

May 26, 2025

My name is Aslam Shoukat Masih. I come from a Christian family in Lahore, Pakistan. I am the third of seven siblings.

Here are the details of my family:

1. **Aslam Shoukat Masih** – March 16, 1988 – Father
2. **Saima Aslam** – November 3, 1993 – Mother
3. **Michael Masih** – April 4, 2013 – Son
4. **Anser Masih** – October 10, 2015 – Son
5. **Eman Aslam** – February 24, 2019 – Daughter
6. **Samar Bhatti** – March 21, 2020 – Son

April 2006: I completed my high school education in Science from Deen-e-Islam Public High School, Lahore.

August 15, 2008: After finishing my Senior High School in Commerce from Commerce Zone Academy, Lahore, I started working as a bread packer at Dawn Bread, a company located near our home. Within three months, due to my dedication, reliability, and hard work, the shift manager promoted me to supervisor.

September 30, 2009: While working at Dawn, I also completed a 3-month computer training course in Microsoft Office from Unique Computer College.

July 11, 2011: My parents arranged my marriage with Saima, my aunt's daughter, from another Christian family in Lahore.

January 2011: After 28 months at Dawn, my communication and marketing skills had improved significantly. I then joined Skillsets Online Corporation, a US-based company that outsourced services to Pakistan and other countries, as a Tele-Sales Representative (TSR).

March 2016: The Christian owner of Skillsets Online, Shahzaib Saleem, promoted me from TSR to Calling Supervisor for the permanent night shift. Just a month later, the company's owners, Ronik Kar and Shahzaib Saleem, honored me with a "Top Leader" Certificate of Achievement.

Before moving forward, I must mention two individuals who turned our workplace—and our own country—into a living hell for us.

October 2019: Although we had always handled freelance IT services in our office, the company's board, led by Shahzaib, decided to hire a new IT employee—Syed Obaid Anees Shah, a member of Tahreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a major Islamic extremist organization.

November 2020: Another TLP member, Hafiz Sami, was appointed in the IT department under Syed Obaid.

September 2021: Two months prior, Shahzaib had promoted me from Calling Supervisor to Customer Support Department Supervisor.

Just two days earlier, a US-based customer requested us to reactivate an archived course—"Active Directory Module"—from our online video courses bundle. For the past two days, I have been requesting Syed Obaid (IT Director) to unarchive the course. Finally, I sent him a formal email, copying Shahzaib and Ronik Kar, to ensure the task was completed.

Minutes after seeing the email, Syed Obaid stormed into my cabin, shouting, *"Do you have no other work?! How dare you copy Shahzaib and Ronik in this email?!"* I calmly replied, *"My only intention was to remind you, as I've been requesting this for two days. I never meant to embarrass you."* Thirty minutes later, the course was unarchived, and he stopped yelling after my polite explanation. But from that day forward, Syed Obaid's behavior changed completely.

- He stopped talking to me.
- He ignored my greetings.
- He would glare at me with hatred, the way many Muslims in Pakistan look at Christians, as if we were "untouchables."

Before this incident, I always approached Syed Obaid for IT-related issues. But after this, I started contacting Hafiz Sami instead.

December 22, 2023: I remember this date because it marked the start of our Christmas and New Year holidays (till January 3).

Our night shift had 28 workers, including only three Christians (including me). As usual, we greeted each other with "Good Morning" at 7 PM when we arrived. Around 12-1 AM, we all gathered in the cafeteria for lunch.

Suddenly, Hafiz Sami pointed at me and yelled, *"Nauzubillah! (We seek refuge in Allah!) Why do you people call Hazrat Eesa (Jesus) the Son of God?!"*

I replied firmly, *"Because He IS God—and with His power, anything is possible!"*

Hafiz Sami, loud enough for others to hear, *"Do you think God needs a family like humans?"*

I calmly replied, *"Hafiz Sahib, we believe Jesus is divine—God Himself, not just a prophet. He performed miracles, rose from the dead, and His power comes from His unity with God."*

He scoffed, raising his voice, said to me, *"Astagfirullah! This is kufr (blasphemy)! How can a man be God? Only Islam teaches the truth—your Bible is corrupted!"*

I replied, *"With all respect, our faith is based on God's revelation. Jesus said, 'I and the Father are one.' We don't insult your beliefs; we ask for the same courtesy."*

