willing) that they will respect my decision.

Alhamdulillah, I'm a Muslim today, trying to learn more and more about the Holy Quran and the guidelines of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Insha'Allah, I will walk on his path in a better way.

With the help of a few friends and an organization, I've learned to pray; I'm praying 5 times daily alhamdulillah. I pray to God to give me more strength so that I could always stand firm on my decision.

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