

WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY MOURN THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN

BEAUTIFUL BOND BETWEEN BROTHERS IN THE FACE OF DEATH

Here we relate just one moving personal account of a survivor, Shehzad Ahmad Muneer, whose uncle Munawar Farooq is a resident in Lower Morden, London.

Muhammad Shabal Muneer, 20, the elder of two sons of Muhammad Muneer Ahmad, took responsibility to take his younger brother, Shehzad, 17, to Dar-ul-Zikur Mosque, in Garhi Shahu, for Friday prayers. As the first gunshots were heard Shabal led Shehzad inside the Mosque to seek refuge. The front doors were closed behind them, offering little more than a minute to desperately seek shelter. Shabal found a hiding space inside loosely rolled-up carpets where other children were also hiding. With barely enough space left for one, Shabal without thought thrust his younger brother in to the space and in vain scrambled for another hiding spot. Shehzad terrifyingly recalls the smashing sound of glass as gunmen fired through the windows, hurling several grenades in to the hall. Meanwhile, not so far away, yet a million miles away, at the boys' home their mother's heart sank as she watched in horror breaking news capturing the initial scenes, knowing her sons had earlier left for prayer. Mrs Ahmad frantically dialled her son's mobile number in despair and in hope to hear of their situation, and to her delight Shabal answered in a trembling voice; [translated from Urdu] "yes mother, just pray for us, please, we are in grave danger, please pray..." then the line went dead. The murderers had gained entry to the building and were ruthlessly offloading semi-automatic gunfire. The perpetrators were initially targeting the legs of the innocent worshippers to disable them from fleeing. At this point, Shabal demonstrated complete unselfishness and love for his brother, as he ran back to him to throw more garments over his hiding spot. Shehzad then helplessly watched Shabal fall from a couple of shots to his leg. As Shabal dropped to the ground, his brother kept hope as he could see he was in pain but still very much alive. Following a prolonged deafening period of gunshots and explosions, a momentary respite in firing drew Shehzad's attention to the horrifying wailing sounds of his injured and disfigured fellow Ahmadi including his brother. However, the assailants' blood-thirsty appetite was not quenched from spraying a hall full of hundreds of innocent men and children with their AK47s. It is then when 'horror' took a whole new meaning for the young teenager, as he fearfully watched the gunmen methodically scan over the bodies shooting at anyone displaying a sign of life. Despite his valiant efforts to remain motionless and tight-lipped, in spite of his bullet wounds, Shabal still received another shot to his back as he lay face down. A pool of blood began to encircle Shabal's body, however, Shehzad continued to retain hope as he still saw life fighting in his elder brother's eyes. Finally, distractions from outside, the police had arrived, hope had returned. Shehzad waited, and waited, yet no breakthrough was forthcoming; he lost touch of time, but tearfully watched minute by minute as Shabal's life began to fade as he continued to bleed. In fact it was another two hours later before the assailants were overpowered from within. By this time Shabal was raised to the coveted position of martyrdom. He was an intelligent, caring individual, devout Ahmadi Muslim giving his time for volunteering work without hesitation, budding athlete and aspiring banker studying Bachelor of Business Administration at the University of Centre Punjab. His memories are now survived in his brother Shehzad, two other siblings, and loving parents Mr and Mrs Ahmad. At the same time, the family is now also mourning the death of his Uncle, Mehar Din, who was unable to bear the news of this tragedy and the scale of these terrorist attacks.