

CAT STEVENS, FORMER POP STAR, UK (PART 1 OF 2)

Rating: 4.8

Description: One of the most prominent musical figures of the 70's and his search for the truth.
Part 1: Life as a musician.

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All I have to say is all what you know already, to confirm what you already know, the message of the Prophet [may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him] as given by God - the Religion of Truth. As human beings we are given a consciousness and a duty that has placed us at the top of creation... It is important to realize the obligation to rid ourselves of all illusions and to make our lives a preparation for the next life. Anybody who misses this chance is not likely to be given another, to be brought back again and again, because it says in the Glorious Quran that when man is brought to account, he will say, "O Lord, send us back and give us another chance. The Lord will say, 'If I send you back you will do the same.'"



My Early Religious Upbringing

I was brought up in the modern world of all the luxury and the high life of show business. I was born in a Christian home, but we know that every child is born in his original nature - it is only his parents that turn him to this or that religion. I was given this religion (Christianity) and thought this way. I was taught that God exists, but there was no direct contact with God, so we had to make contact with Him through Jesus - he was in fact the door to God. This was more or less accepted by me, but I did not swallow it all.

I looked at some of the statues of Jesus; they were just stones with no life. And when they said that God is three, I was puzzled even more but could not argue. I more or less believed it, because I had to have respect for the faith of my parents.

Pop Star

Gradually I became alienated from this religious upbringing. I started making music. I wanted to be a big star. All those things I saw in the films and on the media took hold of me, and perhaps I thought this was my God, the goal of making money. I had an uncle who had a beautiful car. "Well, I said, "he has it made. He has a lot of money." The people around me influenced me to think that this was it; this world was their God.

I decided then that this was the life for me; to make a lot of money, have a 'great life.' Now my examples were the pop stars. I started making songs, but deep down I had a feeling for humanity, a feeling that if I became rich I would help the needy. (It says in the Quran, we make a promise, but when we make something, we want to hold onto it and become greedy.)

So what happened was that I became very famous. I was still a teenager, my name and photo were splashed in all the media. They made me larger than life, so I wanted to live larger than life, and the only way to do that was to be intoxicated (with liquor and drugs).

In Hospital

After a year of financial success and 'high' living, I became very ill, contracted TB and had to be hospitalized. It was then that I started to think: What was to happen to me? Was I just a body, and my goal in life was merely to satisfy this body? I realized now that this calamity was a blessing given to me by God, a chance to open my eyes - "Why am I here? Why am I in bed?" - and I started looking for some of the answers. At that time, there was great interest in the Eastern mysticism. I began reading, and the first thing I began to become aware of was death, and that the soul moves on; it does not stop. I felt I was taking the road to bliss and high accomplishment. I started meditating and even became a vegetarian. I now believed in 'peace and flower power,' and this was the general trend. But what I did believe in particular was that I was not just a body. This awareness came to me at the hospital.

One day when I was walking, and I was caught in the rain, I began running to the shelter and then I realized, 'Wait a minute, my body is getting wet, my body is telling me I am getting wet.' This made me think of a saying that the body is like a donkey, and it has to be trained where it has to go. Otherwise, the donkey will lead you where it wants to go.

Then I realized I had a will, a God-given gift: follow the will of God. I was fascinated by the new terminology I was learning in the Eastern religion. By now, I was fed up with Christianity. I started making music again, and this time I started reflecting my own thoughts. I remember the lyric of one of my songs. It goes like this: "I wish I knew, I wish I knew what makes the Heaven, what makes the Hell. Do I get to know You in my bed or some dusty cell while others reach the big hotel?" and I knew I was on the Path.

I also wrote another song, "The Way to Find God Out." I became even more famous in the world of music. I really had a difficult time because I was getting rich and famous, and at the same time, I was sincerely searching for the Truth. Then I came to a stage where I decided that Buddhism is all right and noble, but I was not ready to leave the world. I was too attached to the world and was not prepared to become a monk and to isolate myself from society.

I tried Zen and Ching, numerology, tarot cards and astrology. I tried to look back into the Bible and could not find anything. At this time I did not know anything about Islam, and then, what I regarded as a miracle occurred. My brother had visited the mosque in Jerusalem and was greatly impressed that while on the one hand it throbbed with life (unlike the churches and synagogues which were empty), on the other hand, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility prevailed.

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