

Muhammed Umar Rao, Ex-Hindu, Brahmin

Description: After a severe hate for Muslims, Muhammad takes to reading the Quran to refute them, and finds that a world he once knew immaterializes.

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God's grace that I'm blessed with religion of God, I'm Mohammed Umar Rao from India, I embraced Islam 6 years back at the age of 18. I wanted to share my story with you all perhaps this would make a difference for non-Muslims to really think over to know what is the truth. I shared my story with two brothers, All praise and thanks be to God, they were convinced that my decision and choice is best, they started reading the Quran and also embraced it a few days back.

My Background

I come from a middle class orthodox Brahmin family; my parents worked in private firms (Mother: teacher, Father: textile engineer). My religious education was at my maternal uncle's place, that's how I became orthodox and my whole family education was always against Muslims, which was nailed in me deeply.

I was associated with RSS for a few years; I always hated Muslims to the extent that in all public functions I wanted to give high volume for music sound boxes to ensure that the *Adhaan* [Call to Prayer] could not be heard at all. I used to go round the town visiting all temples to complete my worship everyday. I was liked, appreciated in my family for being orthodox and encouraged to do more.

My Meeting with Islam

In the summer, my mother asked me to work for a Muslim business firm, which I disagreed, because from childhood I always hated Muslims. My mother stopped forcing me on this; I worked few summers with a non-Muslim so I was able to satisfy my parents. Later, I quit that part time job because I did not like the job and started concentrating more on studies aiming for a better job. Meanwhile, my mother and sisters worked 2 months part-time for this Muslim brother. They were highly impressed with him.

I always hated this person because I did not like the fact that my people were praising a Muslim whom I always hated. I was pushed and insulted for not being useful to the family, so I started working for the same Muslim brother though I hated him before going. After getting in his shop I started hating him more because the non-Muslim employees of that shop embraced Islam, I took this challenge to teach him a lesson claiming my religion is true and from there, I started doing a comparative study with whatever common sense which God had blessed me with then.

By now, in the urge to know more about Islam, I started reading the English translation of the Holy Quran (by Abdullah Yusuf Ali). This changed my entire student life; I was stuck with fear, doubts, I realized the fact that whatever I'm doing is wrong, my religion is all about imaginations/myths and false stories. I had many questions, doubts like where am I heading to, what should I do? What is my duty? Why has the message of truth not reached all of us? Many questions came to my mind and my entire student life went in this hunt of truth.

I started questioning my parents and people around, that who has seen God almighty to be able to paint /make images of God? All answered me that no one has seen God which is so true as it is mentioned in many places in the Quran. Finally, some mythological stories broke my faith down. The stories of Ganesha, Chamundeswari, Ram, Sita etc. did not make sense to me. I could no longer imagine them as gods.

When I questioned my parents that Vedas are against idol worship and why do we still practice it, my mother scolded me saying we are supposed to do it as our forefathers did it, the next day I read a verse in the Quran, Al-Baqarah (Chapter 2) which reads:

"When it is said to them: 'Follow what God has sent down.' They say: 'Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following.' (Would they do that!) Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided?" (Quran 2:170)

...and:

"That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do." (Quran 2:134)

When I read this I was shocked to see something which I just questioned my mother last night. This ayah (verse) hit me right deep inside. I slowly stopped worshipping idols, and stopped doing Pooja [Editor's note: A Hindu ritual for prayer], since *shirk* (Polytheism) is the only sin which will never be forgiven. I started practicing the teachings of Islam in secret in the beginning. There were few [themes] from chapter Al-Baqarah (Chapter 2) which [mean that] there are few who accept Islam wherever it profits them and not whole heartedly [and that they] are hypocrites.

Also:

"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Quran 5:3)

I realized that for all the questions that I have in my mind, the answers are present in the Quran.

By the grace of God, I started conveying message of God at my home with little knowledge I had, I wanted to complete my B.E. meantime, conveying the truth would make it easy in the long run for me and my family, but after my final year of diploma I was

pushed to the wall, then the time came where I had no choice but to quit my family, my sister also embraced Islam and she joined me. We had to live out of our house for more than a year without a job or regular source of income. All praise be to God, God made our ways easy to be firm on truth.

As God says in the Quran:

"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested." (Quran 29:2)

Over a period, Alhamdulillah, God opened doors of opportunities for us, I had quit my previous job as I was unable to perform my five times prayer. All the opportunities that came my way were from the mechanical industry which demanded that I work in shift and compromise my prayer. After quitting that job/mechanical profession for 1+ year, I did not get any job where I can perform 5 times prayer, by the Grace of God, I started working as a faculty for 2000 rupees for a year and now I'm blessed with a better job. By the Grace of God, Almighty God has chosen us, there's nothing more required.

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