

language, culture, food, appearance etc. People who were non-Muslim, Jewish or white had to be mocked on a regular basis. Dear reader, would God, who made all humans, want those people following him to go around causing racial tension? Things may be changing over the years, but this was certainly the way things were during my school years.

No Questioning Allowed

I was brought up to be a Muslim by family, friends, the teaching at the local Mosques and the Asian community. **I had to accept Islam without questioning.** I always thought that leaving the faith would result in going to hell along with all non-Muslims (Kafurs). Dear reader, is it right that people should be told what to believe and have to accept it without question? Isn't it right for us to decide for ourselves what we believe, without fear of what others think or say?

I followed this religion because that was our normal way of life and the thing I was expected to do. However, I was dissatisfied and longing for something more. I thought that doing good or becoming more zealous for Islam would help. But although doing these things looked good outwardly, on the inside, in my heart, it made no difference.

Something Different About Christians

Over many years my family received practical help from a Christian lady, who was friendly and loving, even though she was from a different cultural background to us. Over a period of time I made other Christian friends, and I noticed that there was something different about them. They seemed to have a deep sense of peace and love in their hearts, which I didn't understand, but longed to have for myself.

These friends shared the good news of the Bible with me many times, but **I deliberately switched**

off and didn't take in the message. Some friends invited me to go to a church group (even though they knew I was a Muslim). At the end of the meeting someone would share the **Bible's message about Jesus**, but again I didn't listen.

Is to be Western to be a Christian?

At one of the meetings an Asian man, who had been a Hindu, spoke about how he became a Christian. He explained that **following a religion didn't satisfy the longings of his soul.** He had even read the Qu'ran, but that didn't help. **Only when he came to know Jesus Christ was his soul satisfied.**

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John chapter 4 verse 13.

I was surprised to hear this Asian man talking about becoming a Christian. I was brought up thinking that only white people were Christians. This caused me to start thinking about whether I had been taught correctly. **I also began thinking about whether the Bible had really been changed or corrupted**, as has been taught and accepted by Muslims without question.

Love and Concern

Soon afterwards I met another Christian who showed me love and concern. Over time he told me what he believed. Straightaway I sensed that he was trying to convert me to his religion and so **I switched off again and started to put up barriers in my mind** to what he was saying. I also started to spend less time with him.

I should just say at this point that I was taught by my family and the Muslim community that Christians were immoral. I was told that everything

you see on the media is typical of Christians. But when I met genuine "born again" Christians I found that they were actually nice people who sought to live good moral lives. There are many people who live immoral lives, but they are not "born again" Christians. In fact the Bible condemns wicked behaviour in the book of Romans, chapter 1, verses 18-32 which is about God's wrath against mankind.

Thinking Carefully

I kept on thinking about the Christians I had met and what they believed. My mind was not at rest as I was searching for the truth. I needed to find out more so I went back to my Christian friend and started to attend his church. As I listened to the preaching over several **months it felt as if the preacher was picking on me when he talked about sin.** However, what was really happening was that the preacher was preaching from the Bible, which talks clearly about what is wrong with all humans - our sinful hearts.

I found that the Bible speaks with great authority and understanding about mankind and sin. The Bible shows that sin is not just obvious wicked deeds, but includes everything (great and small) that we do wrong. The Bible explains that the reason we sin is because something has gone wrong in our hearts.

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1.

The Bible is clear that God is holy and pure and hates all wrongdoing. To not punish a crime means he has let us get away with it. Therefore it is right that every wrongdoing is punished. But God loves us and want to spare us from his wrath. This is a dilemma: God wants to spare us, but he must punish our wrongdoing. What is the solution?

A Genuine Solution

The Bible offers a genuine solution for us. Jesus came into the world and led a sinless life. He then let himself be put to death on a cross in order to receive the punishment from God that we deserve. This means that God has punished our sin, but can also spare us the punishment. A few days later Jesus came back from the dead, which showed that he has the victory over sin and death.

As I learned about these things I realised that my heart was not right with God, and therefore I was heading for God's punishment after I die. But I knew that I had been told about God's solution, which is available for everyone. I knew that I needed to receive it for myself.

After talking with a friend and thinking about these things, I went to my house and prayed that God would come into my life and forgive me for my sins through Jesus' death on the cross. After I prayed I felt something of God's presence come into my heart, which satisfied the longings in my soul, and I had a sense of assurance that God had accepted and forgiven me. Since then I have continued to have this sense of assurance that I am right with God. I have been "born again".

Dear friend, it is not enough to just follow a religion, because it does not deal with the problem of our hearts. Jesus' death on the cross is the only genuine solution for us, but we need to accept it for ourselves. God has changed my life and is changing many people's lives through Jesus' death. **What is your state before God?**

Everybody Needs Jesus

Whatever background we come from, we all need Jesus' death on the cross. We all need to be "born again". (John chapter 3 verses 1-21.) If you want to find out how other people's lives have been changed here are some books you can read. Ultimately though, I encourage you to read the

Bible to find out for yourself what it says about our sinful hearts and God's solution through Jesus' death on the cross.

Suggested Reading

"Is anybody out there?" by Mez McConnel, edited by Irene Howat. ISBN 9781845502058

"I dared to call him Father" by Bilquis Sheikh. ISBN 9781842911518

"Uncovered - True stories of changed lives" by Jonathan Carswell. ISBN 1850786127

"Uncovered" tells the true stories of ten people; all of them are students; all of them are different; but all of them come to the same conclusion.

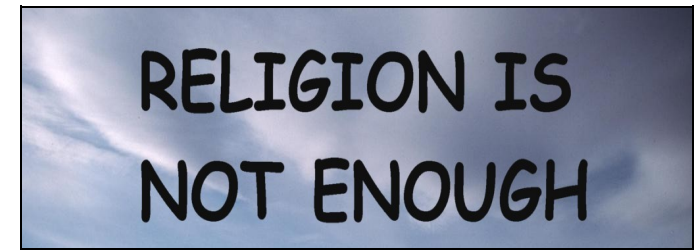
For more information about the Christian message you can read:

"Invitation to live" by John Blanchard. ISBN 0852342853. Publisher: Evangelical Press.

If you want to talk with someone you can contact:

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Dear reader, I would like to share my story with you to try to show you the difference between simply following a religion and having true life and hope. It is important that we make sure what we believe and where we are going after we die. We need to think carefully and decide for ourselves what is the truth, rather than just automatically accepting what our families or religious leaders tell us.

Therefore, please be patient and think carefully as you read this leaflet. You may feel angry as I explain how I stopped following Islam, but please **do not make a judgement until you have read the whole of this leaflet.** I am concerned for your soul, and where you are going after you die. I want you to know the certain hope of going to heaven that I now have.

At first I was going to keep it to myself, as I knew that a Muslim would probably not listen, thinking of me as a traitor or fool. But I decided that I had to share the truth with others regardless of what they might think, because we all need to hear it.

Racial Tension

I was born in Birmingham but my family was from South Asia. (I always thought that to be Asian is to be Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim. To be anything else is to be following Western ideas.) Nearly everyone at my school was Muslim but there was always tension between the Bengalis and the Pakistanis. Even though both groups were Muslim with love, peace and harmony on the surface, deep down there was hatred against