

Imam Hussein (AS) is my reason for what am I today

Could you please introduce yourself?

My name is Yvette Baldacchino and I also have Muslim name as well which is suraya, I took this name 12 years ago when I first became Muslim. I have been Muslim for 12 years, 6 years Sunni, and 6 years Shi'ah Alhamdolellah.

[It is noteworthy to mention that having been raised in a family with Italian lineage on her father's side, she has also chosen the name Nargis for herself, the same name chosen by Imam Mahdi's mother (AS) who bore witness to the Prophethood of the Last Ever-Anticipated Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) while being raised in a Roman Christian royal family. For the delightful story of Hadrat Mahdi's mother (AS), we cordially invite you to read: "Melica's heart story", in this site: kindfather.com]

I grew up in Australia, all of my family is there as well. I was born there and I was educated there. I studied in university for 6 years and I completed two bachelor degrees, one Bachelor of Arts in English and another one in law, a bachelor of law. I'm here now in Iran to study Farsi language and Enshaa'Allah to go on and study religious studies after this.

How were you first introduced to Islam? How much Imam Hussain (AS) influenced your decision to become Shi'ah?

My search for the Truth started from very young age. When I was a child, I always felt the presence of Allah in my innate and I wanted to submit to that higher force whatever you call it Allah or GOD. However I wasn't sure about how to reach His destination and I often contemplated about where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is my destination in this life?

Contemplating over these Questions, where did I come from, why am I here, where am I going, initiated my search for the Truth and my religious studies.

I grew up in a very strict Catholic environment and they didn't allow any inquiry in to your beliefs.

You were expected to believe the same religion as your parents and follow this blindly without any

Question at all. I was continually dissatisfied with the incomplete or illogical answers that I was being

provided during my Christian upbringing, even though I was very interested in religious studies and I

came first in my school when I finished high school. In my teenage years I abandoned Christianity all together.

When I was growing up as a child I used to have dreams of big group of people wrapped in white

garbs, of many nationalities, walking in a place of big pillars, systematically up and down. I thought

that this was connected to Gandhi. So when I got older, I started to researched eastern religions

and particularly Hinduism and Buddhism; and I became very attracted to Buddhism.

However I realized that these religions were very polytheistic and also too much on the philosophical

side; also I noticed strictly discriminatory system within the Hindu faith which really ignores human rights and I didn't like that.

During this time when I was still searching, which was in 1997, my mother decided to go to Egypt,

and this was a lifelong dream that she had; but it was early in her forties that she actually got to

fulfill this dream, she was very attracted to ancient Egypt civilization. So during this time that she

went overseas, I was going to Europe to visit my relatives so I booked 5 day stay in Egypt to visit my mother on the way.

After I arrived in Egypt I ended up staying much longer that I had

planned, and every time that I tried to leave that country I found something blocking me, and my 5 day trip turned to 6 months.

Everywhere I traveled in Cairo, everybody kept telling me about the Mosque of the AhlulBayt in Cairo, and that if I went there all of my wishes would be granted.

I didn't know anything about the personality of this [member of the] AhlulBayt [Imam Hossain (AS)], but the people loved him so much and I found so much faith in this personality and this place; it inspired me to go there.

So I went to this Mosque [Masjid of Ra's-Ol-Hosain] 3 times when I was Christian, and I went there full of hope. While I was at the Zarih, I asked to be guided to the Truth, and I asked my empty life in Australia to change, and I asked for my search to end.

Growing up in the west I was always fed very negative Images of Islam, so I never looked in to Islam. However when I went to Egypt it totally changed my perspective and I saw lots of things I liked, such as very strong family values, Respect for elders, no drive towards materialism, and I saw people so poor yet their hearts were content and satisfied with their lives and I felt like they knew what their destination was in life.

I concluded that most of these characteristics were driven by religious foundations. So this initiated my inquiry in to Islam. And the more I discovered about Islam, the more I became impressed; and I found Islam a complete package covering all aspects of life, from medicine to hygiene, science to moral values and even the unseen world.

Finally I was given a copy of the Holy Qur'an in English, and the

moment I open this book I realized my searched was over. And I felt the Word of GOD talking to me for the first time.

And these were clearly the Words of GOD and not of the human mind. Many verses such as:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل هو الله الصمد لم يلد و لم يولد ولم يكن له كفواً احد.
[In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Say! He, Allah, is One. Allah is impenetrable and independent. He begets not, and nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.] instantly ended a lifetime confusion.

So on that morning itself I became a Muslim. And I concluded that there is no GOD except Allah.

However my search for the truth didn't end in Egypt, and when I came home I discovered after 6 years a big difference between Sunni and Shia beliefs. For one year I studied and supplicated and asked Allah to guide me again.

The more I read about the Shi'a the more I felt myself swayed by the Shi'ah. I loved the ideas and the events and also it appealed to my logic.

Sadly enough I found the division of this great religion was caused mainly by the issue of leadership after the demise of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

I found more than 140 Sunni narrations supporting the event of Ghadir. Also I used my logic: Why would the prophet Mohammad (SAWA) stop such a large group of pilgrims in the heat just when they were about to disperse when he didn't have any significant reason for this ? There are also verses of Quran that support this Day and give it much weight.

Can you please tell us about the influence of Imam Hussein (AS) and the event of Ashura [‘Aashoora] in your reversion to Shi’ah?

As for my relationship with Imam Hossein (AS), it is a deep and long standing and loyal one and despite all the proofs I discovered, Imam Hussein (AS) is my reason for what am I today, may I be sacrificed for him millions of times; he is my savior and advocate before Allah and I owe everything to him.

I believe that Imam Hosein (AS) was with me from 1997 in Egypt when I first went to Mosque of Hussein in Cairo [Ra’s-ol-Hosain] and I asked to be guided when I was there, However Imam Hussein (AS) didn’t leave me at that point. Six years later when I was looking at the Sunni and Shia differences, I was taken to a Shi’ah Mosque [in Australia] for the first time. Out of all the Mosques in the world, I was taken to Imam Hussein Islamic center in Sidney; and at the minute I entered this house of Allah, I felt a very strong energy and a strong connection between the heart and Allah.

When I heard the Shia supplications being read there such as Du’a Komeil, Du’a ‘Arafah, these opened a deeper dimension of my spirituality to me and I found a secret and intimate door to communication with Allah. And Shia ‘Erfaan [the Infallible Imams’ (AS) guidance to the true recognition of Allah] became my inspiration. During this time I discovered the concept of Tawassol.

[For more information regarding the concept of Tawassol we cordially invite you to read the article: “Seeking the Waseelah” in this site.]

And I also realized the character of Imam Hussein (AS) who had been

kept in dark for so many years by the Sunni. when I found out the beauty and the depth of this character and what he had done for the history and the sacrifice he made I realized at that moment that he was my intercessor and immediately I fell in love with Imam Hussein (AS).

Can you please briefly describe Lady Zaynab for us?

To me Lady Zaynab (AS) is one of the greatest female role models that history has ever seen and a shiny example to western feminism as well as those who claim that Islam oppresses women.