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I feel honored to be a Muslim...

And I feel that way for many reasons. There are many norms in the society I live that are opposite to what it is to be Muslim. And when I first came to this way of life, I didn't know how well I would fair with it. To become Muslim was essentially to join a visible minority, and that's not something I would ordinarily be so keen to do. However, after learning the unadulterated teachings of Islam, I found myself compelled to embrace Islam as an absolute truth.

Having spent a large portion of my short life not being Muslim, I know the darkness that God speaks of in the Quran. I remember what it was like when Allah opened my eyes and shined light where the darkness had once been. In the beginning of my life, I had no definite form of absolute guidance.

The simplest aspects of creation would boggle my mind. I was totally oblivious to the miracles God put in nature. One time in particular I recall learning about evaporation in science class. I was unable to comprehend it. Not the how, but the why it happened.

I understood the idea of the water cycle and its importance for life, but what would make the water essentially disappear and float back up to the sky?

When viewing this question, without knowing God, my mind ran into a mental block at which point I could not come up with the answer. Boggled by the thought, I merely shrugged my shoulders and threw it to the back of my mind.

When looking at the human body, and how it's made largely of water, or looking at the universe and trying to comprehend what was beyond it. I would be faced with the mental barricade of not being able to comprehend the reason for its creation.

Time and time again scientists could explain the how, but never the why. They could explain purpose within the mechanics of creation, but they could

never explain the purpose for the mechanics itself. What caused the mechanics? What caused nature to have laws?

Having been brought up in a non-practicing Christian family, I had a general understanding of the principles of Christianity. The reason why I never turned to it for guidance was because it had never made sense to me. When I heard the word “God” as a child, I recall remembering an absolute, single, omnipotent being somewhere out there.

My problem with Christianity was the dogma, and more specifically the beliefs about God. The issue of a “Triune” God that is essentially three different individuals that all unite to take on the role of the “One” God. I know that is not how the Doctrine of Trinity is officially promoted, and any Bible thumping Christian would probably accuse me of not understanding the Doctrine, but that’s the reality that I saw in it.

Besides the inherent problems contained within the Doctrine of Trinity, I used to look at the fact that the Christians worship Jesus, and I would say, “If they worship Jesus, where does God come in?” Especially since Jesus is narrated as having said in the Bible that the Father who is in the Heavens is Greater.

Around that time, I unofficially rejected Christianity. I became a Christian / Atheist / Agnostic. I began to live life trying to come to terms with my surroundings and myself. Not knowing of a greater purpose, I saw no problem in taking part in destructive activities of any kind; on condition I would receive some sort of satisfaction from it.

I had little or no regard for my own body, or anybody else’s for that matter. I began to turn to the common reality escape, namely drugs and alcohol. At first using them as a social tool, and eventually using them habitually as a sedative. If people ever told me I should calm down, I would tell them I could stop if I had a reason, but I had no reason. And I led my life like that for some years, eventually going deeper into it, experimenting with other types of drugs and at one point I even began selling them.

But eventually I started to feel a consciousness within me looking for some sort of consoling. Although I was lost and in the dark, since I never saw the light, I didn’t know the difference between the two. I began to think of “the bigger picture.”

I began to think about death. I tried to comprehend the concept of nothingness, and as many times before in my life, when trying to contemplate the purpose, my mind drew blanks. Until one night, while I lay on my bed, deep in thought, I turned my face to the sky, and I said “God, if you’re real, and You exist, please help me!”

I went to sleep that night never really thinking twice about it. Then on 9/11 I watched the uncanny events unfold. I was confused about the whole situation, why it happened, what exactly happened, and how they knew who did it almost immediately. For the first time there was meaning being applied to foreign terms that I had heard, but never new anything about, namely Islam.

I used to literally think that Islam was an Island somewhere in the Middle East (which surprisingly is still a common misconception amongst a large portion of the population today, thinking Islam is a country). I knew of the Muslim religion, but I looked at Muslims like Buddhist, with strange rituals. I used to think they worshipped idols. But that night when I went out with my friends, Islam had become a hot topic.

Some of my friends started to bash Islam, saying that it was a stupid religion. I was surprised that some of my friends happened to be Muslim and they began to defend their religion. Being curious about the whole topic and its impending impact on the near future, I began to investigate. And what I found surprised me. I found out that the Muslims worshipped God. Furthermore I found out that the Muslims believed in Jesus as being a Muslim (one who submits to God), who was a Prophet and Messenger of God, that God saved him from the Crucifixion, and that he was no part divine or any part of God, and that God alone should be worshipped.

Those pieces of information struck a chord with me, for I remembered believing in God as One Absolute being when I was younger, and likewise, I remember rejecting Christianity based upon its worship of Jesus.

Thus I began an inquest into Islam and Christianity. I became interested in the subject of religion and began reading constantly. I would consult my grandmother on issues regarding Christianity, and would consult my friend on Islam. I would bring the arguments back and forth to one another to see whose arguments would stand up.

Eventually after reading through the Quran and the Bible, observing God's Miracles in nature and undergoing a thorough soul searching experience. I said to myself about Islam, "it sounds so true, but can it be real?" And right in that instance, I remembered my previous prayer when I said, "God, if your real, and you exist, please help me!" I was covered in goose bumps. I realized that this was the answer, but I still wasn't sure if I wanted to become Muslim. I didn't know how well I would fit in with the Muslims from an ethnic standpoint.

I continued reading and was really looking for something to give me a conformation about my decision. Then one day while reading the Bible, I came across verse 26:39 in the Gospel of Matthew. The verse reads:

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

For me, this verse confirmed three things that I had learnt from an Islamic view of Jesus. That he was Muslim, as he prayed as a Muslim by falling to his face in prayer. That he didn't want to die, because he prayed for the cup of death to be removed from him. And that he was not God, because he himself prayed to God for help.

This was the conformation that I needed that really solidified my decision to embrace Islam. And I couldn't accept the Message, without accepting the Messenger. So on December 28th, 2001 by the Mercy of Allah, I took the declaration of faith (To say I bear witness none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), and embraced Islam. And since that time, by Allah's Grace, I have achieved things, and been places, and have done things that I never would have imagined possible.

After tasting faith, I know the fruits it bears, and I pray that Allah allows me to do more good, and allows me to live the remainder of my life on His path. All praises are for Allah, and peace and blessing be upon His messenger, Muhammad. Ameen.