Hafiz Sami, with his face reddened, fists clenched, *"You dare compare your false prophet to Allah? Listen to me—Eesa was just a messenger, and Muhammad (PBUH) is the final prophet! Admit this, or you're mocking Islam!"*

Lowering my voice, I replied, *"I've done nothing wrong. If defending my faith is a crime here, then God will judge us both."*

Shouting to the room, Hafiz Sami, *"Hear this! Aslam claims his 'God' died on a cross like a criminal! He calls Eesa greater than our Prophet (PBUH)! This is punishable under Pakistan's laws!"*

But fortunately, as soon as Shahzaib heard Hafiz Sami shouting, he arrived at the scene. Assessing the situation, he instructed me to go home while trying to calm Hafiz Sami down. In that moment, I quickly retrieved my motorcycle from the parking area and made my way back home.

After Hafiz Sami's outburst, I had already decided to quit my job. So when Shahzaib called me about an hour after I reached home, I told him directly about my decision to resign. However, Shahzaib insisted that I continue working after the holidays, assuring me that he had calmed Hafiz Sami down and emphasizing that he needed us.

August 26, 2024: For months, I had endured the hatred of Syed Obaid and Hafiz Sami at work. But today, everything changed.

I arrived for my night shift, hoping things had calmed since the December incident. But as soon as I walked in, I saw them, Syed Obaid and Hafiz Sami, huddled with a group of coworkers, whispering. The way they looked at me... it wasn't just anger. It was something darker.

Around midnight, I stepped outside to call Saima. The moment I hung up, Hafiz Sami appeared, flanked by two men I didn't recognize, their long beards and shalwar kameez marking them as hardliners.

"Aslam," Sami sneered, "still working here? I thought you'd have learned your lesson by now. But kafirs like you never do."

I kept my voice steady. *"I'm just here to do my job, Sami. Let's keep it professional."*

Then Syed Obaid stepped out of the shadows. *"Professional?"* he spat. *"You lost that right when you insulted our faith! We've tolerated you long enough."*

Before I could reply, one of the strangers grabbed my arm. His grip was like iron. *"TLP has issued a fatwa against you,"* he hissed. *"Blasphemers don't deserve jobs, they deserve graves."*

My blood ran cold. I jerked free and rushed back inside, but the office felt like a death trap. Coworkers who'd once smiled at me now turned away. Some even spat on the floor as I passed. Shahzaib, the one man who'd stood up for me, was nowhere to be found. I went to my cabin and locked the door, first calling Shahzaib to tell him everything. But before he could reach the office...

Then, at 3 AM, my phone rang. It was our neighbor, his voice shaking. *"Aslam, 12 men on six motorcycles just circled your house, shouting your name. They said, 'Tell the Christian dog we're coming for him.' Saima and the children are safe with us, just don't come home!"*

After Nazir's call, I immediately called Saima and told her to take the father and children by rickshaw to my in-laws' place on Walton Road, which is about a 30-minute drive from us.

By 4:30, after Shahzaib helped me safely escape from the office, I was holding my family in a relative's cramped hideout. My hands wouldn't stop trembling. That's when I knew, "Pakistan wasn't our home anymore."

August 30, 2024: Around 2 PM, our neighbor, Nazir Masih, called me with terrifying news. A mob from Tahreek-e-Labiak had gathered at our neighboring local mosque, using loudspeakers to announce that both my father and I had been issued fatwas for blasphemy against the Prophet. They instructed anyone with information about us to report to any TLP-affiliated mosque immediately.

September 2, 2024: Today, I applied for a Thailand Non-B work visa through a travel agent for myself and Non-O dependent visas for my family.

October 22, 2024: Our visas were approved, marking a crucial step toward securing our lifeline.

November 18, 2024: After months in hiding, I risked leaving our safehouse for an immigration interview at the Thai embassy in Islamabad. My hands shook the entire time, and our passports were returned the same day with visas stamped.

January 9, 2025: Today, we boarded the plane. As Suvarnabhumi Airport's lights blinked below us, Saima clutched my arm, and Michael whispered, "Abbu, are we safe now?" I couldn't answer.

Pakistan gave me my family, my faith, and my name. But it also taught me, "home isn't just where you're born—it's where you're allowed to live without fear. Today, as I watch my children sleep peacefully for the first time in years, I pray no father ever has to choose between his country and his God. Our story isn't about escape. It's about what happens when a nation forgets its own people."