

Cat Stevens, Former Pop star, UK (part 2 of 2)

Description: One of the most prominent musical figures of the 70's and his search for the truth.
Part 2: The Quran and accepting Islam.

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The Quran

When he came to London, he brought back a translation of the Quran, which he gave to me. He did not become a Muslim, but he felt something in this religion, and thought I might find something in it also.

And when I received the book, a guidance that would explain everything to me - who I was; what was the purpose of life; what was the reality and what would be the reality; and where I came from - I realized that this was the true religion; religion not in the sense the West understands it, not the type for only your old age. In the West, whoever wishes to embrace a religion and make it his only way of life is deemed a fanatic. I was not a fanatic; I was at first confused between the body and the soul. Then I realized that the body and soul are not apart and you don't have to go to the mountain to be religious. We must follow the will of God. Then we can rise higher than the angels. The first thing I wanted to do now was to be a Muslim.

I realized that everything belongs to God, that slumber does not overtake Him. He created everything. At this point I began to lose the pride in me, because hereto I had thought the reason I was here was because of my own greatness. But I realized that I did not create myself, and the whole purpose of my being here was to submit to the teaching that has been perfected by the religion we know as Al-Islam. At this point, I started discovering my faith. I felt I was a Muslim. On reading the Quran, I now realized that all the Prophets sent by God brought the same message. Why then were the Jews and Christians different? I know now how the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah and that they had changed His Word. Even the Christians misunderstand God's Word and called Jesus the son of God. Everything made so much sense. This is the beauty of the Quran; it asks you to reflect and reason, and not to worship the sun or moon but the One Who has created everything. The Quran asks man to reflect upon the sun and moon and God's creation in general. Do you realize how different the sun is from the moon? They are at varying distances from the earth, yet appear the same size to us; at times, one seems to overlap the other.

Even when many of the astronauts go to space, they see the insignificant size of the earth and vastness of space. They become very religious, because they have seen the Signs of God.

When I read the Quran further, it talked about prayer, kindness and charity. I was not a Muslim yet, but I felt that the only answer for me was the Quran, and God had sent it to me, and I kept it a secret. But the Quran also speaks on different levels. I began to understand it on another level, where the Quran says, "Those who believe do not take disbelievers for friends and the believers are brothers." Thus at this point I wished to meet my Muslim brothers.

Conversion

Then I decided to journey to Jerusalem (as my brother had done). At Jerusalem, I went to the mosque and sat down. A man asked me what I wanted. I told him I was a Muslim. He asked what was my name. I told him, "Stevens." He was confused. I then joined the prayer, though not so successfully. Back in London, I met a sister called Nafisa. I told her I wanted to embrace Islam, and she directed me to the New Regent Mosque. This was in 1977, about one and a half years after I received the Quran. Now I realized that I must get rid of my pride, get rid of Satan, and face one direction. So on a Friday, after the Friday congregational prayer service, I went to the Imam (Prayer Leader) and declared my faith (the Shahaadah) at this hands. You have before you someone who had achieved fame and fortune. But guidance was something that eluded me, no matter how hard I tried, until I was shown the Quran. Now I realize I can get in direct contact with God, unlike Christianity or any other religion. As one Hindu lady told me, "You don't understand the Hindus. We believe in one God; we use these objects (idols) to merely concentrate." What she was saying was that in order to reach God, one has to create associates, that are idols for the purpose. But Islam removes all these barriers. The only thing that moves the believers from the disbelievers is the salat (prayer). This is the process of purification.

Finally, I wish to say that everything I do is for the pleasure of God and pray that you gain some inspirations from my experiences. Furthermore, I would like to stress that I did not come into contact with any Muslim before I embraced Islam. I read the Quran first and realized that no person is perfect. Islam is perfect, and if we imitate the conduct of the Prophet we will be successful.

May God give us guidance to follow the path of the nation of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Ameen!

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