

December 10, 2024

My name is Meelan Izhaq. I was born into a Christian family in the city of Gujranwala, Pakistan, and I am the third among my siblings.

Following are the details of my family members:

1. Meelan Khokhar - August 11, 1980 (Father)
2. Lubna Meelan - December 23, 1980 (Mother)
3. Malyca Meelan - November 24, 2006 (Daughter)
4. Aroon Meelan - September 17, 2009 (Son)

April 1992: I completed my primary education at Saint Francis School, Gujranwala.

May 1992: To support my younger siblings' schooling, I began working in the packing department at Janjua Pack Cardboard Factory in Gujranwala. During the first three years of packing, I learned how to run four important industrial machines: paper roll cutting, paper sheet pasting, rotary die cutting, and carton box cutting. For the following 11 years, I worked on these four industrial equipment at Janjua.

August 7, 2005: My parents arranged my marriage with Lubna, a Christian woman from Lahore.

December 20, 2006: I relocated to Lahore with Lubna and Malyca, who was just a few weeks old. Iftikhar Butt, one of my Muslim friends, had selected me as manager of a recently opened hospital canteen, Opium Café.

We'd relocated into my in-laws' home in LDA Cantt, Lahore. Lubna's mother, sister Uzma, Huma, and two brothers, Jamshed and Ranjesh, lived on the bottom level of the house, while our family stayed on the upper level. We lived in the same house.

June 5, 2003: Jamshed became his family's main provider after his father's death. He worked as a freelance set designer for several channels in Lahore. Jamshed's Muslim coworkers disliked him because he was Christian and had competence.

September 2012: GEO News Channel in Lahore appointed Jamshed in September 2012. A few months after joining, Jamshed purchased a new Honda City. On the other hand, Jamshed and I continued to pay 50,000 rupees each month for each of our 120-square-meter plots in a new residential estate in Asif Town, Lahore. Certainly, Jamshed's success sparked envy among his Muslim coworkers.

July 17, 2014: When Jamshed arrived at his office one morning and opened his drawer to place his keys, he discovered several shredded Quran pages in it. When Jamshed saw these pages, he had no idea what was happening. He instantly approached his production manager, Hafiz Ullah, who was also a Sunni Tehreek member and showed him the drawer. This was Jamshed's mistake. He assumed that Hafiz Ullah would see the pages in his drawer and defend him from whatever harm other Muslims could possibly bring him.

That day, everyone in the workplace, from the clerk to the senior producer, and the security guards beat Jamshed so hard. After so much beating, when their hearts were still not satiated, they kicked Jamshed and pushed him down the steps.

Jamshed regained consciousness. At the time, a Christian office boy named Peter who worked there assisted Jamshed in getting to his car in the parking lot.

July 19, 2014: After receiving medical care, Jamshed recuperated at his house when Hafiz arrived, accompanied by some Sunni Tehreek members from the adjacent Noor-ul-Islam Mosque. Among them was Ahmed Bhatti, a Sunni Tehreek member and neighboring resident. After opening the door, seven persons walked inside Jamshed's room. Hafiz Ullah asked Jamshed, "How are you feeling now?" Jamshed, afraid, continued telling them that he had no idea who had placed those pages there. Ahmed Bhatti then informed Jamshed that, despite everything that had occurred, they could still save his life if he adopted Islam. Following that, one of them, a cleric, recited two verses of the Quran in Arabic and then explained their translations. Before leaving, they told Jamshed that they would return to check on him. And that after he had recovered and gotten out of his bed, they would accompany him to the mosque to pray.

July 20, 2014: The day following Hafiz Ullah's visit, after we all resolved, Jamshed came today to his aunt Saraiya's residence in Sialkot.

July 29, 2014: For the second time today, around 11 a.m., Hafiz, Ahmed, and three other Sunni Tehreek members visited our home to meet Jamshed.

Just like the last time, they knocked and went straight to Jamshed's room to meet him, but when they discovered he wasn't there, Ahmed stormed out of the room, grabbed Jamshed's mother by the hair, and began shouting, demanding where Jamshed was. Ahmed's aggressive behavior terrified Jamshed's mother. She was crying and telling Ahmed that for the past two days, they had no idea where Jamshed was or whether he was still alive. Jamshed's mother was so afraid that she cried the entire day after Ahmed and his companions left.

It was Thursday. Both Malyca and Aroon had gone to school, Huma was at college, and Ranjesh was working at the hospital. Hafiz, Ahmed, and his three members tied Jamshed's mother's hands, feet, and mouth with a cloth and locked her in a room. They led Lubna into Jamshed's room and beat her as well. All five took turns committing collective abuse. Aunty was so afraid that she screamed for two days, and Lubna still cried when she remembered the incident.

