

Bringing Hope to Jaranwala



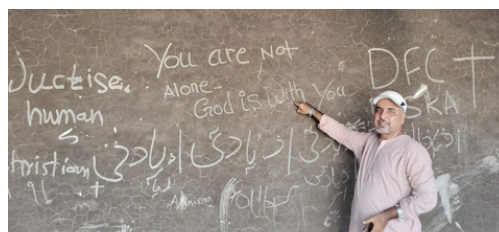
A Personal Journey of Compassion and Resilience

In the wake of a deeply unfortunate incident that shook Jaranwala, I embarked on a mission of compassion and solidarity which was marked by profound grief. I ventured into the heart of the Jaranwala division, accompanied by a few friends, where reports had emerged of 16 churches being destroyed by a misguided extremist mob, triggered by baseless rumors of a young Christian boy burning the Quran. While this incident cast a shadow of fear and despair, I also heard whispers of another story – one involving a Christian Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Shoukat Masih, whose honesty and efficiency had ruffled some feathers, possibly leading to this turmoil.

My primary objective was to bring a ray of hope to the affected communities. Armed with 25 food parcels and 600 packets of noodles for the children, I set out on this emotional journey. It took me to the outskirts of the division, visiting Chak 240, Chat 238, and Nasrat Nagar, where I witnessed the devastating aftermath. Churches, once vibrant hubs of faith, lay in ruin. I then moved to the epicenter of the attacks, Christian Colony and Essa Nagri, both deeply affected and severely damaged. Homes and churches alike had been reduced to ashes.



As I distributed the food parcels in Christian Town, I saw the desperation and anguish etched on the faces of the community members. My heart ached, and my resolve strengthened. A friend's generous donation of 600 packets of noodles allowed me to extend my reach to Christian Town and Essa Nagri. In Chak 240, I entrusted Bishop Salamt with the noodles for distribution in the days to come.



In Essa Nagri, I had a heartfelt conversation with a sister who shared a poignant story. She told me that her Muslim neighbors taunted her, suggesting that if she had converted to Islam, she wouldn't have lost her home and possessions. Her response was both powerful and deeply inspiring. She calmly replied, "Changing my faith might save my earthly house and possessions, but it won't affect my heavenly one." Her unwavering faith in the face of adversity truly moved me. It's a testament to the resilience and strength that faith can provide, even in the most challenging of circumstances.



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In Essa Nagri, I was blessed with the opportunity to engage with the children through games and activities. Their smiles, though tentative, carried the promise of hope. A pastor and another kind soul approached me, thanking me for bringing joy to these frightened children.



During my visit, I learned that financial support had been extended to the affected churches and families, alleviating immediate monetary concerns. However, it became glaringly evident that the most pressing need was educational opportunities for Christian children. Many of these areas lacked Christian schools, hindering access to quality education. This observation has ignited a vision for change.

I propose a two-fold approach. In the short term, I aim to establish an emergency relief program, providing children with books, bags, and dedicated teachers to support home tuition. Given the circumstances, these young minds may not return to school for at least six months, risking the loss of an entire academic year. In five key areas, I envision deploying five teachers to provide invaluable home-based educational support.

In the long term, I aspire to create Christian schools, not only to impart education – a fundamental right for every child – but also to nurture their faith. These schools would offer a safe haven for young Christians to grow academically and spiritually.



My journey through Jaranwala was marked by despair but kindled by hope. In the face of adversity, I united in compassion and solidarity. As I contemplate my return to these areas with more food parcels, I am also fueled by the dream of a brighter future, where education lights the path to a more inclusive and harmonious society. Together, we can turn this dark chapter into a story of resilience, transformation, and enduring hope.

