Gerda, Ex-Christian, Lithuania

I am from a little Eastern European country called Lithuania where Christianity is the dominant religion, and where a baby in his first days in the world is made a Christian. I've never been an atheist, but I never called myself a good Christian. It was the time when I was going to the church every Sunday, not just for prayer, but to help the priest and to sing in the church choir that I had God in my heart the most, even though I would ask my parents why they baptized me without asking me if I would like to be a Christian or not.

All my life, as I remember, I couldn't be a good Christian, and I couldn't understand the meaning of the Christian religion. But I was looking for meaning. I would read a lot of books about Christianity, while continuously asking the priest for help. I could say that I felt and I believed that "Somebody's" watching over me, but I could not call myself Christian.

Life without God Almighty's guidance was difficult, scary, and lonely wherever I went. I was looking for God all the time, and yet I felt that He was so close to me. I was feeling God's help all the time with me; I felt like He was talking to me. I saw how He was taking care of me and letting me find the way of life that He had already chosen for me. I was trying to understand a lot of signs that he was sending me daily almost like He was speaking to me.

I am the second child in my family, and my mother's delivery pains with me were much harder than with her first baby. I was very lucky to survive the delivery, and I believe God saved my life. After two really serious accidents later in my life, which people said that nobody could possibly survive after, I started to really appreciate my life. I felt how fragile human life is and that only God knows how long I will live.

God let me trust Him every minute of my life and this helped me to enjoy my life even when I was sick or feeling bad. I know that God is giving us everything, wanting us to appreciate Him, so we will understand that He is doing it just for us.

I had a car accident right after my graduation exams, and I was told to stay in a bed for no less than six weeks. I could only move my head and arms, but with God's help I nonetheless finished my school and enrolled in university while still lying in bed. Even my doctor couldn't believe that I accomplished that much! Most people would be screaming with pain or asking for a pill to make them sleep. It couldn't just be luck - it was a miracle from God for sure. After this, my faith increased but "SomeOne" still kept me away from church. I can now understand what was going on - for me, church wasn't the way to God.

True understanding of God, what I had been wanting for so long and which would be my only way to real happiness through the calmness of my soul, I found through my husband. How we met each other was one of God's miracles too. In the beginning, we never talked about religion, and we never had disagreements about it. One day, when I was in a really happy mood because I had just met an old friend, he (in that time we still weren't married) told me that he wanted to give me the best thing in his life - faith. God put the correct words on his lips that day, and I was really interested to hear what he had to say about the Holy Quran, about miracles written in it, and about the meanings of every motion of his body while he prayed. Though it was just one conversation about the topic, it was enough to make me read as many books as I could get my hands on. With every book, with every page, I started to understand what I was missing in my life, that is, what I had been looking for all those years when I was asking priests for answers. Books would talk to me - God was talking to me through books. I found answers to a lot of questions; I found calmness in my soul while those around me were still searching.

I became Muslim just a few months ago, and it's amazing to feel the miracle of a rebirth in faith. God loved me so much that He let me be born again though I was already 21 years old, an age when I was able to appreciate His amazing gift. Now I am a Muslim. Nobody can believe how different it is to be Muslim!

God made me see the sun in a different way than I used to see it when I was a Christian. The sun has a different meaning for me now. I know that this sunshine that God is sending to us everyday is His way of showing us how much He cares about us, how much He loves us. Because of His mercy, we do not feel cold, and we can see the world in many colors. God created night in order to show us how amazing His light is. He made us trust Him that after a cold and dark night, He will bring forth a nice, fresh morning. In this way, God is showing us signs. He gave us eyes to see His words in every miracle.

I'm so happy and thankful for God's gift to see this world anew - to finally appreciate my life. He gave me a new and fresh light in my life, and now I can see His signs all around me in a different way. Everything I do, everywhere I go, God is saying welcome to me. In miracles that He is showing me, I see that I'm on the right way, that He is with me (in His Knowledge). The world didn't change in one

day, it didn't even change in 21 years. All that has changed is the quality of my life when true understanding of God came into my heart.

I wish the whole world would change too. Now people are angry and tired of looking for calmness through worldly success. They are tired of hating each other, and of being jealous of one another. Nations try to survive by fighting each other; countries try to live in peace but cannot stay without war. Each day, the world is sinking deeper and deeper down. The only way to stop it is to make Islam the way of life of humanity. With love and knowledge of God in everybody's heart, we will find and enjoy the life that we are now just dreaming about. We will build an optimistic future for our children; we will not be scared to meet each other and live as a single humanity.