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Description: How a roulette analogy helped this former Las Vegas resident become a Muslim. Part 4: A meaningful videotape and reflections about conversion.

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Overcoming an Obstacle

At this point, I felt about 80% sure I wanted to become a Muslim, but something was holding me back. I was concerned about the reaction of my family and friends if they knew that I had become a Muslim. Shortly thereafter, I expressed this concern to a Muslim who told me that on Judgment Day, no one will be able to help you, not your father, mother or any of your friends.^[1] Therefore, if you believe Islam is the true religion, you should embrace it and live your life to please the One who created you. Thus, it became very lucid to me that we are all in the same boat; every soul shall taste death and then we'll be liable for our particular belief in God and for our deeds.^[2]

A Meaningful Videotape

By this stage in my search for the truth, I was on the verge of embracing Islam. I watched an Islamic lecture on videotape about the purpose of life. The main theme of this lecture was that the purpose of life may be summed up in one word, i.e., Islam (submission to the Will of God).

An additional point was that, unlike other religions or beliefs, the term 'Islam' is not associated with any particular person or place. God has named the religion in the following Quranic verse:

“Indeed, the only religion acceptable to God is Islam...” (Quran 3:19)

Anyone who embraces Islam is called a Muslim regardless of that person's race, sex or nationality. This is one of the reasons why Islam is a universal religion.

Prior to my search for the truth, I had never seriously considered Islam as an option because of the constant negative portrayal of Muslims in the media. Similarly, it was disclosed in this videotape that although Islam, is characterized by high moral standards, not all Muslims uphold these standards. I learned the same can be said

about adherents of other religions. I finally understood that we cannot judge a religion by the actions of its followers alone, as I had done, because all humans are fallible. On that account, we should not judge Islam by the actions of its followers, but by its revelation (the Holy Quran) and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

The last point I picked up from this lecture concerned the importance of gratitude. God mentions in the Quran that we should be grateful for the fact that He created us:

“And God has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect] that perhaps you would be grateful.” (16:78)

God has also cited gratitude along with belief, and has made it clear that He gains nothing from punishing His people nor will He gain anything when they give thanks to Him and believe in Him. He says in the Quran,

“What would God gain from your punishment if you are grateful and believe?” (Quran 4:147)

The Truth Unveils Itself

As soon as the videotape had finished, I experienced the truth being unveiled. I felt a huge burden of sins flying off my back. Moreover, it felt like my soul was rising above the earth, refusing the makeshift delights of this world in favor of the eternal joys of the Hereafter. This experience, coupled with the long process of reasoning, solved the ‘purpose of life puzzle’. It revealed Islam as the truth, thereby replenishing my ‘spiritual landscape’ with belief, purpose, direction and action. I therefore entered the gate of Islam by saying the declaration of faith required to become a Muslim: ***Ashhadu an La ilaha illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasoolu Ilah***. (I bear witness that there is no deity but God and Muhammad is His Messenger). I was informed that this formal testimony confirms one’s belief in all the prophets and messengers of God, along with all of His Divine revelations in their original form, thereby updating and completing one’s religion to the last of the prophets [Muhammad] and to the final revelation of God [the Quran]. The following point became overwhelmingly clear to me: Had Jesus been the last prophet of God and had the Gospel been the final revelation, I would have attested to that. As a result, I have naturally chosen to follow the final revelation from the Creator as exemplified by the seal of the prophets.

Impressions of a New Muslim

During my search to find the truth, the lesson which transcended all lessons was that all objects of worship other than God are mere delusions. To anyone who sees this clearly, the only possible course is to bring one’s own will and actions into complete unison with that of God. Submitting to the Will of God has enabled me to experience

inner-peace with the Creator, with others and finally, with myself. Consequently, I feel very grateful, that by the Mercy of God, I have been rescued from the depths of ignorance and have stepped into the light of truth. Islam, the true religion of all times, places and peoples, is a complete code of life which guides man to fulfill the purpose of his existence on earth, and prepares him for the Day when he will return to his Creator. Following this path in a devout manner enables one to gain the pleasure of God and to be closer to Him amid the endless delights of Paradise while escaping from the punishment of Hellfire. Another bonus is that our present life will be much happier when we make such a choice.

