

A trip from Hungary to Islam

Please tell us about your childhood and where did you grow up?

I was born in 1993, and was brought up in a small town in the South-East of Hungary. The main, leading religion here is Christianity. However, growing up I can not really recall hearing, learning or knowing much about faith, religion or God. Hence, I was brought up without the use of religious principles and morals, as neither of my parents was a part of any religion. Faith, as far as I remember, has never really been a topic that is frequently spoken about in my family.

When did you feel religion is important and what made you think you need to change? What triggered you to consider a conversion?

In 2008, I befriended some Muslims, who asked if I practiced any religion, which I did not. I believe this question triggered my interest. I began to start thinking and feeling that I could, should and needed to believe. To have something to hold onto. To belong somewhere. Thus, I started asking about their faith, Islam. In the beginning, I did not think of reverting to Islam, as it was a complete stranger to me. But as Christianity is all around here, I thought I could give it a try. I was also thinking of getting baptized at that time.

What did you choose to embrace Shia Islam?

The Muslims I got to know Islam from are Shia, so there was a chance if I convert, I would choose Shia Islam. Therefore, I believe it was a good starting point to my journey. They told me stories about the great personalities of the Shia school of thought. I also remember hearing about the heart-rending event of Karbala. After giving a chance to Christianity, I continued asking and reading more about Islam. Maybe the thought of discovering and belonging to a completely unknown religion (to me) had a strong effect on me, Allah (swt) knows best. Upon reading and hearing more about Islam, I could not let it go.

The Shia Muslims, who helped me, warned me not to search for

information online on my own, as I could easily get lost and learn from wrong, untrustworthy sources. However, after a while I did not want to waste more time. I needed knowledge in order to start practicing my faith.

I, therefore, started doing my own research, trying to find my way, keeping the Shia school of thought in mind. Just like I was told, I got confused often times, learnt the wrong information. Yet, after much confusion, by this way, I could still reach my destination, Praise be to Allah ((swt)), to the teachings and pathway of the Purified Household of the Prophet Muhammad (sawa).

The belief in the rightful successors after the Prophet Muhammad (sawa) seemed so clear and obvious that there was no room left for doubt.

Who inspires you the most in Shia history?

I am afraid, I can not pick just one person from the Household of Prophet Muhammad (saw). They all inspire me with their indescribably great personalities and teachings. However, Lady Fatima al-Zahra (sa), the lady of light stands very close to my heart and I wish I could one day, If Allah wills, make her proud.

What has been your experience of the Shia community?

The Shia population, as far as I know, is very small in Hungary. Locally, there is no community where I could attend/belong to.

How do you spend your days in Muharram?

As I can not attend any Shia gathering during the month of Muharram, I have always spent it on my own, reading and learning about, commemorating the tragic event of Karbala.

What is your view on rituals of Azadari - how did you see them

before embracing Shia Islam and how do you see them now?

I personally wish, that one day I could be a part of the Azadari, commemorating and mourning the tragedies of the Holy Household (as). I find it heartbreakingly beautiful and necessary as we should rejoice in the happiness of the Purified Progeny (as) and be sad for their sadness.