After all of that, the five of them exited the home and fired two bullets at our door. Three gunshots were fired towards the sky. They were also intimidating and threatening our other Christian neighbors, asking if anyone had seen Jamshed arrive or leave. Before leaving, Ahmed Bhatti gave some of our neighbors his phone number and asked them to call him if they saw Jamshed.

When I arrived home at 7 p.m., Lubna told me about the incident that happened to her. She told how, when she attempted to run from those five, they viciously beat her, and how and where they injured her. I couldn't bear to hear what Lubna was saying. I decided to leave Lahore with my in-laws and their family.

July 30, 2014: I, Lubna, Aunty, Huma, Ranjesh, and both of my children, Malyca and Aroon, arrived at my in-laws' residence in Qasoor this morning after taking the train from Lahore.

August 12, 2014: Ahmed Bhatti, along with the three members that assaulted Lubna. Arrived at Qasoor in an attempt to capture Jamshed and Lubna.

It was approximately 11 a.m., and I had gone out to buy some vegetables for lunch at Sabzi Mandi Qatal Gari, which is about a 25-minute walk from our house. I was returning from shopping when Ahmed and his three friends stopped me on the dirt road and began inquiring where Jamshed and Lubna were. I told them they needed to be at their home in Lahore, and that I was there for a work. But it appeared that they already knew I was lying when Ahmed Bhatti pulled out a pistol from beneath his shirt and whacked my head with the gun's handle. Two people seized my wrists from both sides and pressed their hands against my shoulders. Ahmed Bhatti kicked my face, and the fourth person struck me in the waist. Fortunately, several people nearby were able to stop them. Then, an unknown guy assisted me by giving me a ride on his bike and returning me to my home.

When I got home, I noticed that nearly all of the neighbors had gathered outside our house. Then, when I entered the home, I noticed Lubna and Auntie sobbing. Lubna, crying, told me that they had also found us here. I was attempting to soothe Lubna, telling her not to worry because we would leave for my parents' house in Gujranwala early in the morning, before dawn. Our Christian neighbors, who had become more concerned about their safety, came on the door and began advising us to relocate to a safer area. Lubna, on the other hand, was so afraid that she continued to scream after arriving at Gujranwala the following day.

August 23, 2014: Today, around 3 p.m., Muhammed Iftikhar, the Muslim Head Chef at Opium Café, called to inform me that Ahmed and 8-10 Sunni Tehreek members had come looking for me. They were personally questioning hospital and canteen employees if anyone had seen me there. Iftikhar told me that they were handing the staff their phone numbers and informing them that Maleen's wife and brother-in-law were both blasphemers. Therefore, if anyone sees Maleen or any member of his family, they should call the phone numbers provided and notify them.

September 7, 2014: This morning, at 7:30 a.m., I received a phone call from the Police Superintendent's office in Gujranwala. The caller was a man with a rich voice who, after asking for my name, did not introduce himself and simply stated that he was a Police Investigation Officer phoning from the Superintendent's office. The caller stated that by noon today, either Jamshed or I would be required to visit the Police Superintendent's office. I questioned the caller, "Why?" "What have we done wrong?" The caller responded that if neither of us appeared by noon, the police would come to where we were and haul us in. As soon as the call was disconnected, I turned off my phone and then destroyed the sim card.

That evening, I accompanied my family and my in-laws' families to Jamshed's house, where he had been living for over a month in a rented two-bedroom house in Qayum Abad, a Christian residential colony in Karachi, with the help of a friend. We arrived in Karachi the next evening, September 8, by the train, Karachi Express (from Gujranwala to Karachi).

When Jamshed met us at the station and took us to his house, the first thing he did was inform me of his plans. He stated, 'Don't think any of us are safe here in Karachi. Sunni Tehreek is prevalent throughout Pakistan. These people have high positions in a variety of occupations, including street vendors, manufacturing workers, bank personnel, and others. That is why we can't able to to accept the charge of blasphemy against ourselves, and we cannot remain disguised in Pakistan for long.

Jamshed revealed that he asked his Christian property dealer friend Sohail in Lahore to sell his plot. He further stated that as soon as the plot was sold, he would marry his girlfriend, Sabah, a Christian native

of Karachi, and then apply for tourist visas for himself and his bride to travel to Thailand and seek international protection.

Lubna and I concluded that we could no longer stay in Pakistan after many discussions about Jamshed's plan. We instructed Jamshed to seek that Sohail also sell our plot.

October 10, 2014: After receiving a settlement of 1,250,000 rupees for selling his plot, Jamshed and Sabah had already submitted their documents to a travel agent to apply for Thailand tourist visas. Jamshed and Sabah have also legally registered their marriage at the Trinity Church in Karachi.

November 16, 2014: Jamshed and his wife flew from Karachi to Bangkok.

December 10, 2014: Sohail sent me 1,200,000 rupees for my Asif Town plot.

February 8, 2015: My wife, children, and I flew from Karachi to Bangkok.