A Deceptive Enjoyment

Embracing Islam has given me more of an insight into the illusive nature of this life. For instance, one basic object of Islam is the liberation of man. This is why a Muslim calls himself 'Abdullah', the slave or servant of Allah (i.e., God) because enslavement to God signifies liberation from all other forms of servitude, and although modern man may think that he is liberated, he is in fact a slave to his desires. He is generally deceived by this worldly life. He is 'addicted' to hoarding wealth, sex, violence, intoxicants, etc. But above all, he is often seduced by the capitalist system that tends to work through the invention of false needs, which he feels must be satisfied instantly. God says in the Quran,

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him? Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except as livestock. Rather, they are [even] more astray in [their] way.)” (Quran 25:43-44)

Correspondingly, we should not let our zeal to enjoy the pleasures of this fleeting life jeopardize our opportunity to enjoy the bliss of Paradise. As God says in the Quran:

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of the worldly life, but God has with Him the best return [i.e. Paradise]. Say, “Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who fear God will be gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and purified spouses and (they will attain the) pleasure of God...” (Quran 3:14-15)

Therefore, the real competition in this life is not the accumulation of wealth or the desire for fame; it is racing with one another to perform good deeds to please God, while having our lawful portion of enjoyment in this life.[\[3\]](#)

The Right Path to God

There are many religious alternatives available to man and it is up to him to choose the one he wishes to follow. He is like a merchant with many goods in front of him, and it is

his choice which one to trade in. He will obviously select the one he thinks will be the most lucrative. However, the merchant is unsure and has no guarantee of prosperity; his product may have a market and he may make handsome returns, but he could just as easily lose all of his money. In contrast, the believer in the Oneness of God who submits to His Will (a Muslim), is completely sure that if he follows the path of guidance [the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad] there will undoubtedly be success and reward waiting for him at the end of this path. Fortunately, this success also starts at the beginning of the path.

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, may God be pleased with him, narrated that God's Messenger said, "If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then God shall forgive all his past sins, and after that starts the settlement of accounts: the reward of his good deeds will be greater in value by ten to seven hundred times, and an evil deed will be recorded as it is unless God forgives it .(Bukhari)

Epilogue

Based on my search for the truth, I concluded that the precise way we believe in God and the deeds we perform determine our future condition for eternity. Our Creator is giving us all an equal chance, regardless of our circumstances, to earn His pleasure in preparation for Judgment Day, as in the following Quranic verses:

“And obey God and His messenger that you may obtain mercy. And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden [i.e., Paradise] as wide as the Heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.” (Quran 3:132-133)

If we sincerely seek the truth of this life, which is Islam (submission to the Will of God), God will guide us there, God Willing. He directs us to examine the life and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad as he is the best role model for mankind to follow. Furthermore, God directs us to investigate and ponder what He says in the Quran. One will see that the Quran is indeed like a persistent and strong knocking on a door, or loud shouts seeking to awaken those who are fast asleep because they are just completely absorbed by this life on earth. The knocks and shouts appear one after the other: Wake up! Look around you! Think! Reflect! God is there! There is planning, trial, accountability, reckoning, reward, severe punishment and lasting bliss!

Clearly and unequivocally, the best way to live and die in this world is as a righteous Muslim! When one comes to the conclusion that Islam is the truth, he should not delay in becoming a Muslim because he may die first, and then it will be too late.[\[4\]](#)

A few months after embracing Islam, I found two verses in the Quran that mirror what the American Muslim told me regarding how we should live and die:

“And Abraham instructed his sons and [so did] Jacob, [saying], “O my sons! Indeed God has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims.” (Quran 2:132)

And,

“O you who believe, fear God as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].” (Quran 3:102)

Footnotes:

[1] See Quran 31:33; 82:18-19.

[2] See Quran 29:57; 3:185.

[3] See Quran 28:77.

[4] See Quran 23:99-100; 63:10-11.

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