

**Description:** Sara Hermansson was born in Mariestad, Sweden. 27 years later, she tells us how she in 2004, found her "way to the most beautiful gift...Islam."

By Sara Hermansson (from IslamOnline with permission, slightly edited)

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### **How was your life before finding your way to Islam?**

My life before Islam was empty in a way. Just the feeling to live for the day and not knowing the meaning and purpose of life. My self-confidence was quite weak. I didn't feel that I belonged anywhere in the society, something was missing. I was searching for something, I just didn't know what it was at that time.

### **What was the turning point that led you to choose Islam?**

It was a long journey and it took time. I knew there was and is a God, I just couldn't identify myself with Christianity. God for me has always been something so great and big that my mind is limited to understand what He is. This, as God has such great power and can not be compared to a human being. God has no limitation, he is capable to do whatever He desires.

I searched for a long time among different religions and the more I came to know about Islam, the more I felt Islam is the full truth and it made complete sense. Islam described God as I had always imagined Him.

### **What do you love most about Islam?**

What I mostly love about Islam is Allah's love and mercy.

### **What does being a Muslim mean to you?**

For me, being a Muslim means to live in peace with yourself and your friends, family and the whole society. And to show the best behaviour as possible, according to Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) Sunnah and how he treated people and how he showed love, charity and mercy. And also to please Allah (swt) [Editor's note: (swt) is an abbreviation for Subhanahu wa Taala, used by Muslims, meaning Almighty] and follow His words and ask for forgiveness and thank Allah (swt) for everything.

### **What would you like to tell people about Islam?**

Islam gives you a rich life, in the sense that life has a purpose and you feel peace and love in your heart.

## **Do you think Islam is relevant to today's world? How?**

I believe Islam is very much relevant to the world today. There is so much hatred in the world and a lot of people have the wrong concept of Islam, which is in many ways our own (we Muslims) mistakes in showing Islam in a wrong way. We need to show Islam in a peaceful way and with patience.

## **What do you think Islam has to offer the world today?**

Islam has many things to offer the world today. For example, charity is very much emphasized and to not be greedy regarding money and material things. To share love with your neighbors and with strangers. To keep self-respect, to show that confidence is not to show your body, it is to protect it; which is the ground to confidence and good morals.

## **What are the obstacles that you faced after embracing Islam?**

### **- From family, friends, and associates, etc.**

There are unfortunately many misconceptions about Islam. For example, that women are oppressed and forced to do whatever men say. So, it was not strange that my parents were not happy after I told them that I reverted to Islam, but they knew that I started to read about Islam since a long time before that.

They had and still have a negative view about Islam. Very much due to what is portrayed in media, but also because of the many bad actions done by Muslims who fail to correctly represent their religion. Unfortunately, I am held responsible for other peoples acts.

My parents do accept me and they love me very much and when I'm there at their house they always cook food that I can eat as well. In that way they respect me, but they do feel ashamed if I need to pray somewhere.

What's positive is that they think that I'm helping them a lot and that I'm very caring.

Some of my friends reacted in a negative way when I became Muslim. I have no longer any relationship with some of them, unfortunately.

Others, I still got a relationship with, but I try not to discuss Islam too much with them, as some could feel uncomfortable with that. However, they do sometimes ask me things.

My parents are not keen on discussing Islam. With time, I pray they will start asking and become Muslims inshaAllah (God willing).

It's in the hands of Allah. I try to be kind to them, help them as much as possible, respect them and just show good behaviour.

I guess my relatives think I'm strange to revert to Islam, but none of them ever commented about it.

## **- From the Arabic language and/or specific acts of worship.**

I have felt frustration on not understanding Arabic. I have also not felt completely free to pray in any place, even in Islamic countries.

## **What methods of dawah (Islamic Propagation) were used to invite you to Islam? Were they effective?**

Friends who showed charity and love and open arms had a great effect on me.

## **What were you unhappy with in your own religion/lifestyle?**

I felt I did not see a purpose with life. I had an empty feeling; no peace.

## **After accepting Islam did you embrace a whole new way of life; or did you experience just isolated changes to your life style?**

I embraced a whole new way of life with daily prayers, etc. I'm still doing the things I liked to do before that are permissible.

## **How difficult was it to believe in Muhammad (peace be upon him)?**

It was not difficult for me to accept the belief in Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). When you read about his beautiful way in dealing with people with understanding and love and his respect and love to people as well as animals in addition to how logical his acts were, it's easy to believe in him.

## **What role did current events have on your journey to Islam?**

Current events had the effect of "A wakeup call".

## **Did the search for a spiritual path lead to other religions before finally finding Islam?**

Yes, I read about Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism before embracing Islam, I believe that knowledge about other religions is very relevant to be able to compare and to get a larger understanding for your own religion and for other religions.

If we, as Muslims, want people to understand and respect us and our religion; we must act in the same way to others.

## **What is your current state after embracing Islam?**

Islam has given me a feeling of peace and harmony. It's a feeling of satisfaction that I found the truth.

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